

# Pastor Russell's Sermon

## THE JAPANESE COMPLIMENTED

Pastor Russell Praises Their Kind Demeanor.

## DEPLORES LACK OF FAITH.

Noted Preacher Discourses on the Importance of the Will and Its Proper Direction—New Year the Time to Choose a Right Line of Service—Faith in God of All Grace Necessary to Strength of Character and a Permanent Civilization.



Tokio, Japan, Dec. 31st.—The Foreign Missions Investigation Committee is here and are accorded every courtesy and every facility. Pastor Russell, Chairman of the Committee, delivered two addresses to day. He had one of our finest Auditoriums, the Y. M. C. A., and a large attendance. In his audience of English residents were many Japanese. Very earnest attention was given him. We report one of his addresses from the text, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua xxiv. 15). He said:—

I am deeply impressed with the great progress which your nation has made, which is manifest on every hand. But alas! I fear that here, as in civilized lands, some of the progress is injurious. The Japanese and every other people need a faith ballast. It is necessary to strength of character and a permanent civilization. Without it, in a little while the whole world will be swept into anarchy. Indeed I foresee that a awful condition approaching rapidly in Europe, in America and here in Japan.

### Laments the Lack of Faith Ballast.

The basis of anarchy is a lack of faith ballast; and alas! our wonderful schools, with their fine equipments, are the real cause of the condition which is approaching. In Europe and America this inability is glossed over with the name of Higher Criticism, but here I see that you more candidly label it Agnosticism and Atheism. It appalled me to find that the progress of your scholars from Shintotau, Confucianism and Buddhism has not been toward Christianity, but toward total unbelief. I have been handed a report from three of your schools which has made me heart sick. Out of a total of 400 Students 4 professed Christianity, 17 the religion of your fathers, 90 declared themselves Atheists, 282 registered as Agnostics and 46 were so he willed as to be non-committal.

Alas, my friends, even your proverbial politeness, gentleness, kindness of character and willingness to die for your Emperor cannot exist long under the influence of such a lack of faith ballast. And what your scholars of today believe will surely reflect in your masses shortly. And I am bound in candor to admit that a very similar condition of things prevails throughout Europe and America. The outlook is ominous indeed.

Whatever we may be, the closing of one year and the opening of another furnishes a favorable opportunity for retrospection as well as for good resolutions. I trust that my audience agrees with me in this. The greatest power in the universe is the power of the will, and we are all learning how important a matter it is that our own wills and the wills of our fellow-creatures be rightly directed. It is in line with this thought that the Wise man declared that "greater is a man that ruleth his own spirit than he who conquers a city," and, "As a man willeth in his heart, so is he." (Proverbs xvi. 32; xxiii. 7.)

### War and Rapine Not Noble Objects.

Of old Alexander the Great willed to be the conqueror of the world, and at a cost of wealth and streams of blood he accomplished wonders. We are gradually learning, however, that war and rapine are not sufficiently noble objects for the human ambition and will. Instead, the bright minds of the world are turning toward the conquering of the earth. Highways are cast up, rails are laid, trains are run, mountains are pierced, rivers are spanned with bridges, and the human will is using steam and electrical power in every direction in a marvelous manner. I am not emphasizing these well known facts so common to our observation, but calling attention to the will behind all these results, without which they would not be attained.

And what is thus noted in the achievements of the world reminds us that we each and all have wills, which should be rightly directed and forcefully exercised in all of our personal affairs, our lives, our ambitions, our family and social attainments. A will-less man is a good-for-naught. How important, then, it is that all of our wills should be wisely, rightly directed, that our lives may be made as successful and useful as possible, for the glory of our Creator and for the welfare of our fellows, as well as for our own sakes. I suggest to you, therefore, in harmony with our text, that we "choose this day" our course for the coming year, yea, for life, and, adding that we have chosen wisely,

that we bend every energy to the out-working of that resolution or will.

### Japan a Flowery Kingdom.

This choice does not necessarily mean that all must turn right about face and go in the opposite direction to that in which we have been going. I am not a believer in the theory of man's total depravity. Wherever I travel I perceive marks of sin, depravity, human imperfection, weakness, but I also perceive evidences of good intentions, good endeavors, noble resolves.

