

Pastor Russell's Sermon

ONE REDEEMER FOR WORLD'S SIN

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PASTOR RUSSELL AT BERLIN.

According to God's Plan Opportunity For Eternal Life is to Be Extended to All Mankind—Faith, Obedience and Loyalty the Qualifications. Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.



PASTOR RUSSELL

Berlin, Aug. 18.—Pastor Russell of London and Brooklyn had a splendid hearing here today. This is his third visit. He spoke through an interpreter. His text was, "He is the propitiation 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.

As the Jews applied all of God's promises to themselves and left none for the Gentiles, until the end of the Jewish Age, so we Christians have been inclined to appropriate to ourselves all of the gracious promises of the Bible, leaving nothing for the Jews and the world in general—until now, in the ending time of this Age and the dawning of the Millennium, we are coming to see God's Word in a clearer and more beautiful and harmonious light. Now we see special promises for the Jews in the past, special promises for the Gospel Church, special promises for the Jews in the near future, and still other promises and blessings for every creature. And the more the light increases on the pathway the more reasonable the Divine Plan appears to us. Why should God select one nation or people of one religious cult for glory and make preparations from the very beginning of creation for the eternal torture of all others? Surely we have been most inconsistent in our interpretations of the Divine Message, yet just as surely the all-wise One knew of our plight and permitted us to remain in darkness until now; and He is able to overrule our measure of blindness so that it will be of no injury to us.

Perhaps, indeed, the beauty of the Divine Word and Plan is much more conspicuous now because of the darkness in which we all were so recently involved, and perhaps the same principle later on will apply to the whole world. When all shall emerge out of the darkness and ignorance and superstition into the glorious sun-light of Divine truth and grace, undoubtedly the contrast will make the blessings of the future all the more precious, and the more incline every knee to bow.

After Divine favor had first granted opportunity to the Jews to accept the Redeemer, shedding upon them first the special light of the Gospel, then the Message was sent forth without restriction gradually through Asia Minor, into Greece and into Rome, and then favored chiefly the Germanic nations—and amongst these I include the British people and the larger proportion of our American population. In these peoples, too, the Reformation Movement found its chief adherents. The Message of Christ has made great in civilization all the nations it has touched, in proportion as they have received the Message in simplicity and purity, and in proportion as they have lived out their Christian profession as footstep followers of Jesus.

Less Favor, Not Less Worthy.

So far as human judgment can discern, the Divine records show that these favored peoples were not superior to others less favored. The Bible shows us some noble characters amongst the Gentile nations before the Redeemer's day and plainly intimates that God intentionally bestowed His favor upon a stiff-necked race, less tractable than others of that time. We see the same thing in respect to the operation of God's grace during this Gospel Age. Apparently the peoples of India and China were more docile and of much more likely soil for the Gospel Message than the fierce Goths and Huns and Franks to whom the Gospel was more particularly directed. How unlikely it would be that the less-favored nations should have no provision in the Divine Plan!

On the contrary we perceive that a special election, or selection, of a saintly class was made during the Jewish Age—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets and saintly Jews. (Hebrews xi, 38-40.) And since the selection of the saintly Jews the calling of the Bride class, chiefly from the nations of Europe, implies that when this spirit-begotten, Spiritual Israel, spiritual children of Abraham, shall be completed, then all nations will be alike favored in the distribution of the coming blessings declared to be for all other peoples, kindreds and tongues.

No Predestination to Misery.

While speaking last Sunday in the great Victoria Hall of Geneva my mind naturally went back to the days when that great and good man John Calvin cut such a swath in religious sentiment that it still influences about one-half of all Protestants. I saw the monument to Calvin, and I saw the monument unveiled this very year by Calvin's followers to the honor of Servetus, whom Calvin so horribly burned to death at

the stake. Indeed, I am sure that the monument, as it declares, was not so much of a tribute to Servetus as a protest against Brother Calvin's atrocity committed in the name of Jesus, the Bible, and the God of Love.

We must give John Calvin credit for emphasizing the doctrine of Election, although we cannot give him credit for making that doctrine, for of course it was a Bible doctrine fifteen centuries before his birth. Had he been contented with emphasizing the election for the Church and had he said, "I know not what will be the fate of the non-elect," he would have deserved to this day our unstinted praise. But alas! to err is human. Calvin was not content to leave the matter thus. He reasoned out his theory, and his head being imperfect, his conclusions were defective when he surmised that all of the non-elect, whether infants or gray-headed, were predestinated to eternal torture. This feature, purely Calvinistic, and strictly unscriptural, has been the cause of untellable difficulties in the theology of Christendom from Calvin's day until now.

