

PEOPLE'S PULPIT...



Sermon by CHARLES T. RUSSELL, Pastor Brooklyn Tabernacle

The Seas In the Hollow Of God's Hand

"Who hath measured the seas in the hollow of his hand" (Isaiah xl, 12).

On the Ocean, October 16.—Pastor Russell of Brooklyn Tabernacle is enjoying his usual health, en route for London. He expects to be back in Brooklyn the first Sunday in December. His Sundays in Great Britain will be given to London, filling appointments with as many as possible of the smaller cities week days. His discourse for today from the foregoing text follows:—

The wonderful force, and immensity of the thought of our text, cannot be appreciated by those who have never been upon the great Ocean. As we travel through the water at railroad speed and keep watch in every direction, yet seldom see a vessel, large or small, day after day, we begin to get a little conception of the world in which we live. It is so much larger than previously we were able to comprehend. Yet by the aid of the telescope and the mathematical calculations we perceive that our earth and its seas are small, in comparison to many other worlds. We perceive that our solar system (our sun and his planetary satellites) constitutes but a small fraction of God's great creation. Astronomers tell us that by the aid of sensitive photographic plates they are able to count about one hundred and twenty-five millions of stars, around which planets are revolving, as our earth revolves around our sun. And they estimate that probably only a portion of these stars is visible to our naked eye—so far distant are they. Astronomers estimate that there are millions of other suns so far distant that their light cannot even be discerned by photography.

We stand appalled at the immensity of space and the law and order which everywhere reign. We heartily assent to the words of the Prophet David, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; there is no place where their voice is not heard." The person who can look upon this wonderful display of super-human power and who can believe that these worlds created themselves, shows to the majority of us that, if he has brains, they are sadly disordered, unbalanced. The person who, after intelligent thought, concludes that there is no God, that everything came to be what it is by chance—or by the operation of some blind force—the operation of some blind force—the operation of some blind force—in the Scriptures in the following words, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm xiv, 1).

"The Man Who Never Told."

On first reading our text some of us might have been inclined to say, Ah, a beautiful poetic extravagance! But not so dear friend! As scientific instruments demonstrate to us the immensity of the universe we perceive that the Prophet used very moderate language in all his description of the majestic power and greatness of the Creator, representing him as weighing the mountains in his balance and holding the seas in the hollow of his hand and that, from his standpoint, a thousand years are but as a watch in the night. How insignificant small we all feel in the presence of our God! No wonder some great men have been inclined to say that humanity is too insignificant from the Divine standpoint to be worthy of the least consideration—much less to be objects of Divine care and providence! The Scriptures encourage us to reason from the known to the unknown. They tell us that although God is so great, so wise, so powerful, he is also just and loving. And the more we consider the matter, the more reasonable this Bible description of the Almighty appears. His power we see demonstrated. The wisdom of One so great cannot be doubted. Then we come to consider, Could One so wise and so powerful be unjust or ungenerous? Our hearts answer, No! No one is really great who is devoid of justice and love. So surely as our God is Jehovah he must possess these qualities.

When we came in contact with the Bible, and particularly after we learned something of its teachings and got rid of the misrepresentations which gathered about it during the dark ages—then we began to recognize it as the message of Jehovah to his creatures. It informed us that the great Creator of the universe is not only Almighty and All-wise, but loving and kind, with justice as the very foundation of his Empire. From the Bible we learned, too, that our Creator had been pleased to make us in his own image, in his own moral likeness, to the intent that we might enjoy him and the fruits of his righteousness to all eternity. From this standpoint we began to realize that the loftiest sentiments of the human mind and heart are merely the reflections of this Creator.

Thus coming into sympathetic accord with our Maker we can comprehend the principles of his character—what justice signifies, and mercy and kindness—what is wisdom as contrasted with foolishness. From this standpoint we were enabled to see the glorious perfection of our Maker's charac-

ter and attributes, which justify the name which he has taken to himself when he declares through his ambassador, "God is Love." As we come to grasp the infinite; we are getting near to the heart of the great Eternal One, who weighs the mountains as in a balance and measures the seas in the hollow of his hand.

"Like Unto Your Father."

