

# Pastor Russell's Sermon

## SAVED BY FAITH, NOT BY WORKS

Still We Must Work Out Our Own Salvation.

### PASTOR RUSSELL IN LONDON.

Man kind Will Be Redeemed Through Jesus' Death and by God's Benign Influence and Infinite Mercy Working in Them Through the Inspiring Promises of the Holy Scriptures. With the Bible as a Guide We Cannot Go Wrong in Obeying the Divine Commands.



London, Eng., August 4.—London Tabernacle was crowded both morning and evening to hear Pastor Russell. We report his evening discourse from the text, "Not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. ii, 9, 10)

Ever since Brother Luther's day and his vigorous preaching of justification by faith Christian believers have been more or less perplexed in their endeavors to harmonize the Scriptural declaration respecting faith and works as related to salvation. Pastor Russell believes that in the clearer light God is shedding upon the pathway of His people today through the Bible they are enabled to comprehend with absolute clearness matters once foggy. This, he claimed, does not signify that our forefathers were less loyal to God, nor less logical in the operation of their minds. It does, however, agree with the Scriptural declaration that we are living in the time when the wise of God's people are to understand the Message previously more or less hidden, but now, in due time, to be revealed.—Revelation 1, 7.

The logical thought which appeals most strongly to every mind is that good works must be the basis of Divine favor and not the basis of disfavor. This led up to the child-summary of preaching, namely, "Be good and go to heaven; be bad and go to hell." Our Catholic friends, said the Pastor, carry the matter of good works to such an extent that they claim that some have laid up such surplus of good works and Divine favor therefor that they are able to appropriate some of these to others; hence the claim that they may be appealed to in prayer and may give of their merit to others as a bounty or donation.

The Scriptural proposition is plain: It is that no man is perfect, that all through the fall are impaired in mind and body, so that none can do perfect works. Their very best works would be unacceptable to God—imperfect. Instead of ignoring their imperfections God provided a Redeemer, whose obedience unto death He accepts as a sacrifice for the sins of Adam and his race. Evidently all imperfections of word or act resulting from that disobedience and fall will be completely forgiven. The race will be reconciled to God. Divine blessings will come to humanity and the earth, instead of the curse now resting upon them. The effect will be to give all mankind the fullest opportunity for rising up out of sin and degradation, imperfection, sorrow, death, alienation from God, ignorance, superstition, etc., back to the full perfection that Father Adam possessed at first.

But in order to regain all those blessings lost each member of the race will be required to appreciate the privileges of life eternal and Divine favor and will be obliged also to show his appreciation by striving against sin and co-operating with the Savior in the uplifting arrangements which will prevail for a thousand years, during the Messianic Kingdom.

#### Present Age Salvation by Faith.

It is in the present Age only that salvation is to be by faith and not by works. True, the world in the next Age will not be faithless while making their progress in good works and being judged according to their works. They will be full of faith, but there will be abundant basis for faith. Knowledge will make their pathway clear as day. Demonstration will prove to them such things as God's people in the present time must accept by faith—"For we walk by faith and not by sight."

This Gospel Age, from the time of Jesus' first advent until the second advent, is the Age of Faith in contrast with the unsuccessful Age of Works preceding and the to-be successful Age of works to follow. The Pastor showed that during the Law Age, from Moses to Jesus, the requirement was works: "He that doeth these things shall live by them." (Leviticus xviii, 5; Romans x, 5.) Israel's failure was because of inability to do things perfectly—the things contained in the Law given to them at Mt. Sinai.

The New Law Covenant, which will be inaugurated by Messiah's Kingdom, will be on exactly the same lines as the old one, namely, works: "He that doeth these things shall live by them." The difference will be that Christ Himself will be the Mediator of the New Law Covenant, both able and willing

to render all necessary assistance to all who will come back into harmony with the Father by Him. On the other hand, Moses, the mediator of the old Law Covenant, while ever willing to help his people, was not able to do so, because his mediation was based upon only typical sacrifices of bulls and goats and not upon the real sacrifice of Christ, which alone is able to make full satisfaction for sin.

"We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight." The Apostle was here discussing the terms and conditions by which God is willing to accept the Church class of this Gospel Age. These, in the Scriptures, are called the Elect or select ones of the race. God is calling and drawing these out of the world for a special purpose and under special conditions, one of which is that only such as have great faith can belong to the select class.

