

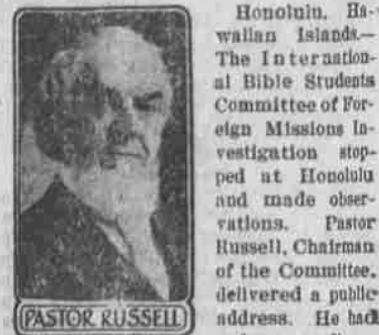
Pastor Russell's Sermon

GOD'S PROMISE TO BE FULFILLED

His Kingdom on Earth Shall Be Established.

BUT NOT BY HUMAN POWER.

Pastor Russell Says Mankind Erred in Its Early Interpretation of the Divine Plan of Salvation—The Present Age Not the Lord's Time For the Redemption of the World—It is the Period in Which the Few Shall Be Selected to Receive the Blessing of the Messiah.



PASTOR RUSSELL

Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands.—The International Bible Students Committee of Foreign Missions investigation stopped at Honolulu and made observations. Pastor Russell, Chairman of the Committee, delivered a public address. He had a large audience and attentive hearing. His text was from Isaiah lvi. 8, respecting the birth of a nation in a day. He said:—

In my childhood days every penny I could save was devoted to Foreign Missions. The Hawaiian Islands and the Fiji Islands were prominent before the Christian world as missionary fields. I remember well that the establishment of a civilized government in these islands was hailed as the fulfillment of the text I have chosen—"a nation born in a day." The thought then was that thus speedily the world would be converted and the glorious promises of the Hebrew prophets fulfilled. How earnestly we labored and prayed, "Thy Kingdom come," thinking all the while that we were bringing the Kingdom of God to earth and fulfilling the Lord's Prayer!

Alas! we are having a rude awakening from such dreams. We are finding that if the Kingdom of God must be established by human power it will never be established. We are finding that the world's population is doubling every century. If we double our missionary enterprises every century we would only be keeping pace with the natural increase of the human family. Statistics show us that there are twelve hundred millions of heathen today and that a century ago there were only half as many. Alas! those missionary hopes of ours have gone glimmering.

But the awakening has done us good; it has taught us to think a little. We are now sensibly inquiring, Suppose we should convert all the heathen and make the whole world a Christendom of the same sort that we have in Europe and America! What then? Would God's will be done on earth as it is done in heaven—perfectly? Could we thus hope to bring in the glorious conditions prophesied, in which not only the knowledge of God would fill the whole earth, but additionally every knee should bow and every tongue confess in such a manner as to be to the glory of God? We see that such hopes would be worse than foolish; they would be ludicrous. Thus our awakening has done us good, and sent us again to God's Book to see wherein we erred in our expectations.

What Say the Scriptures? The disillusion respecting great works of our own humbled us before God and made us realize our dependence upon Him for the fulfillment of the glorious prophecies. We have read our Bibles afresh. We have taken from our minds the spectacles of our forefathers with the color and gloss which they handed down to us. We are now reading God's Book in its own light, allowing God to be His own Interpreter, and Himself to make it plain. And what do we find? Ah! wonder of wonders! We find the Divine Plan wider and deeper and higher than we had ever dreamed.

We find that the present Age, from Calvary and Pentecost to the second coming of Jesus, is not God's time for dealing with the world, opening their blind eyes, untopping their deaf ears and making every knee to bow and every tongue to confess. It is merely His time for the gathering out from every nation, people, kindred and tongue a "little flock" of such as have the hearing ear and the appreciative heart, to become the Bride of Christ and His joint-heirs in His glorious Kingdom, the establishment of which will mean the blessing of all the families of the earth, as was promised to Father Abraham.

Well may we reason that if our God waited for four thousand years before He sent His Son to redeem the world, and has since waited two thousand more for the selecting of the bride of Christ. He must intend that the great Kingdom of His Son, the Messianic reign of a thousand years, is to do a great work for mankind in general. Such broad foundations, such deep laid plans and arrangements foreshadow a grand and glorious outcome. Evidently God's Word shall be fulfilled, which He spoke, saying, "My Word that goeth forth out of My mouth shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it."