Godlikeness is love-likeness, and, as the Scriptures declare, "Love is the fulfilling of the (Divine) Law" (Romans xiii, 10). Our great Creator, the only living and true God, is thus seen in contrast with all the gods of the heathen, who are pitiless, merciless, vengeful, devilish. From the Bible we learn that Jehovah, the True God, takes delight in doing good—in the exercise of his Almighty power and wisdom in the creating of beings in whose everlasting life and enjoyment forever he takes pleasure. With such glorious intentions his creative work began with the celestial beings, who are still enjoying his favor. With such benevolence he created man a little lower than the angels, crowning him with glory and honor as the king of all creatures, on the animal, the human, plane, the likeness of his Maker, who is a spirit. Harkening to the explanations of the Divine purposes by the Apostles and Prophets, we have received assurances that nothing has befallen humanity in all the dire experiences of the past six thousand years that the great Creator did not foresee. Further, we have the assurances that Divine Wisdom purposes eventually that the tears and sorrows, cryings and dying, the penalty for Original Sin, under which man has suffered all these centuries, the great Creator purposes shall work no real disadvantage to his creatures. Instead, the end of the Divine Program will attest the various elements of the Divine character as nothing else could have done. The holy angels, who have known no sin, will in mankind read to eternity a valuable lesson of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the wisdom and blessedness of righteousness.

"Joy Cometh In the Morning."

A night of weeping six thousand years long, involving suffering and sorrow to twenty thousand millions, is a awful thought. But the proposition is yet a different one when we remember that the majority of Adam's children die in infancy and that to those who live their three score years and ten with labor and sorrow, there are pleasing and happy experiences, as well as tears. And when we read that even the tears of a few years are a part of the disciplines, instructions and experiences which God designs shall be valuable lessons in preparation for a glorious and joyous eternity—then the whole matter begins to have a new aspect to our minds. If the light afflictions of this present time will work out blessings for eternity then we can rejoice in them for ourselves, our neighbors and all humanity. And this is the Divine proposition. Not that God has ever proposed eternal life for a single rebellious soul, but that he has prepared blessing for all of Adam's race who shall come into full harmony with himself. At present he is teaching great general lessons to humanity as a whole by the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It would be too bad if, as these lessons are learned, there should be no opportunity of profiting by them. But there will be an opportunity of profiting, and this is the great message which God has sent to mankind and which, Scripturally, is styled The Gospel—the "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people" through Christ.

The night of weeping, six thousand years long, is about to be followed by the morning of joy. The New Day, in which darkness and sin will be abolished and in which the Sun of Righteousness will bless and heal the world of mankind, is a "Thousand-Year Day" for the blessing and uplifting of our race (II Peter iii, 8). The Bible describes that day in most glowing terms. It is the day of Messiah, the day in which God's Kingdom shall come and his will be done on earth as it is done in heaven, the day in which the poor and needy will be lifted up from the dung-hill of superstition and depravity, the day in which the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth. And there shall be no more fear. That day will not end as do others. It will not be followed by a night, but lead on to a glorious eternity for all of God's creatures who appreciate Divine goodness and, using the Divinely provided opportunities, will return to full harmony with their Creator. Such he will in turn recognize as his sons and,

at his right hand of favor, they will enjoy pleasures for evermore.

The Revelation of Our God.

One of old truly said, "Thou art a God which hidest thyself" (Isaiah xlv, 15). How true! As a result the world by wisdom knows not God. He is near in his wisdom and love, yet he can be seen only by those whose eyes of understanding have been opened. But we are glad that the time is coming when all the blind eyes shall see clearly. "As I live, saith the Lord, the whole earth shall be filled with my glory." The knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep" (Habakkuk ii, 14). Then all shall see what God hath wrought and our temporary blindness will but accentuate the glorious brightness of his Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power:

"Blind unbelief is sure to err, And scan his work in vain; God is his own interpreter, And he will make it plain."

In the end it will be seen that the Divine permission of the reign of sin and death in the earth, instead of being a blot upon Divine character and a demonstration of Divine un-wisdom and incompetency, will reveal the great Creator to his subjects, his children, as nothing else could have done. Besides, the experiences of mankind during the seven thousand years from Adam's creation to the end of Messiah's mediatorial Kingdom will demonstrate traits of the Divine character which could not otherwise be manifested to angels or to men.