There are some so born, under the fallen conditions, that they have great difficulty in experiencing faith, even a little, and only after a thorough training could they exercise great faith, by experiencing that transformation of the mind of which St. Paul tells us. (Romans xii, 2.) These are not to be blamed for having been born under less favorable conditions than some others. And so God has made provision for all such to come to a knowledge of the Truth and not merely to a faith in it, that they may be saved.

There are others more favorably born, so far as their mental make-up is concerned, who have been unfavorably born as respects environment and place. Born in heathen lands, where they heard nothing of the Message of God's grace, or where they heard it under such unfavorable circumstances that they could not appreciate it, these must indeed lose the special favors of this Age, which go only to those who do exercise faith; but they are not forgotten nor left out of the Divine Plan, but will share in the general blessings coming to the world through the Redeemer's Kingdom.

#### "Work Out Your Salvation."

The favored class who bear the Message of Divine favor, speaking peace through the sacrifice of Christ, assuring them of the Heavenly Father's willingness to forgive their sins and receive them as members of the Body of Christ, are obliged to receive this Message by faith. What is there to prove that Jesus died and rose again? This must be received by faith. What is there to prove that the sacrifice which Jesus made met with Divine approval and that as a consequence all that come unto the Father through Him as their Advocate will be accepted? There is no proof except to the eye of faith and ear of faith. To the natural man these things are imagination, and those who fully and completely trust in them are accused of being rather weak minded.

This step of consecration through the merit of Jesus brings them into such relationship with the Heavenly Father that He is willing to accept them and give them the Holy Spirit of adoption into His Family. Up to this point they have done nothing—merely believed—merely accepted God's gifts, favors, invitation, etc. Here our text applies, "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Every Christian takes these same steps of faith and consecration, or he is not a Christian. There are no other steps to take. True, indeed, as we approached God we thought to put away some of the filth of the flesh; but such endeavor to wash and free ourselves from sin cannot be counted good works. A good work is one that is done for God or for others. Merely seeking to cleanse our thoughts and words and deeds is not good works in the Scriptural sense—but, anyway, none has ever been able to purge himself, to wash himself, to cleanse himself. Our own righteousness is as filthy rags, in which God could not receive us. We can come to Him only under the robe of Christ's righteousness, and it is given only as a reward of faith and a consecration of the heart.

But while there are no works up to that point, after that point there will be works, else we will never come off conquerors, nor ever gain the great prize which Jesus likens to a "pearl of great price." We can do no works to justify ourselves, but, after being justified by faith, we are permitted to do works. Yea, we are required to work out our own salvation. Note the difference, however. It is the old creature, the sinner, that was justified. When God accepted him a living sacrifice through faith in Jesus he was begotten to a new nature and became a New Creature in Christ Jesus—a spirit being, though without a spirit body.

This New Creature not only maintains the faith which brought it into existence, but in it the faith must work. It must grow by exercise—"grow in grace, knowledge and love," grow in all the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. Under a figure of begetting and birth the Apostle represents the New Creature as a foetus developing and getting ready for its birth—resurrection. Again, this New Creature is referred to by the Apostle sometimes as a babe, saying, "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." The milk of the Word represents the simplest truths, the simplest elements of Divine instruction, the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

Gradually we grow in grace and become strong in the Lord and able to assimilate the stronger food—able to appreciate the deeper truths. As a child requires the exercise of every muscle in order to become the youth, and as the youth needs exercise in order to become fully developed, so it is with the New Creature. He must have works in order to his development. He must work out his good

things which he takes in as milk and strong meat. They must be worked out in his own mind, in his conduct toward others, in his ministry of spiritual truths to his family, to the Church and before the world.

#### "We Are God's Workmanship."

As we look into the starry sky and learn that it contains approximately a thousand millions of worlds, and perhaps many times that number, we are amazed at God's workmanship. But still more wonderful is the angelic creation with its various orders. Then coming down to earthly life as we know it, we see an infinite variety of sentient creatures. The grandest of all is man, even in his fallen condition. And we are amazed also at the endless variety displayed in other earthly creations—fruits, flowers, etc. We say to ourselves, How great is our Creator, that from His storehouse of Wisdom and of Power all this infinite variety should come!

