

ISRAEL'S NEW COVENANT NOW TO BE ESTABLISHED

So Declares Pastor Russell in Remarkable Sermon.

Messianic Kingdom the Power to Bring About God's Will on Earth.



PASTOR RUSSELL

Brooklyn, Dec. 5.—Pastor Russell continues to use the Academy of Music, our largest auditorium, whenever he speaks in Brooklyn, the "Temple" being of insufficient capacity. He had a grand audience today of thoughtful looking people, evidently chiefly from the middle walks of life. Asked why so few of the wealthy attend, his characteristic reply was "Of my Master it is written, 'The carnal people heard him gladly.'" He spoke from the following text:—

"The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold he shall come with the clouds of heaven, and shall come in the day of his coming." Matthew 24:30.

Six thousand years ago in Eden our Maker, in justly sentencing his disobedient children to death, intimated that ultimately the Seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. This hidden promise was the first intimation of the Divine mercy which our gracious Creator purposed in himself from before the foundation of the world. Ever noble, kind and gracious our Creator restrained his mercy for the good of his creatures, that they might learn to appreciate the exceeding sinfulness of sin. For the good of the angels also, and that they might fully know of his justice, as well as of his wisdom and power, God insisted upon dealing with his creatures from the standpoint of exact justice. They had sinned and thereby had forfeited all claim upon the eternal life which he had given them conditionally.

Eternal torment, as we have already seen, did not in any sense or degree enter into the Divine intention. His sentence upon man, plainly stated, was, "Dying thou shalt die," not, "Dying thou shalt live in torment." "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:20). God intended to exemplify in his dealings with our race a principle of Divine government to be made operative everywhere—ultimately amongst all his creatures on the entire plane, as well as upon the earth.

Long centuries after, in the seventh generation of Adam's children, God spoke prophetically through one of those chosen, saying, "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute justice in the earth, to establish righteousness amongst men. Time passed on, but sin prevailed and the ending of the Great Deliverer was still future.

Next God spoke to Abraham, after first he had tested his faith and loyalty. To him he mentioned the same great Deliverer who would bruise the serpent's head and who would come in great glory with ten thousands of his holy ones. To Abraham he gave assurance that this One, in some way, would be identified with his posterity, so that he might properly be called the Seed of Abraham. He said, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

The Divine Programme was not changed, but more explicit statements were given respecting it. Thereafter all thought of God would know to look for the Messianic blessing through Abraham's Seed. Besides, the Covenant was afterward confirmed with an Oath to Abraham; later, to Isaac; later, to Jacob. That Covenant promise became the basis of God's adoption of the entire nation of Israel—all of Jacob's children. "They were before the Abrahamic Covenant—the Oath-Bound Covenant. If so great an honor from the Almighty God has made some of the Jewish people at times to appear arrogant and proud, let us not forget that to one is human to forgive, Divine. Perhaps if we were in their stead our imperfections would similarly display themselves.

God's Covenant of the Law. Israel's experiences of tribulation and bondage in Egypt were probably necessary to prepare them for God's great proposition—that they should keep the Law and as a reward have life everlasting. As it is written, "He that doeth these things shall live by them" (Leviticus xviii, 5). Israel greatly rejoiced in this manifestation of Divine preference for them more than for all others of humanity. The Law Covenant was mediated. The sacrifice of bulls and of goats made a typical atonement for them for a year, so that they might enter into this Covenant relationship with God. But when they attempted to keep the Law they were disappointed. They failed. The Law of God being the full measure of a perfect man's ability, and the Jews, like other men, being imperfect, found that they had undertaken an impossibility.

Not a Jew kept the Law perfectly. Not a Jew, therefore, gained eternal life during the first year. But God, foreknowing this, had made preparation for a repetition of the Atonement Day every year, so that the people might continue striving to attain eternal life. Year after year, century after century, they failed, and discouragement took the place of hope. God was teaching them a great lesson respecting the need of better sacrifices than those of bulls and of goats, and also teaching them that there is no other means of justification in his sight. They got blessings under this Covenant educational blessings, but not the blessing hoped for, not life eternal. Hence they were not in a position to become, as they had hoped, a national Messiah, a national Seed of Abraham, for the blessing of all the nations.

God gave them kings for a time, but those were unable to accomplish the great things hoped for. But the promise of a personal Messiah was made, and that he should be of the lineage of David, a great King, far superior to the great, wise and rich Solomon. Messiah would be David's Son and yet David's Lord (Psalm cx, 1; Matthew xxii, 42-44). Here, as God intended, Israel began to get the thought of a personal Messiah, a King of Glory, who would use their nation as his instrumentality for the conquering of the world, when every knee should bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God.