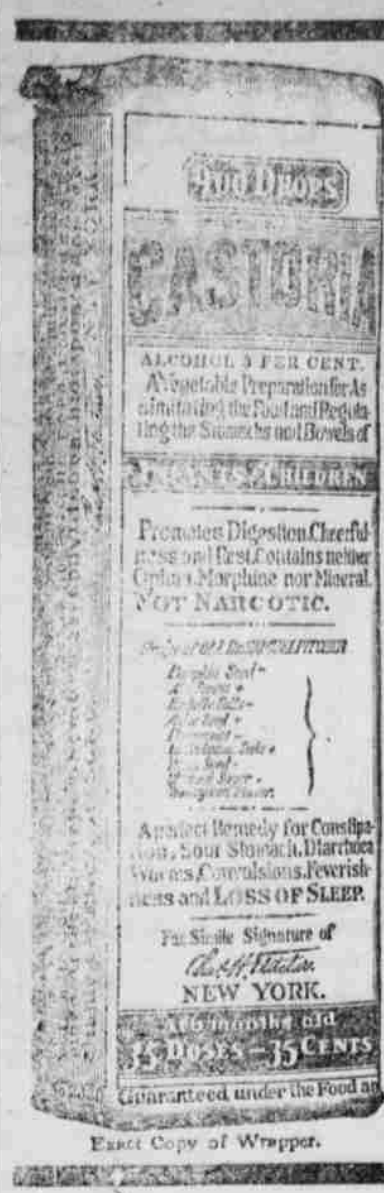
For instance, without the permission of sin, the element of Divine Justice and the unalterable opposition of God to all sin would never have been known to his creatures. His sentence upon father Adam and his race and the permission of the reign of death and sin for all those who have demonstrated the fact that Divine Justice cannot be trifled with. And this reign of sin and the strength of the Divine opposition to sin, and the sentence upon sinners, in turn gave opportunity for the exhibit of Divine mercy, compassion, sympathy, love. Undoubtedly God's love was known to the angelic hosts before, but not to the same extent. His dealing with humanity will prove the depth of his sympathy to angels and to men. "God commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans v, 8). Surely, as the poet declares, we have in this a manifestation of "Love Divine, all love excelling."

More than this; some of us at one time were, perhaps, inclined to criticize our Maker and to say that he had no right to redeem us at the cost of Calvary; that it was wrong to cancel the sins of one and require their payment of another. But we erred. It was not thus. Rightly understood, the dealings of the Father with the Son add still further to his glory—magnify still more his Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power. With all power and authority the death of his Son. For Jesus to become man's Redeemer meant his voluntary sacrifice of himself. And how shall we understand this—the Redeemer's willingness to be man's ransom-price? The Scriptures, replying, tell us that it was because of his great love for the Father, his great confidence in him and his willingness to submit to the Divine will and purposes and arrangement in everything. Yet, notwithstanding the willingness of the Redeemer, the Father would not permit him to engage in this great undertaking which would cost himself so much, unless he would give him the corresponding reward. Thus we read of Jesus, that "for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross and despised the shame."

"No! It is Just Like Him."

The Divine Plan being set forth to an old colored woman, she was asked if it was not strange that God should do such great things for us. Her answer was, "No, Master; it is just like him!" So we say respecting the great God who made the heavens and the earth and sun and stars. It is not strange that he should have a glorious Plan for all of his creatures—a Plan which will fully exemplify his character—his Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power!

And amongst these wonderful things of the Divine Purpose none is more wonderful than that which relates to the church class, "the elect," drawn and called and begotten of the Holy Spirit during this Gospel Age. These, justified by faith instantly, are a separate class from the world, who will be justified, perfected, through works during Messiah's glorious reign. The arrangement for their faith-justification through the merit of the Redeemer in advance of the world's justification is for the purpose of allowing these, who by nature are "children of wrath even as others," to become sons of God on the spirit plane, "partakers of the divine nature." Dealing on lines of impartiality, God's offer to these members of Adam's race, a "little flock" in all, is that, if they join with their Redeemer in sacrifice and walk in his footsteps, his merit shall cover their blemishes and they may become for all eternity his glorious Bride and joint-heirs with him in his Kingdom—that they may sit with him in his Throne and be associated in the great work of uplifting the children of men. How wonderful is our God, infinite in all his qualities! "Who hath known the mind of the Lord; who hath been his counselor?" (Romans xi, 34.) How came all these wonderful things which are written in his Book, unless by his own knowledge? Let us bow before him and adore him and be faithful followers in the footsteps of Jesus until the end of the race—until we receive the crown of life.



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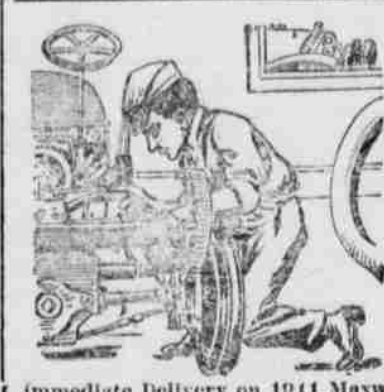
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