But it is when we learn of God's work in the Church as a New Creation that we are more than ever amazed. Divine grace, laying hold upon willing hearts of fallen men, first justifies them through the merit of Christ, and not by works, and then begins to work in them for their own development as a New Creation. We might well ask, What are the agencies, what are the tools, by which Divine grace operates in this New Creation? The answer of the Bible makes the matter all the more wonderful, for it reveals to us that God works in us merely by His promises and through our own minds and our own wills. Thus St. Peter declares, God hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become "partakers of the divine nature."—II Peter 1, 4.

#### Christ Has Pre-eminence.

This New Creation had its start in our Redeemer. He who was "the beginning of the creation of God," in harmony with the Divine Plan, humbled Himself, laid aside His heavenly glory and was made flesh—became the Man Christ Jesus, that He, by the grace of God, might redeem the world. It was in conjunction with this redemptive work, when He fully submitted Himself in baptism at Jordan to do the Father's will, that the Father began to work in Him as a New Creature.

When Jesus gave Himself sacrificially, when His sacrifice was accepted of the Father, then to Him came the begetting of the Holy Spirit as a New Creature, to be the "Head of the Church which is His Body." For three and a half years the promises of the Old Testament Scriptures (contained in great measure in types and shadows) worked in the Redeemer to will and to do the Father's pleasure. He was found faithful unto death—the New Creature growing in grace and Divine favor as He took the various steps even to the cross. When He cried, "It is finished," it signified that the sacrifice of the flesh was finished and that the development of the New Creature was complete.

Then the work began in respect to His Body, the Church, otherwise called His Bride class. Divine energy has since been working in the Church—since Pentecost. Member after member has been called and justified and sanctified, begotten of the Holy Spirit. In each the work of grace goes on. Each, as our text declares, is God's workmanship, developing in meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love. All these traits and qualities are being worked out—not in the flesh, but in the heart, in the mind.

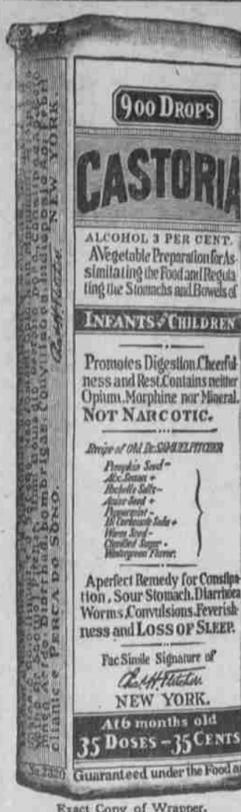
True, the flesh does, indeed, reflect some of the graces of the spirit—but imperfectly. Gradually the new mind gains control over the mortal body. Gradually the light of God shines out in words and deeds, through the heart illuminated. It is God working.

#### Created For Good Works.

Our text declares that this New Creature, Christ and the Church, are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works—that a good work may be done by and through them. What good work is this which God designs to accomplish through the Church—through Christ and His elect Bride? It is the good work of blessing the non-elect world. It is the good work which will progress from the time of the second coming of Jesus and the establishment of His Kingdom for a thousand years. It is the good work which will ultimately uplift or resurrect Adam and all his race from death, ignorance, superstition, sin, if they are willing—up to the full perfection of human nature and Divine favor and everlasting life. All others, unwilling, disobedient, will be destroyed.

When the blessed work of the thousand years of Messiah's reign shall have cleansed the world of all wilful sin and wilful sinners and shall have lifted up mankind to an earthly Eden and human perfection, that will not be the end of the Divine program for the Church. The Apostle, in a verse preceding, tells us that in Ages to come God will show His favor toward the Church—not merely in the one Age in which the Church will be permitted to share with her Redeemer His glorious Messianic Kingdom.

The work beyond the Millennium is not clearly revealed, and yet "day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge." As the Scriptures declare, God formed not the earth in vain, but formed it to be inhabited, so the same principle, applied to the stars, tells us that all the thousands of millions of worlds have been created for a purpose, or are in process of perfecting for a purpose—not in vain. The human creation on our planet is merely a hint to us of what the Divine purpose is respecting all those millions of worlds.



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