A New Covenant and Better Mediator. The next lesson for Israel to learn was that a change of Dispensation must come, that as Moses had mediated the Law Covenant, so an antitypical Moses, a greater than Moses, would induce them into the blessings and privileges of a still better Covenant, a Covenant more favorable to them and under which they could gain eternal life. This New Covenant was particularly set before them through Jeremiah's prophecy (xxxii, 33-34). And this, combined with the statement of Moses respecting a greater Mediator, helped their faith to take a fresh hold upon the Oath-Bound Abrahamic Promise—"In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

If a great enough Mediator should come as the promised Messenger of God, and should establish a better Covenant, under which Israel could have eternal life, and if he, as the offspring of David, should become their King, then indeed Abraham's Seed, the nation of Israel under their great Mediator-King, would be fully qualified to bless all the families of the earth. The thought of this glory to their nation became a fresh inspiration, and around it gathered the fifty and thousand of Jews, out of all the tribes of Israel, who returned from Babylonian captivity under the chief of Cyrus, offering them this privilege.

Through the Prophet Ezekiel the Lord again made mention of the fact that their Law Covenant, made at Sinai, must, before their great blessing of restoration, give place to a New Covenant, a better Covenant. Speaking of the time when he would gather them out of all lands and would fulfill to them the promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and make them a great nation, and use them for the blessing of other nations, the Lord declares, "Not for your sakes do I do this, O house of Israel, but for my name's sake." He then proceeds to tell them that at the time he would gather them back again into his love and favor he would also humble their pride, by restoring the Samaritans and the Soudonites—peoples whom Israel detested as inferiors and sinners.

God declares that neither of these peoples had ever committed as serious sins against Divine goodness as had Israel, and that when he would again bless Israel he would bless also these other peoples in their midst. Let me quote his words: "When thy sisters, Soudon and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate." \* \* \* Nevertheless, I will remember my Covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting Covenant, \* \* \* and I will give thee (Soudonites and Samaritans) into thee for daughters, but not by the Covenant (not under the old Law Covenant); but under the New (Law) Covenant of the future, and I will establish my Covenant with thee. \* \* \* in order that thou mayest remember and be comforted, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel xvi, 55-62).

This New and better Covenant is to be mediated through a personal Messiah—a still more glorious King than Moses, a still more glorious King than David—this One whom Israel began to look for and to long for. Can we wonder that they failed to identify him in the lowly Nazarene who died at Calvary? We cannot! Nothing but a special assistance of the holy Spirit would enable any one to trace the connection between the glorious pictures of the prophecies and the humble appearance of him who came to fulfill those prophecies. We do see, however, that the great Messiah of Glory, Jesus, in his Second Advent as King of kings and Lord of lords, fills absolutely every demand of Jewish expectation and of prophetic outline. Some can see, but others cannot as yet, that he who was pierced is the same One who, as the Son of God, in great glory is shortly to bless Israel, and all the families of the earth through Israel.

"Abide the Day of His Coming." Our text is from another prophecy speaking of this same great Messiah, the Mediator of the New Covenant, King of kings and Lord of lords, who, as the representative of the great Jehovah, his Father, is to reign until all enemies shall be put down; until Satan shall be bound and, ultimately, shall be crushed—until Adam and his race, released from Divine sentence, under

the New Covenant provisions, shall be uplifted out of sin and degradation and death to perfection and everlasting life—the unwilling and disobedient being destroyed in the Second Death.

The Prophet Malachi points out that the Messiah of the New Covenant, whom he announces, is the glorious Mediator and antitypical King for whom they had waited long and of whom they delighted to think. He would come to the temple, thus fulfilling that he would be not only an antitypical Prophet, an antitypical King, but also an antitypical Priest—"A priest upon his throne" (Isaiah cx, 4; Zechariah 6:13).

But after this joyful proclamation that their long-expected and glorified Mediator of the New Covenant should be looked for, they were warned that his day would be one of trial, one of special testing and proving, that the Lord might find the antitypical Priests and antitypical Levites to serve in the antitypical Temple. He would be like a refiner of fire to take away the dross and to leave only the pure metal—his trials and testings being implied. He would "be like fuller's soap," in the sense that a great washing or purging would take place to make ready for the Kingdom the called and chosen and faithful.

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WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 6.—At least two members of the new court of commerce have been chosen, according to gossip in political circles here today. They are Franklin K. Lane of California and Judge Charles A. Prouty of Vermont. Both at present are members of the interstate commerce commission, and both are known to stand high in the estimation of President Taft.

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