

TWO DISTINCT SALVATIONS ALL IN ONE OR THE OTHER

Every Human Being is to Have a Full, Fair, Intelligent Opportunity For Eternal Life.

A SECOND CHANCE FOR FATHER ADAM ONLY



London, March 19.—Pastor Russell preached today at the London Tabernacle to an overflowing house. His text was taken from Hebrews ii, 3: "So great salvation, which began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those who heard Him."

In the past many of us misunderstood these words—"so great salvation"—and have thought them to apply merely to an "elect" few of the saintly followers of our great Redeemer. Surely it should not be thought strange if a closer examination of God's Word would demonstrate to us that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways and plans higher than ours (Isaiah lv, 9). It should not surprise us to find that our forefathers were generally in considerable darkness in respect to "the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God, which passeth all understanding" (Ephesians iii, 18, 19). It should not surprise us to find that our Savior will yet see the fruition of the travail of His soul and be satisfied (Isaiah liii, 11), and that this satisfaction will result from the salvation of more than the "little flock," who walk in His steps and do, like Him, "present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God," in the service of Truth and righteousness.

There are several ways of treating this thought, that more than an "elect" few are eventually to reach eternal life through the Redeemer of mankind. One way, which many adopt, is to claim that our Lord and the Apostles did not really mean to establish so high a standard of sainthood as their words imply, and then to conclude that the unsalutary will gain eternal life as well as the saintly—all except the degenerately wicked. This view of matters, which is the common one, is undoubtedly prompted by sympathy for friends, relatives, neighbors and the heathen; but it is wholly contrary to God's Word.

Another view still held by some is that everybody but the saintly will suffer torture eternally and hopelessly. The third theory which I desire to present here is the one I believe to be in accord with every text of Scripture, and in accord with Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power Divine, and in accord with sanctified common sense. I have time for only an outline of this Plan, which is most comprehensive, as follows:

The Saintry New Creation.

Salvation in no sense began before the Redeemer's birth, forty-one hundred and twenty-eight years after the fall of our first parents. In all that long period nobody was saved. The Apostle declares in our text that salvation began to be preached by Jesus. Again we read that Jesus brought life and immortality to light through His Gospel (I Timothy i, 10). So, then, life and immortality and the Gospel Message began to be preached by our Lord and was not preached before His day. Indeed we can see that if there is "none other Name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved," than the name of Jesus, then it could not have been preached; nothing could be preached previously except the Divine declaration that God purposed in due time to redeem mankind from sin and death through a Savior and a Great One—One able to save unto the uttermost all that would come unto the Father through Him.

This reasoning is surely true to the facts. Search all through the Old Testament and there is found no promise of eternal life set forth except by the Law given to the one little nation of Israel. That Law declared that he that doeth these things shall live by his obedience thereto (Romans x, 5), and the Apostle assures us that Jews died because none of them kept the Law—because no imperfect human being could possibly meet the requirements of God's perfect Law. "By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Romans iii, 20). The Apostle, further explaining the matter, says, "Wherefore, then, serveth the Law?" He replies to his question, "It was added because of transgression until the promised Seed should come" (Galatians iii, 19).

The Promised Seed.

The Apostle's words direct our thoughts back to Eden, when God declared that the Seed of the woman would at some future time bruise the Serpent's head. But that Seed did not exist for over four thousand years after, and has not yet crushed the Serpent's head—destroyed sin and the works of Satan.

The Apostle's words again remind us of God's promise to Abraham, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis xxviii, 14). Abraham was not thus blessed, nor were any others thus blessed, however faithful they were. All the blessing was to come through Abraham's Seed and could not be dispensed before His coming. Hence the Apostle, referring to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all

the faithful of past time, declared, "All these died in faith, not having received the promise" (Hebrews xi, 13)—the blessing—reconciliation to God and eternal life.