The message went forth in a primary sense in Eden, when God declared that eventually "the Seed of the woman

should bruise the serpent's head"—should crush evil. His Word went forth still more distinctly to Father Abraham, assuring him that he would have two seeds, two posterities, one "as the stars of heaven" and the other "as the sands of the seashore." The Church, with Christ her Head, constitutes this heavenly, starry Seed of Abraham, as with the Apostle (Galatians III, 16, 29); and with the completion of the Church will come the secondary blessing—the development of the seed of Abraham as the seed of the seashore for multitude, every knee bowing and every tongue confessing to the glory of God.

But this secondary seed of Abraham, the earthly seed, is to receive its blessing from the Heavenly Seed, hence everything waits now until the Church shall have been completed—and the "very elect" shall have been gathered "from the four winds of heaven"—until all the followers of Jesus shall have been changed, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," as participants in the First Resurrection.

Then, oh, glorious Day! the Sun of Righteousness will shine forth—Christ and His faithful Bride—to chase away the darkness, ignorance and superstition from the world and to fully enlighten mankind of every nation, people, kindred and tongue. In that glorious work of enlightenment the natural seed of Abraham will have a blessed share, and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets shall be "Princes in all the earth" (Psalm xlv, 16, perfect men, representatives of the glorious Messiah and His Bride in the earth, administrators of the Law, which will go forth from the glorious Christ, invisible to men.

Ah! that will be Earth's Jubilee! As in olden time, in the Jubilee year, the Israelites returned to their own possessions, to their own homesteads, so in the Antitype, only the latter will be still more grand: The human family will come back into possession of its own—that which was lost by sin and its penalty, that which was recovered by Jesus, that which will be restored by resurrection power during the Messianic reign.

The Nation Born in a Day. But what about our text? Did we misinterpret the Divine statement when we applied it to the acceptance by a people of civilization? Ah! yes; we made a very foolish mistake; the wish was father to the thought. Our misconceptions blinded us to the proper interpretation of that Scripture. What then does it mean? How should our text be applied? Ah, beloved, that Nation to be born in a day is the Church, the Holy Nation, of which St. Peter spoke, "Ye are a Royal Priesthood, a peculiar people, a Holy Nation." (I Peter II, 9.) The beginning of this Holy Nation began at Pentecost, and has continued down through the succeeding eighteen centuries and more. The birth will be the resurrection.

All who now receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit are reckoned as members of this Holy Nation, but their membership in it is dependent upon their faithfulness; as we read, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne." The present life is to every one of these royal priests, or priestly kings, as we may choose to express it, a period of probation. Will we or will we not "make our calling and election sure"? Not at the beginning nor at the time of our consecration is the matter decided, but after we "have fought the good fight and finished the course" and won the crown, by obedience even unto death.

For nearly nineteen centuries these royal priests have been testifying for the Lord, each in his turn. For all the faithful there is a crown of righteousness laid up; as St. Paul said, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day"—early in that day of Messiah, in the resurrection morning. All these have a part in the First Resurrection, and will be members of that Holy Nation, that royal priesthood; as we read, "Blessed and holy are all they that have part in the Chief Resurrection; on such the Second Death hath no power; but they shall be kings and priests unto God and unto Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

Thus will that Holy Nation which God has been gathering and electing during the nineteen centuries, out of all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues, from Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, be born in a day—come forth perfect and complete, the Holy Nation of Divine promise which, as God's spiritual Empire, is to take over the control of the world for a thousand years and rule it in righteousness, to free all from the power of Satan, sin, and death, and to lift up again as many as are willing to the image and likeness of God, and to destroy all who love unrighteousness and work iniquity.

This is the Kingdom of Messiah, whose dominion is to be established on the earth, and for which Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." It will require the entire work of a thousand years to fully accomplish all of this glorious prophecy, but we have the Divine assurance that by that time God's will will be perfectly done on this earth as it is now done in heaven itself.

Paradise of the Pacific. I can now well understand why your beautiful island has been described as the Paradise of the Pacific. Not only your wonderful climate and everything which co-operates with it to bring about this Paradise likeness, I say to myself, How gracious is our God! Not only has He provided a heavenly Para-

dise for the Church, that they should be sharers with their Lord on the spirit plane, partakers of the divine nature, "far above angels, principalities and powers," but now gracious has God also been in His provision for the world at large—His promise of an earthly Paradise for such of humanity as, when brought to a knowledge of Himself and His requirements, shall gladly, heartily accept the same!