Is it not because sin at the present time is profitable, advantageous, pleasurable, or seems to be one or all of these, that it is sought after, desired and given so large a control in human affairs? Is not this true because we are now under the domination of the Prince of darkness, the Prince of this world, whom the Scriptures declare shall be found for a thousand years and deceive the nations no more, by putting light for darkness?

When the deception shall pass away and mankind shall see clearly the joys and rewards of righteousness, will they not prefer them? And if in that glorious Epoch right doing brings blessing and pleasure, and wrong doing brings all the disadvantages and stripes, may we not expect that the majority of humanity will seek righteousness, seek harmony with God, and thus seek the joys and blessings of Divine favor and everlasting life?

My brief stay in Japan has given me a keen appreciation of what the Japanese have already attained as a people—entirely aside from Christianity. I perceive many things in Japan, closely connected with your religious customs, which put to the blush certain conditions prevalent in Europe and America, where Christianity has been dominant for centuries. We are to acknowledge the good wherever we see it, and so now I freely acknowledge that I perceive amongst your people an esthetic taste, a gentleness of demeanor and a loyalty of heart which I fully appreciate, even though these qualities came to the Japanese, not through Christianity, but through Shintotau and Buddhism. Indeed, I must apologize for much of the rudeness and crudeness of the so-called Christian nations, of which you have heard through your learned men and of which you know something through contact with the soldiers and sailors of these lands who come to your ports.

I would have you understand that the teachings of Christianity cover every form of courtesy, gentleness, brotherly kindness and hospitality. The very keynote of Christ's instruction to His followers is love, out of a pure heart—and that each should do unto his neighbor as he would that his neighbor should do to him. The fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit of Christ are prominently set forth in the Bible—meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, faith, hope, joy, love.

You should know, moreover, that, while these qualities are very generally ignored amongst the representatives of Christendom, there are, nevertheless, faithful disciples of Jesus who study daily to put into practice all these qualities marked by Divine approval. The difference seems to be that these esthetic qualities or graces in your land have become a national trait with the Japanese, while in Christendom, so-called, they are practiced only by a proportionately small number, the remainder rather boasting of and cultivating qualities the reverse of these, as more helpful in the battle for life and for money which is manifest everywhere among them.

### Disagrees With Missionaries.

I find myself unable to agree with the teachings of the missionaries which have reached you, however honest some of them may have been. Knowing that an essential feature of Shintotau is reverence for deceased ancestors, many missionaries, I fear, have done violence to your tenderest feelings and most deeply seated convictions when they told you that your ancestors, instead of being objects of worship, are damned of God and have begun their experiences of a torture which will last to all eternity, because they did not know and therefore did not accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Savior, and did not become His followers.

I will not discuss the sincerity of these brethren in thus doing violence to your most sacred and tender sentiments; I will merely say that to my understanding they have misinterpreted our great Creator's Plan and the explanation thereof furnished us in our sacred Scriptures. Instead, I give you the Bible Message, that your forefathers, whom you so deeply venerated, are, according to the Bible, asleep in death, sweetly resting from all labor, strife, vexation and turmoil, awaiting the morning light of a new Epoch.

That glorious period, when they will be awakened and come forth under more favorable conditions than the present, under a reign of righteousness, and to a clear knowledge of the Truth, is to be inaugurated by the coming of Christ, the world's Messiah. He comes to establish His Kingdom and to overthrow the Prince of darkness. He comes to break the shackles of ignorance and sin, sickness and death, and to set mankind free from these. His Kingdom will set up the glorious standard of righteousness and truth and render every assistance possible for humanity to come into harmony with the Divine will.

In that glorious Day, which I believe is very near at hand, everything that you and your ancestors have learned in harmony with meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love, will be that much of an assistance in your uplift toward the full perfection of the Divine requirement of character. And, similarly, be it noted, those who have failed to cultivate these heart and character qual-

ties, whether they were Japanese or nominal Christians, will have that much wherewith to be ashamed, and to overcome and rectify.