And when Jesus came He did not attempt to bless the world, but on the contrary, in His prayer, declared, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given Me" (John xvii, 9)—the saintly, the "very elect" (Matthew xxiv, 24). These He called; these He taught—"Israelites indeed." These He directed to give the same message to others, not for the conversion of the world, but for the calling, instruction and edification of "the Church, which is the Body of Christ." The message to these from first to last was that they were called to suffer with Him, that they might also reign with Him.

"The Church Which is the Body of Christ"

In the past many of us have overlooked the fact that the Church are, figuratively, "the Body of Christ"—to be hereafter, as the Apostle declares, "the Church which is His Body." And again, we are members in particular of the Body of Christ, which is the Church (I Corinthians xii, 27). In a word, then, the entire Christ includes the members of the Body with the glorious Head of the Body. And this glorious Christ, which will be completed by the close of this Gospel Age, will as a whole be the promised Seed of Abraham.

From this viewpoint we can see why God's long-promised blessing has not yet reached the world, but from this viewpoint we can see that He is merely selecting or electing the Church, the Seed of Abraham. The promise to Abraham is, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," and, as we have seen, the Seed of Abraham is "Jesus the Head and the Church His Body." In a word, our previous view of the Divine Plan was too narrow. We saw the election of the Church, but did not see God's gracious purposes for "all the families of the earth." The Church, as the Scriptures declare, is merely a "first-fruit" unto God of His creatures and is not, by any means, the entire harvest. Let us here remember St. Paul's explanation of this matter. He declares, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise" (Galatians iv, 28)—the heirs of the promise—through us all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

No Second Chance In This.

It might indeed be said in one sense of the word that since father Adam was placed on trial in Eden with a reward of eternal life before him or a penalty of death, and that since he lost his chance of eternal life by disobedience, therefore any chance of eternal life coming to him or to any member of his race would, of necessity, be a second chance. This is undoubtedly true. From this standpoint every member of the human family must eventually have a second chance for eternal life, because it was for this very purpose that our Redeemer left the heavenly glory, was made flesh, dwelt amongst us and "died, the just for the unjust." Whoever enjoys this second chance must expect no more, because "Christ dieth no more." But, as we have already seen, nobody had a second chance for eternal life prior to the coming of our Redeemer into the world. "He brought life and immortality to light." He died, the just for the unjust, to make reconciliation for iniquity—and this message of so great salvation began to be spoken by our Lord.

The comparatively few who have heard the Gospel since Jesus' day—"Good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people," these, the comparatively few, who have heard of "the only Name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved"—are the only ones who in any sense of the word have had their second chance. Indeed we might, Scripturally, limit the matter much further and say that the Gospel has been hidden from the majority of those who heard it; their mental eyes and ears being deaf and blind, they did not comprehend the message, and therefore could not reject it.

The "high calling" and "so great salvation" which so few have really heard and seen is referred to by our great Redeemer saying, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned. . . . But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (I Corinthians ii, 14). In other words, only the Spirit-begotten ones are now on trial for life everlasting or death everlasting. And only the faithful footstep followers will gain the glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship with Him in His Kingdom. These are the "elect," the "very elect." These are such as make their calling and election sure by so running as to obtain this great prize of membership in the Body of Christ.

These elect ones experience a change of nature, and in the future will not be human beings, but partakers of the divine nature (II Peter i, 4). They will be inducted into the perfection of the divine nature in the First Resurrection, the chief resurrection, in which they will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (I Corinthians xv, 50-52).

Human Salvation is Restitution.

We all gazed at the thought that the heathen and everybody except saints would be consigned to an eternity of torture, yet we all recognized that heaven is not a place of development but a condition of perfection. We were perplexed, mystified. We did not follow our Bibles with sufficient

care. Many of us twisted the Scriptures, wrested them from their plain obvious import, and always to our own injury. Some went in the direction of Universalism; others halfway, and still others abandoned the Holy Book. Now we see where we erred.

