

# PEOPLE'S PULPIT...



Sermon by CHARLES T. RUSSELL, Pastor Brooklyn Tabernacle

## The Message of the Hour to the Church and the World.

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. The voice said, proclaim, all flesh is grass, and the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeeth, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people are grass." (Isaiah xl, 3-7)

London, October 30.—Pastor Russell of Brooklyn Tabernacle today addressed an audience of nearly four thousand people from the above text. His hearers were of all classes and very intelligent appearing. He had closest attention. He said in part:—

God has messages for those who have hearing ears at each great Dispersional change in earth's affairs. These messages have generally been in the nature of forewarning of coming distress and the reasons therefor. Such a message was given to our first parents when they were expelled from Eden—accused would be the ground for their sales. Thorns and thistles it would bring forth unto them. In sweat of face they should eat bread thereof until they should return to the ground, from whence they came. Another great message went forth at the time of the flood; another before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; another at the close of the Jewish Age, when Jesus and his Apostles called attention to the prophecies which foretold the Divine rejection of the nation of Israel for a time, and declared that all things written in the Law and the Prophets concerning them would have fulfillment, quoting the prophecy which declared that their house would be left desolate; that they would have neither prophet, nor vision, nor priest, nor episcopate for many years, but that eventually God's favor would return to Israel—that he would gather them again and fulfill to them everlastingly the blessings promised both to Abraham and to his descendants—"the sure mercies of David."

A week ago we considered the prophetic message, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God" (Isaiah xl, 1). We noted that the due time has arrived for the fulfillment to Israel of this comforting message—that as a people the appointed time for the return of favor to them is accomplished because their two-fold discipline for sin have been fulfilled. Thus our present day is clearly marked and the words of our text following imply that now is the time for a special message to all, in proportion as each may have the hearing ear.

It is the voice of God which calls now through various channels and agencies. It cries not from the "City Babylon the Great." It cries not from the citadel of Christendom; but from the wilderness, from those who are more or less separated; from those who have heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation xviii, 4).

### Prepare the Lord's Way.

The message of the hour to every hearing ear is, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple" (Malachi iii, 1). For centuries you have been praying, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Now your prayer is about to be answered, whether you prayed in sincerity or in hypocrisy. The glory of the Lord is about to be revealed. "All flesh shall see it together." It will not be revealed merely to one nation, nor merely to one holy class. His glory will be revealed in flaming fire—in judgments. All flesh shall see it—the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the holy and the unholy. But, as the Prophet Malachi declares, "Who shall abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like fuller's soap (in its attack upon grease and dirt), and he is like a refiner's fire," as it melts and separates the dross of sin and iniquity (Malachi iii, 2).

The coming of a great earthly king to a city is the signal for a general cleaning up everywhere. And so the Lord declares that the message of his fast-approaching Kingdom should influence all who have the hearing ear to make preparation. To each nation it means. Set your house in order. An inspection is at hand. See that your laws are just and equitable and that they are administered justly. The same message comes to each self-governing city, and lastly, and most important of all, this message comes to each individual, and especially to all who have named the name of Christ. Or, as St. Peter declares, this inspection of the King of kings and Lord of lords must begin with the house of God (1 Peter iv, 17). And if the inspection be so searching that it must begin with God's saints, what could we expect of it when it reaches those who are merely nominal Christians and then the world in general? Ah! we may expect just what the Bible advises us will come. "A time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation" (Daniel xii, 1). The message of this hour, dear friends, elsewhere stated in Holy Writ, is, "Seek meekness; seek righteousness. It may be that ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger" (Zephaniah ii, 3).