The Key to the Problem.

The key which solves the problem is so simple that we wonder that we have all so long overlooked it. The key is found in the promise made to Abraham that his Seed was to be the Elect—Jesus the Head and the Church His members—Jesus the Bridegroom, typified by Isaac, and the Church His Bride, typified by Rebecca, Isaac's wife. And this Seed of Abraham when completed, according to Divine promise, is to be the channel for blessing all the families of the earth—the living and the dead. The blessing that is to come to all is clearly stipulated by St. Paul, saying, "God our Savior will have all men to be saved (from the condemnation that came on them through Adam) and to come into the knowledge of the Truth."—1 Timothy ii, 3-6.

The basis of the Apostle's argument is set forth in Romans v, 12. He there shows that Adam, and not his race, was put on trial in Eden—that Adam and not his race was directly condemned—but that Adam's race were involved through heredity, by inheriting the weaknesses and dying conditions of their parent. St. Paul then shows forth in the same argument that as condemnation and death thus passed from Adam to all of his race, so Christ Jesus, having become Adam's Redeemer, Divine mercy through Him extends beyond Adam to all the members of his race who were involved with him in the death sentence by laws of heredity. The argument is plain. To see it is to be convinced, because it is so logical. And it could not be supposable for a moment that God would provide the ransom-price for all mankind and fail to make it operative, because the great mass of mankind went down to death without a knowledge of it—many of them during the four thousand years before Christ came into the world to give His life a Ransom.

The explanation is that all went down into the Bible hell—down to the tomb, the death state, in harmony with the sentence, "Dying thou shalt die." Provision is made for the redemption of all from *sheol*. (Hosea xiii, 14.) Christ died for all and, as a result, there is to be a resurrection of the dead, both the just and the unjust. (Acts xxiv, 14.) The just are the justified, and are the comparatively few who have heard of God's grace and have responded and come into fellowship with the Father and being approved of Him are to have share in the better or First Resurrection. The remainder of the world, equally redeemed with the precious blood from the power of the tomb, are all to come forth into a resurrection of the dead, "For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive, each in his own order."—1 Corinthians xv, 22.

The Church's Sin—the World's Sin.

How clearly our text defines the fact that the Church is a separate and distinct class from the world—a class called out from the world. As Jesus said, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "For I have chosen you out of the world." The ordination of the Church is to association with the Redeemer in His great work of witnessing now for the Truth, showing faithfulness even unto death and sacrificing all the earthly interests, to the intent that they with the Redeemer may later on be associated in the work of blessing the world as the antitypical, the spiritual, Seed of the Abrahamic promise. (Galatians iii, 29.) All along we read in our Bibles that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." (Hebrews ii, 9.) But other texts misunderstood, beclouded our judgment and led us to think that this text meant every man in Christ. We all know that the Bible declares that "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have eternal life." (John iii, 16.) We found it difficult to limit this text to the Church when it specifically declares the world. We see now that it applies to the Church first and to the remainder of the world afterward.

Those who in the present life, during this Gospel Age, hear of Christ and have their eyes and understanding open to recognize Him as the Son of God and the Savior of men—those shall not perish in the Second Death, but pass immediately by faith to a reckoned everlasting life, which will be completely theirs when they shall have experienced the glorious "change" of the First Resurrection. We are glad now to see that the Divine purpose still holds on with respect to the world that was lost and redeemed. We perceive now that God intends to bring all men to a knowledge of the Truth. More than that, He intends to give the world the assistance of the

Royal Priesthood for a thousand years for their edification, instruction and uplifting out of sin, degradation, death, back to full perfection of the image of God in the flesh, freely provided for all who will come unto the Father through the precious arrangements then operative.

The same original sin of Adam was inherited by all of his race and therefore was as much against the class chosen as the Church as against the remainder of the world. This the Apostle declares, saying, "We (the Church) were children of wrath, even as others." (Ephesians ii, 3.) We have merely been delivered from the curse, the death sentence, in advance of the world as a result of special Divine favor enjoyed by us—whether that favor consisted in not being so seriously fallen as some, or whether it consisted in special opportunities for coming into this grace. And if the Church has enjoyed some special favor of God in being constituted the first-fruits of His creatures to be delivered from the power of sin and death, why should we ever have imagined that He had no grace whatever remaining for our less fortunate brethren (the world in general)? And how could we think of ourselves of the Church as the first-fruits and suppose that there would be no after-fruits—no general harvest for the world?—James i, 18.