God has two salvations; one for the Church and a totally different one for the world. The salvation for the Church is to heavenly nature, spirit bodies, and joint-heirship with the Master in His Kingdom, which flesh and blood cannot inherit, as we have already seen. The other salvation, for mankind, is an earthly one, called in the Scriptures "Restitution." Man was not an angel originally, not a spirit being, but, as the Scriptures declare, "The first man was of the earth earthy."

It was that earthy man, perfect, in the image of his Creator, for whose happiness Eden was specially prepared. By obedience to God he might have continued to enjoy his Eden home everlasting. By disobedience he first lost his fellowship with God, then his Eden home, and after nine hundred and thirty years of toiling with thorns and thistles in sweat of face, the death penalty upon him reached completion—he died. Adam's race, sharing his weaknesses by laws of heredity, have also shared death with him.

"World Through Him Might Be Saved."

The Scriptures tell us that God's real purpose in sending Jesus into the world was that the "world might through Him be saved"—not the salvation of the Church; that was an incidental feature. The Church is selected that as the Bride or Queen during the Messianic Kingdom she may be associated with her Lord, the King, as the Seed of Abraham in the blessing, the savior, of Adam and his family, or so many of them as shall be willing, from sin and death conditions. We remember the Master's words to the effect that "He came to seek and to save (recover) that which was lost."

We have just seen that it was a human life, human perfection and an earthly home that were lost. It is these, then, that Jesus proposes in due time to recover for Adam and his family. The Messianic reign of Jesus and his Body—the Anointed, the Christ, the Messiah—will be for the purpose of blessing Adam and all of his race with glorious opportunities of an earthly salvation. The uplifting, restoring influences of Messiah's Kingdom will affect not only Adam and his race, but also the earth itself. Gradually Paradise Lost, as a little garden of Eden, will become Paradise Regained as the world beautiful. Then the wilderness shall blossom as a rose and the solitary place shall be glad.

"Times of Restitution."

At our Lord's First Advent the "acceptable time" began—the time when God, having accepted the sacrifice of Christ Jesus, became willing through Him to accept the sacrifices of all who desire to become His disciples—to take up their cross and follow Him through evil report and good report even unto death. The entire Gospel Age anticipates Israel's Day of Atonement, and the sacrifices of our Lord and the Church, His Body, are the "better sacrifices," foreshadowed by the bullock and the goat offered typically by the Jews. This is the acceptable year of the Lord which Jesus declared (Isaiah lxi, 2; Luke iv, 19). God's faithful people of this acceptable day are glad to be invited to "present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God" (Romans xii, 1). In the end of this acceptable day will come the end of all opportunity to thus sacrifice the human nature and become joint-heirs with Christ and partakers of the heavenly nature.

Then will be introduced a new period styled, in the Scriptures, "Times (or years) of Restitution." The acceptable day for the Church's sacrifice has lasted for nearly nineteen centuries. And we know how long the "Times of Restitution" will last—nearly a thousand years. St. Peter tells us just when these "Restitution Times" will begin. They did not begin in his day. They have not begun yet. They will begin as a result of the Second Advent of Jesus, the Messiah, and the establishment of His Kingdom and righteousness. "Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord and He shall send Jesus Christ, as before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must retain until the Times of Restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. For Moses verily said unto the fathers, A Prophet like unto me (of whom I am but a type or figure) shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren. Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall speak unto you. And it shall come to pass that the soul that will not obey that Prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people" (Acts iii, 19-23)—in the Second Day.

This great Prophet has been in process of raising up for now nearly nineteen centuries. And when the last member of His Body shall have passed beyond the veil, He will stand forth in the glories of His Kingdom to rule, judge, instruct, restore and bless—all the families of the earth with opportunity for restoration to all that was lost in Eden and redeemed at Calvary. These "Restitution Times" are beautifully referred to in a poem known to many of our readers, written by one who was particularly identified with the Christian Standard office brethren:—

A thousand years, earth's coming glory; 'Tis the final day so long foretold; 'Tis the bright morn of Zion's glory Prophets foresaw in times of old.

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