How wonderful is the Wisdom and Power of God by which He can make use of even the reign of sin and death to teach great lessons both to angels and men respecting the exceeding sinfulness of sin! And how merciful and gracious is the arrangement He has made that when this reign of sin and death shall have accomplished His intended purposes, He will bring it to an end. Those twin monarchs which have ruled the world for six thousand years—Sin and Death—shall be vanquished, and ultimately every member of Adam's race shall be delivered from their power. For the willing and obedient, the earthly Paradise, human perfection, the image of God in the flesh, is to be the reward—an earthly reward; and for the rebellious, the Second Death, from which there will be no redemption, no recovery, and in which, thank God! there will be no suffering, for they shall perish like the brute beasts, as St. Peter declares.—II Peter II, 12.

Restitution Will Bring Real Paradise. Much as your island may resemble the Garden of Eden, it is not Paradise, and cannot be Paradise so long as you have sin and sorrow, pain and death amongst you. One of the first objects that greeted my sight as I landed was your cemetery, and I said, Oh! yes, death is here, and everywhere—God's curse, declaring that no imperfect being may live. Well, I thank God for that, too. Centuries of life with imperfection would doubtless be too much for us to enjoy. Far better is it as Divine Wisdom has arranged it—a birth, a struggle for existence, a battle with self and sin, the world, the flesh and the Devil, and then a falling asleep in death, until the morning of the resurrection. There will be no consciousness of even a moment's intervening until the glorious day shall have dawned, and the new order of things shall have been introduced and established; and then the sleepers will come forth to see a brighter side than any that they have previously experienced or ever heard of.

The Kingdom of God's dear Son and His elect Bride will be in power and nothing shall hurt or destroy in all His holy Kingdom. The blessing of the Lord shall be upon man, and His earthly dominion. Restitution influences will be at work for the bringing of everything to perfection—especially for the bringing of man up, up, up, out of sin, weakness, degradation and death to the full glory of perfection of mind and body and vitality—the image and likeness of God, as at first, before sin entered.

Rich and Poor and Socialism. You still have your rich and poor; there still is caste amongst the children of the one parent; but when the uplifting influences of Messiah's reign shall have done their work, these things will all be in the past. "He that sitteth upon the Throne shall say, 'Behold, I make all things new!'" In that glorious time there will not be rich and poor, there will be socialism in the proper sense, as the Scriptures clearly point out; they say, "Every man shall sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree; and none shall make them afraid." And again, "They shall not build another inhabit, they shall not plant another and eat the fruit thereof." There will be no tenantry, no landlordism then.

Do not understand me to be inciting dissatisfaction with the present conditions, in many respects what we have today is the very best possible thing under present conditions—man's fallen nature and selfish temperament taken into consideration. The counsel of God's Word is that all who trust in Him are to wait for Him to bring in the better conditions. Some very well intentioned people are making a sad mistake; just as this morning is about to dawn—about to bring in the great blessings of restitution, socialism, etc., they blindly look in another direction and declare that unless they bring socialism to pass it will never come. We grant, indeed, that it would be foolish to expect that the rich would bring about the wonderful changes which the Bible foretells—it would be contrary to human nature to so expect. But we do say that those who think of bringing about socialism by human wisdom and human strength are deficient in wisdom. They do not see that what they propose is absolutely impossible—their eyes are hidden.

The Bible alone shows us what will be the outcome of the present unrest and selfishness and dissatisfaction. The Bible tells that what will start socialism will eventually develop into anarchy. The Bible shows that those who think they can bring in the Messianic blessings by carnal weapons are deluding themselves—they will instead bring upon themselves, as well as upon the rich, the great and awful trouble which the Scriptures foretell as being now imminent—"a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation" (Daniel xii, 1). Our Lord Jesus quoted this passage and added to it the words, "No, nor ever shall be." (Matthew xiii, 21.) Thank God that this one, great, awful conflict, in which every man's hand shall be against his neighbor and against his brother, will be the last. It will be so awful as to make the entire world sick of strife or selfishness, of sin. Thus it will act as a great plowshare in the hearts of mankind in general, to break the hard-hearted and to turn all hearts in expectation to the Lord and His glorious Kingdom.

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