Our text forcefully calls attention to this double action of Divine grace—first upon the Church and secondly upon the world—and points us to the fact that the salvation of the willing of the Church of this Age, and the salvation of the willing of the world in the next Age—two distinct salvations—both proceed or result from the one redemptive sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ finished at Calvary. Notice the statement, "He is the propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins (the Church's sins), and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

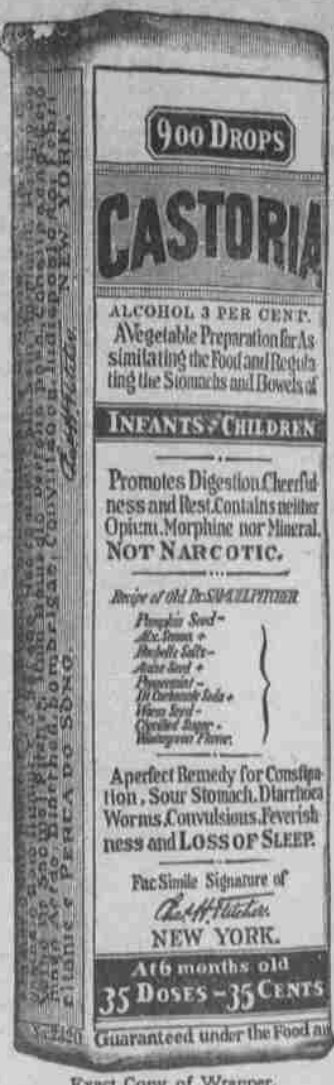
Will Truth Injure?

Many ministers all over the world, following the suggestions of the I. B. S. A. Convention, have informed their congregations and the world in general through the newspapers that they do not believe in a hell of eternal torture, and that they do not believe that the Bible, rightly interpreted, teaches this. But there are others who, by some influence, take an opposite course. They denounce the Bible Students, and myself in particular, for telling the people the Truth. These ministers, generally without much influence even in their own congregations, have, I am told, threatened the newspapers all over the world that are publishing my sermons that they will boycott them and influence their congregations.

But the editors are finding out that narrow minded people never have much influence, good or bad. Hence the sermons still appear in nearly fifteen hundred newspapers in the English language and are spreading, I am told, into the German and Swedish. These brethren claim that the world is likely to be injured and to be turned away from God and the Bible by its proper interpretation. We answer, Not so. After the preaching of eternal torment for sixteen centuries the net result is that everybody is losing faith in the Bible, which has been misinterpreted, and many are even losing faith in a personal Creator. Is it not time, even for policy's sake, to discontinue the misrepresentation of God and His character to see if the Truth will not accomplish more than the error has done? And aside from the policy question, if we have been slandering our Creator and misrepresenting the Bible for centuries, is it not all the more incumbent upon us now to set the matter right?

Who will deny the fact that life and property are less secure in so called Christian lands, where the eternal torment has been preached for centuries, than in any other part of the world? We assure the dear brethren who are fearful that we have many evidences to prove the very contrary of their fears—to prove that a better knowledge of God and His love, as expressed in the Divine Plan of the Ages, is helping many, not only out of ignorance and darkness, but also out of indifference and wickedness, into fellowship with God. But anyway, how dare we, as Christian ministers, either directly or indirectly, slander the character of our God in a way and to a degree that we would resent if charged against our worst enemy?

We fear that some of these misguided brethren are more solicitous for their own supposed welfare and the supposed interest of their own churches than for the glory of God or the welfare of the people. They are afraid to have the people see the light of Present Truth and gain a clear comprehension of the Bible, possibly because they fear that this would reflect upon them as not having properly instructed the people. They seem to know that if the people will read they will be convinced—and if convinced, they will no longer be sectarian, nor pay good money to help to misrepresent God's character and keep the people in ignorance of the true meaning of His Word. This accounts for the wild and fanatical and untruthful misrepresentations of my teachings! They give the people horrible misrepresentations of my teachings to hinder them from coming to a knowledge of the Truth. In three different cities ministers in this enlightened Twentieth century have under one pretext or another collected my books and burned them after the style of the autodafes of centuries ago. In every case, however, good has resulted. Sane or more honest minds have been led to investigate—just as when, centuries ago, the Bishop of London bought up and burned publicly the Bibles which Tyndale had translated and published.



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