### Does Not Wish to Be Misunderstood.

Do not misunderstand me. I am not ignoring the fundamental Christian doctrine that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and rose again for our justification." I am affirming that doctrine and carrying it to its legitimate conclusion. The Bible, the inspired Authority of Christendom, clearly teaches that the sacrificial death of Jesus, the Just for the unjust, was not for a mere handful, but for the entire race. That sacrificial death took place more than four thousand years after Adam's sin, but it is to be made efficacious for Adam and all of his race—not merely for those who have heard the Message of Divine grace, nor merely for those who have lived since the sacrifice took place, but, as the Bible declares, "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." (Hebrews ii. 9.)

Another Scripture distinctly shows that the Divine favor and blessing resulting from Jesus' death is not only to be a benefit to the Church, to those who now believe and walk in the footsteps of the Redeemer, but will ultimately benefit all the remainder of mankind. Thus we read, "He is a propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins (the Church's sins), and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) All mankind, therefore, must ultimately receive a benefit, a blessing, as a result of Jesus' death, and this will include your ancestors. This is the method God has adopted for the fulfillment of His glorious promises of thirty-five hundred years ago to Abraham—to which promise our Creator gave His oath, that we might have strong consolation and faith in its fulfillment. The promise is that "All the families of the earth shall be blessed," and, additionally, that the blessing shall come to them through Abraham's Seed.

### Christendom's Great Mistake.

The great mistake made by Christendom has been in overlooking the fact that God's great work thus far has been only the finding of the promised Seed of Abraham, through whom the blessing will reach all peoples. Primarily, this gracious offer was made to Abraham's natural posterity, the nation of Israel, if they could keep perfectly the terms of their Law Covenant. But they were unable so to do because, like the remainder of the race, they were fallen, imperfect. Then it was that God revealed to them that He would send them a Savior, who would deliver them from their own weakness and use them in carrying the blessing and favor to the whole world.

In due time God sent His Son, Jesus, to be the Redeemer. Jesus led the glory which He had with the Father and humbled Himself to human nature, yea, even to death, the ignominious death of the cross. Thus doing He provided the ransom-price for the sins of the whole world, for the penalty upon the race was a death sentence. Thus the death of a Just One for the unjust is sufficient to constitute a satisfaction of the Divine Law, the redemption of the race from its death sentence. Thus was secured to all an opportunity for resurrection. "As by a man came death by a Man also comes the resurrection of the dead; for as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive, every man in his own order"—not all at once.—1 Corinthians xv. 21, 23.

Jesus, the Redeemer, having finished His sacrifice, was returned to heavenly glory at the right hand of Divine Majesty, far superior to angels, etc. He now is ready for His great work. Why the delay, do you ask? The Scriptures very clearly inform us that a special, saintly class, to be gathered out of all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues, is to be associated with the Redeemer in His great work of blessing the world. It is for this fore-ordained company to be called, chosen and found faithful that the Messianic Kingdom delays. It is my opinion that the delay is nearly over—that very soon the last member of the glorious company will have passed beyond the veil, and that then, forthwith, the sufferings of The Christ, Head and Body, being ended, Messiah's glorious Kingdom will begin.

### What Israel Did Not Obtain.

St. Paul points us to the fact that the Jewish Age, up to the time of Jesus, accomplished a great moral uplift in that nation, but that the nation as a whole was not saintly and hence, as a whole, could not be the Redeemer's associates in His Messianic Kingdom. When Messiah came to His own and they received Him not, but crucified Him, they as a nation were rejected from Divine favor for a time. But some of them were Israelites indeed—some of them received Jesus, became His disciples, and were accepted of God by the begetting of the Holy Spirit, at and after Pentecost, to be members of the House of Sons—members of spiritual Israel.

Since then Divine Providence has been selecting the saintly ones from every nation under heaven, to complete this spiritual Israel. Thus St. Paul declares again, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the promise"—the promise that all the families of the earth shall be blessed through this Seed—Galatians iii. 14, 29.

So today, on the threshold of the New Year, I urge upon you a recognition of the power of the will, and the importance of its proper exercise in choosing the best things—the things represented in Christ and His glorious Gospel of the love of God. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve"—God or Mammon.

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