**Hidden Things to Be Revealed.**  
The greatest Teacher the world has ever known, a Jew, eighteen centuries ago, declared prophetically of our day that every hidden thing shall be revealed (Matthew x, 26). We see his prophecy fulfilling. The secrets of nations are being exposed. Injustice in its every form is being brought to light as never before. Iniquity in financial institutions and in politics and in private affairs is being remorselessly unmasked and brought to light. Expediency and policy might say, "Hide these things from public gaze. But under Divine Providence the light is being turned on everywhere and hidden things of darkness are being exposed, sometimes in the evil and sometimes in the good. And sometimes, perhaps, the Adversary succeeds in making the good to appear evil. We are merely noting the general tendency—the great fact so peculiar to our day. We are not saying that every charge of fraud is bona-fide.

### Leveling Processes Are at Work.

The great leveling processes mentioned by the Prophet may be seen at work everywhere in society—in politics, in finance, in religion. A straight path is certainly being marked out in the wilderness. The people are coming to see gradually what constitutes Justice from the Divine standpoint—the path that Jehovah God will take when coming to mankind to require an accounting for the blessing of religion and of enlightenments granted to humanity in this, our day. Those who point out to mankind the straight path do not always walk therein themselves. Nevertheless, the great purpose of the Almighty is being accomplished in the exposures of sin and injustice, which are made from the Christian pulpit or from the socialistic platform or in the public press. The Divine edict is, "Make straight in the desert a highway for your God" (Isaiah xl, 3)—show his path of righteousness; make it known to all the people.

We should remember, however, that it is one thing to know the path of righteousness, of justice and of equity, and another thing to walk therein. Let us, my dear hearers, see to it that we not only recognize the Divine standards of righteousness and that we proclaim these to all who have the hearing ear, but let us also take heed that we be not condemned in respect to those principles which we allow and acknowledge and proclaim as the Golden Rule to others. Alas for the hypocrites who proclaim the way of the Lord to others, yet ignore that way in their own dealings. We have every reason to believe that honesty is one of the qualities which our God most highly appreciates in his creatures; hence we may be sure that hypocrisy is one of the most abominable qualities in his sight. Hearken to the words of the great Teacher, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! \* \* \* for ye lay men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers" (Luke xl, 44-46).

Let all who have named the name of Christ; all who in any sense of the word profess to be God's people, put far from them the hypocrites which appear so abominable in others. Let us be honest. Let us practice even more than we ever preached. Let all who have named the name of Christ, let them indeed burning and shining lights in the world—examples of justice and righteousness in their homes, in their neighborhoods, in the workshop and in the markets. Let us not only proclaim and assist in making straight before our feet the pathway of our God, but let us conform our words and deeds and thoughts thereto. The general result of the un-covering of the hidden things of darkness, and the bringing of them to light, and the proclamation of the straight way of the Lord, will have a great effect, and that effect is declared by the Prophet. It will mean a Revolution—in symbolical language, an earthquake. Note the picture given: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places smooth." Not in one instant will all this mighty transformation of society be accomplished. Not at once will all the degraded members of the human family be brought to the general standard or level. Not at once will the mountains and hills (the kingdoms and principalities of the world) be brought down to the common level. Not at once will this general equalization of society be effected. But it will be effected. "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

"The leveling process already is begun. In Germany, for instance, one-fourth of the Reichstag is composed of Socialists, notwithstanding the fact that the wealthy have several votes to the poor man's one. Already we see the great mountain or nation of Russia yielding to the demands of the people and granting them a measure of civil rights. There we see a practical illustration of the lifting up of the valleys and the bringing low of the mountains. In Great Britain we see another wonderful illustration of this principle; for here, more than in any

other Kingdom of Europe, perhaps, the distance between the mountain tops of anarchy and the depths of social degradation, have been lessened, so that in Great Britain, the change demanded by the new Kingdom, Messiah's Kingdom, will be less than in many other countries. Here it has come gradually.

**The Glory of the Lord Revealed.**  
A well-known American author (Henry Ward Beecher's Sister) once wrote some words which seem prophetic:—"I can see his coming here, as they circle all the earth. The signs and groanings promised, to precede a second birth; I read his righteous sentence, in the crumbling thrones of earth—Our King is marching on."

