

Pastor Russell's Sermon

CONSANGUINITY OF HUMANITY

Bible and Science in Accord on This Point.

ALL NATIONS OF ONE BLOOD.

Pastor Russell Shows the Futility of Trying to Prove a Human Evolution in Conflict With the Declaration of Scripture—God Created Man in His Own Image and the Present Diversities of Degradation Are All Results of Adam's Fall From Divine Favor.



PASTOR RUSSELL

London, March 17.—London Tabernacle was crowded today to greet Pastor Russell. He occupied the pulpit and behind him on the rostrum were the six other members of the Foreign Missions Investigation Committee, viz., Gen. W. P. Hall, United States Army; Prof. F. H. Robison, Dr. L. W. Jones, Mr. J. T. D. Pyles, Mr. E. W. V. Kuehn and Mr. R. B. Maxwell, all of the United States.

Pastor Russell opened his address by remarking that although the International Bible Students Association, which appointed the Committee of which he was Chairman, held a British Charter and might be supposed by some to make a full or partial report in London of its findings, he regretted that they would be disappointed. The Committee felt that it should make but one report, and advice received indicated that considerable preparation had been made for the Committee's reception in New York City on Sunday, March 31.

However, said Pastor Russell, things are marvelous today, and with the wonderful facilities for communication, Britishers, as well as the people of the United States and Canada, will receive the report at practically the same time—through hundreds of their prominent newspapers.

Very Significant Text.
His text was this: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell upon the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitations, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him." (Acts xvii, 26, 27.) He said:—

Our text is taken from Saint Paul's address to the Athenians, whom he found so religiously inclined that they had erected an idol to every known deity, and then one prominently "to the unknown God." The words of my text have been repeatedly borne in upon my mind in my sojournings of the past four months. I marveled as I perceived the thoroughness of the division of the human family as a result of the confusion of human language. Time and again the Apostle's statement that God had "determined the bounds of their habitations" impressed me.

Our text explains the matter; it was of God; and we will doubtless yet see more particularly than now how it worked some good for all—staying the downward tendency of sin.

Of One Blood All Nations.
My wider contact with humanity impresses the Apostle's declaration that our various nationalities are all of one blood—or are of one original parentage. And in this scientist, usually wholly out of accord with the Bible, agrees. They do not claim that our race evolved from many monkeys, but merely from one pair. It seems strange indeed to me that some of these learned gentlemen so persistently bend their efforts to antagonize the Bible—endeavoring to prove a human evolution in conflict with the Bible declaration that God created man in His own image—likeness—and that the present diversities of degradation are all results of Adam's fall from Divine favor, through disobedience, under the sentence of death.

Even if some divisions of our race do bear a stronger resemblance than others to the ape, this is surely not scientific proof that they evolved from the ape. Just as reasonably might we argue the reverse, that they are a more degraded section of humanity. But we do not so rate it. On the contrary, the most savage peoples seem to have a mental organism capable of quite a considerable development under favorable conditions, even of a few years.

Indeed, when we consider the inferior station of women in all the heathen nations, and the blankness of the mother's mind and her dejection and hopelessness and the tendency of these to mark her offspring, we do not wonder at the sad faces of many of heathen lands, both male and female. Indeed, on the contrary, we are astonished as we compare some of the lowest types of Christendom with some of the degraded types of heathendom—surprised that the difference is not greater. The explanation for it all is that we have not had the true type of Christianity. Our Christianity has been so mixed with superstition and so impregnated with error that Church-ianity, taken as a whole, in the four hundred millions of Christendom, is a hybrid thing—a slander upon the name Christian and upon the teachings of Christ.

And, by the way, I remind you of

Saint Paul's explanation of the degradation of the heathen, as set forth in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. He tells us most distinctly, as the Old Testament does, that man originally knew His Creator and was in fellowship with Him, but that he gradually slipped away from this into greater and greater depths of degradation, mental, moral and physical. Let us read Saint Paul's words: "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. [Contrary to Divine instructions, they imagined that the recognition of God in all these various creatures would increase their reverence and make them better and more thoughtful of the lower creatures. But herein they were foolish.] Wherefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not proper."—Rom. 1, 21-25.

"Feel After God and Find Him."
But the feature of our text which most particularly impresses me is Saint Paul's declaration that God determined and appointed in advance the times of these nations—when they should be brought in contact with the light of Divine Truth, to the intent that the reverential quality, inherent in the race, might exercise itself and feel after the true God and happily find Him.

We see that in Divine providence the torch of the Gospel, first lighted in Palestine, spread westward and northward, through Europe, and still westward to America. It, indeed, has been the torch of civilization. No other power in the world possesses the dynamic force of the Gospel Message. In proportion as it is received in its purity it breaks the fetters of ignorance and superstition. It sets men free. It declares, as does our text, the oneness of the human family—that the entire human family are by nature brothers. It tells that God is no respecter of persons and that the same laws of right and wrong apply to kings and princes, bishops and clergy, that apply to the humblest members of the race, and that all must give an account to the great Creator sooner or later.

This feature of the Gospel Message has been the igniting spark for all our civilization. But, alas! the combination of this civilization with the innate selfishness of the unregenerate produces a human type which is dangerous, because of its higher intelligence and unrestrained sweep of ambition and imagination combined with a fallen nature, born in sin and shapen in iniquity and continually tending toward selfishness. In other words, a man wholly ruled by selfishness is dangerous to his fellows in proportion to his education and enlightenment. He knows, better than his heathen neighbor, how to take advantage of the circumstances and conditions of life, for he is lifted mentally to a higher plane.

Conditions Now Changing.
Saint Paul in our text declares that God has predetermined "times" associated with His dealings with the nations and in bringing to them the Gospel. We have already considered the Divine order and time in association with the call of the "elect" Church—a "little flock"—called out of every nation, people, kindred and tongue, to be the Redeemer's associates in the Messianic Kingdom which is to bless Israel and all the nations. We believe that this election of the Church class is about complete and that soon thereafter God's Kingdom, the reign of righteousness, the world's Judgment Day, will begin.

It should not surprise us, therefore, to find great changes imminent amongst the peoples of the whole world. The bounds of human habitations and the barriers of language are rapidly yielding because of the other times of Divine appointment which have been reached, viz., the period mentioned in Daniel's prophecy as "the Time of the End." (Daniel xii, 1.) And here we must remind you afresh that the Time of the End does not mean the end of time. It merely signifies the time for the ending of the present order of things, that a new order of things, the Messianic Kingdom, may be substituted. Twenty-five centuries ago God determined this time and appointed it and gave us four very important proofs by which to identify it. Let us examine these.

(1) The first sign of the Time of the End was to be, "Many shall run to and fro." How wonderfully this prophecy is fulfilled before our eyes today! Its fulfillment has been in progress, especially for fifty years. And it is less than eighty years since the first locomotive was built. The nations, first separated by diverse languages, kept well within the bounds of their habitations for many centuries until now; and now suddenly we have a running to and fro in fulfillment of this prophecy which is amazing. The various nations and languages are being scattered all over the earth.

(2) The next step in the prophecy marking the Time of the End of this Age is, "Knowledge shall be increased." This general increase of education amongst all classes is a logical result of the commingling of humanity and the lessons of comparison and competition being learned. Suddenly, as though in obedience to the Divine command, nation after nation has made schooling free; and not content with this, has made it compulsory; and

this spirit is spreading to Oriental lands. The whole world is waking up! Personal rights and national rights are everywhere being discussed. The schools of India are said to be turning out a million graduates in the English language every year. The Chinese also are introducing English schools. What will be the results? Enlightenment? Yes! Godliness? No! Contentment? No! Dissatisfaction, war, strife, anarchy, are coming to the world by leaps and bounds, as a result of general education, and the breath of Liberty, because not backed by reverence for God and a knowledge of and submission to His will, Japan, China and India seem merely waiting for a spark to start a conflagration—anarchy.

Destructiveness of Higher Criticism.
And as for Europe and America, the conditions there are the same, for what faith the masses did have in God and in the Bible is being rapidly undermined by the theories of Higher Criticism and Evolution which are advanced from the colleges and seminaries and pulpits, and are invading, not only the public schools, but also the Sunday Schools. Evidently any system of knowledge which denies or opposes God and the Bible is an injurious education—harmful to the last degree. However, by now this God-ignoring education has so fastened itself upon the world as to be impossible to shake it off.

(3) The third item indicative of the Time of the End of this Age is that "The wise shall understand"; not the worldly wise, but those wise toward God. And so we find it today. While the great and the learned and the masses are rapidly drifting into heathenish darkness, away from the Bible, God's saintly few, of every nation and of every denomination, are gradually seeing more and more clearly the teachings of the Scriptures, and ridding themselves more and more of the creeds of men which for centuries have helped to blind and to stumble and to make the Divine character and the Divine Word appear inconsistent and unreasonable, and to separate God's children into six hundred different sects and parties. These creeds are now being seen in their true light by the saints and are being discarded—smashed.

(4) As a result of the fulfillments of Nos. 1 and 2, we see nearing us, portentously, No. 4: "There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." That time of trouble, as already intimated, is now looming up on the horizon of every nation. It comes in the wake of an unsanctified knowledge. It would mean the utter wreck of all of our civilization were it not for the interposition of the Kingdom of God's dear Son, for which we have long waited and prayed, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Our Lord, speaking of this trouble, declared, "Unless those days were shortened there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened"—because of the "elect," and the Kingdom which they will establish, that great "time of trouble" will be cut short—it will not be allowed to work out the terror at first apprehended.

The Hope of the World.
I am returning from heathendom fully convinced that the hope of the world is exactly what God's Word declares, namely, the Messianic Kingdom. Unless that Kingdom comes, and comes soon, the world will be in the most terrible plight it has ever known. But my confidence in the Word of God and in the promise of the Kingdom "under the whole heavens" grows stronger every day. The Bible, once a sealed book, once apparently contradictory, once assumed to be in harmony with the creeds, and their very foundation, I now see to be the most wonderful book in the whole world. It merely needed the light now due to God's people to shine upon its pages, to scatter our night and enable us to truly sing, "Wonderful things in the Bible I see!"

The three wonderful things of the Bible which I would wish to impress upon you at this time are: (1) The Justice of God, in permitting a death penalty to come upon our race as a punishment for sin; (2) The Mercy of God, like the wideness of the sea, which is making provision for Adam and every member of his race to return to Divine favor and everlasting life, if they will—otherwise, to be remanded into Death—"everlasting destruction." (3) If there could be a more wonderful thing than the general provision for humanity, restitution to human perfection and an earthly Eden and all that was lost by Adam and provided for in the redemption at Calvary—that still more wonderful thing is "the exceeding riches of God's grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Ah, what wondrous love God is manifesting toward this specially called class, invited to become the Bride of Christ! Truly, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things God hath in reservation for those who love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

This wonderful provision for the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, is glory, honor, immortality—joint-ship with her Lord in His glorious Station, and association with Him in His glorious work of blessing, first, the nation of Israel, and secondarily, through them, all the nations of the earth, according to the Divine promise. For such a hope, surely, "we may trials well endure!" For such a glory surely we may well, if necessary, "suffer through bloody seas!" For such a crown surely we may well count all earthly advantages and good things, privileges and opportunities and honors, but as loss and dross, "that we may win Christ and be found in Him."

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