"The Gentle Times" are closing, for their kings have had their day; And with them sin and sorrow will forever pass away; For the tribe of Judah's Lion, now, comes to hold the sway—Our King is marching on.

"The seventh trumpet is sounding, and our King knows no defeat; He will sift out the hearts of men before his judgment-seat. O! he swift, my soul, to welcome him; be jubilant, my feet—Our King is marching on."

The exposure of the frailties of poor humanity—of the shams of society and of religion and of business and politics, all are constituting a great black background, against which the glories of the Lord are being revealed in striking contrast, as the critics of the world mercilessly howl to the line and lay bare the cankers in politics and pollutions of our social system. The effect of this primarily will be the arousing of the masses against the classes of privilege. Their human idols and ideals will crumble. Their confidence in men will melt. They will give vent to what they will esteem to be a righteous indignation. And so doing they will forget that the masses are equally as unrighteous, unjust, as the more favored classes, in proportion to their opportunities. Wherein they judge others they should also condemn themselves, and the result should be that mercy which the Lord enjoins.

Only those who forgive others their trespasses—who thus manifest a spirit of love and sympathy—need expect to have mercy, consideration, shown them by the new King. He will surely punish injustice and unrighteousness of word and deed and thought in the poor as in the rich, in the ignorant as in the learned, in the outwardly religious as in the outwardly profane. The message of the hour to Christian, Jew and Gentile is what it was eighteen centuries ago, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repent and reform respecting public injustices, no matter of how long standing, no matter by whom practised and approved. Repent and reform from and disown the rank errors to be found in so many Church creeds, dishonoring to our Creator. Let us be honest in our professions of faith. Repent as respects wrong practices which have crept into our Churches, quite out of harmony with the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles.

Let us return to the simplicity of the early Church. Let us repent of the God-dishonoring statements we have put forth in the name of God and religion and the Bible, by which we painted off bad things of great misery, as instead of the true Gospel of Good Tidings of Great Joy which shall be unto all people. Let us repent of and abandon the falsehoods and misrepresentations so common in business life—the subservient of the Truth to money. Let us repent of and put away the dishonesties of the Stock Exchange, through which the weak and ignorant financial launds are deceived and impoverished. Let us repent of the iniquities which abound in nearly every home, even those where Christ is claimed to be the Head—Injustices of husbands toward wives and of wives toward husbands, the strong-minded toward the weaker-minded—failing to observe the Golden Rule. Let us repent of the injustices practised by parents upon children, in violation of the same Golden Rule. Let us repent of the dishonest and disobedience to parents practised by many children. Let us repent of the selfish ambitions of our own hearts and let us pray earnestly to the Lord, "Create within me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me." "Cleanse thou me from secret faults; keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins" (Psalm ii, 10; xix, 12, 13).

### The Time is at Hand.

True, these and similar exhortations have been made by the Lord's people from time immemorial. And yet the present proclamation is different from all others in that it proclaims, "The time is at hand." "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Not an earthly kingdom with an earthly king; not a papal kingdom exhorting the world to righteousness in the name of the Lord; Not a Protestant ecclesiastical empire exhorting to godliness! But the real Kingdom of God's dear Son so long promised, so long prayed for, is at hand! It will be a Spiritual Empire, replacing and displacing Satan's empire in the world and using as its earthly agency Israel restored to Divine favor. Men will not say, Lo, here, or, lo, there, but, Behold, the Kingdom of God will be in the midst of mankind—everywhere present, empowered to bless and empowered to punish. The Great Prince of Light, the King in his glory, with the elect as his Bride on the heavenly, spiritual, invisible plane, will soon take the sceptre of earth. His great power and the glorious majesty of his righteous rule will be manifest in the judgments which will prevail—rewards and punishments. "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness" (Isaiah xxvi, 9).

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