

Pastor Russell's Sermon

THE WORLD'S NEED OF A MEDIATOR

Why a Savior and a Redemptive Work Are Necessary.

PASTOR RUSSELL IN SWEDEN.

Scripture Teaches That Humanity Would Have No Hope of Everlasting Life Except Through Divine Mercy. Why God Provided a Salvation For Mankind Through Jesus' Sacrifice. The Only Basis of Reconciliation.



PASTOR RUSSELL

Stockholm, Aug. 25.—Pastor Russell of London Tabernacle arrived from Finland this morning. He addressed two large Swedish congregations here and leaves tonight for Copenhagen, Kiel, Brussels and London. We report one of his addresses from 1 Timothy II, 5, 6: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time." He said:—

Many fail to understand why a Savior and a redemptive work are necessary. They ask, Why was it necessary for Jesus to come into the world? How did His death influence God to the forgiveness of human sin? And why was the better sacrifice of Jesus typified by the sacrifice of bulls and goats under the Jewish Law Covenant? A right understanding, a correct understanding, of these matters is the very essence of true theology, and most helpful to us all.

The Divine arrangement proposes that everything in accord with God must be absolutely perfect. Both angels and men were created perfect, "in God's image." And the Divine Law, in the interest of all, cuts off from fellowship and blessings all who deliberately go into sin, and fellowships only such as are perfect. Hence the sentence upon Father Adam for his disobedience cut him off from Divine fellowship and favor under the sentence, "Dying, thou shalt die" (Genesis II, 17)—not, "Going to eternal torment, thou shalt roast."

True, Adam's children were never thus condemned, but, born in sin and "shaped in iniquity" (Psalm II, 5), under the laws of heredity they never were perfect, never were fully in the image of God, never were, therefore, in harmony with God, but always shared Father Adam's alienation and condemnation. They were "children of wrath" (Ephesians II, 3)—justly sharing their Father Adam's penalty of death, because imperfect—not worthy of life under the Divine arrangement.

Reconciliation a Necessity. Whoever sees clearly these facts of Scripture must perceive that humanity would have no hope of everlasting life except through Divine mercy—forgiveness. But some one will say, Why should there be any necessity for the Logos to leave heavenly glory and be made flesh and then to die, "the Just for the unjust," to make possible our return to Divine favor? Why should God forgive the sins of Adam and his race even as we are directed to forgive those who trespass against us? God's attitude towards sin very properly is different. "His work is perfect." (Deuteronomy xxxii, 4) He created Adam in His own image. We sinners are not God's creation direct, but have merely come into existence under laws of heredity. Justice is under no obligation to us. All rights and privileges granted to Father Adam were forfeited and have been abrogated. From the Divine standpoint of justice, our race is a dead one. More than this—the great Supreme Ruler and Judge of the Universe, having condemned us as unfit for eternal life and fellowship with Himself, could not justly set aside His own decree. God could not, therefore, justly, righteously, change His verdict, for that would imply that our sentence was an unjust one.

The Divine Government refuses to be thus compromised, but instead has provided a salvation for humanity through Jesus' death. The method adopted maintains the dignity of the Divine Law to the full, and at the same time reveals the fact that our Creator is the very embodiment of sympathy and love—qualities of His which never would have been so fully appreciated by either angels or men unless God had permitted human sin, had provided the penalty He did, and then provided the Redemption through the Logos—Jesus.

"Between God and Man." A mediator is one who stands between two parties who are at variance, for the purpose of bringing about reconciliation. The two parties mentioned in our text are not God and the Church but God and the world—mankind in general. Man sinned. God justly condemned the sinner. The Mediator's first work in reconciliation must be to offer a substitute to Justice for Adam's sin. Our text tells us that the Man Christ Jesus did this very thing—He gave Himself to be a Ransom—price for all mankind. He did this when He reached perfect manhood, at thirty years of age, when He

consecrated His life to God—even unto death. He finished this giving of Himself on Calvary when He cried, "It is finished." (John xix, 30.) The perfect, spotless, uncontaminated life of the Man Christ Jesus, thus laid down a voluntary sacrifice, constitutes a Ransom—price for Adam and his race. The word Ransom in our text has a very strict meaning, namely, a corresponding price. Adam in his perfection was in God's image—"very good." The Man Jesus, who gave Himself a corresponding price, was in God's image—"very good." He corresponded exactly to the perfect man Adam, and His sacrifice of Himself in death corresponded exactly to the penalty against Adam, which the entire race has shared. This great transaction, accomplished nearly nineteen centuries ago, is not yet generally proclaimed, but will be testified to all in due time, our text declares. As yet only the few, guided by the Word and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, can appreciate this matter, because its details have not yet been fully worked out.

"When all its mighty work is seen, Praise shall all tongues employ." St. Paul declares that the calling and election of the Church to become the Bride of Christ and His Joint-heir in His Messianic Kingdom is a "Mystery" appreciated by few. The Mystery is that in the Great Jehovah's Plan this Elect Church, now in process of selection, is to constitute with Jesus her Redeemer the great Mediator who, during the Millennium, will mediate the New Covenant between God and mankind in general. The foundation for all that Mediatorial work—the essential basis of it—was effected by our Lord Jesus alone when He, as the Man Christ Jesus, gave Himself a Ransom—price for all. But the great work of reconciliation belongs to the future and is to be shared in by the Bride class.

Well did John the Baptist point to Jesus and say, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John I, 29, 36.) In Jesus re-idealized the Ransom—price, and not in His Church; in Jesus' work, and not in our work; in Jesus' sacrifice, and not in our sacrifice, was the potency for the cleansing away of Adam's sin and the setting aside of his death penalty. Whatever share the Church was granted in the great work of the world's reconciliation was by grace and not by our merit, not by our sacrifice.

Mediation Not Yet Begun. The Redeemer has not yet begun His work of Mediation between God and men. He merely provided the basis of that reconciliation in His death at Calvary. The merit of His sacrifice is in Jehovah's hands, but is not yet appropriated for the sins of the world. The world's sins are not yet forgiven. Hence God still treats the world as sinners, aliens, foreigners, enemies through evil works.

Everything is in readiness for the forgiveness of the sins of the world; but the Redeemer waits until He shall have accomplished another feature of the Divine Program, namely, the selection of the Church to be His Bride; or under another figure, to be members of the Body of Messiah, under Jesus the Head—members of the Body of the Mediator, under the Redeemer's Headship. "For Moses verily said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren like unto me [Moses]; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. And the person that will not obey that Prophet [that Teacher], shall be destroyed from amongst the people."—Acts III, 22, 23.

This antitypical Moses, Head and members, has been in process of development, or raising up, for now nearly nineteen centuries. God raised up Jesus the very first, and is since raising up also by Jesus. And through the First Resurrection shortly the entire Body, the Messiah of glory, will be changed, made partakers of the divine nature.—Revelation xx, 6; II Peter I, 4.

The antitypical Moses will inaugurate the New Covenant with Israel and the world, even as the typical Moses inaugurated the old Law Covenant with typical Israel at Mt. Sinai. As the old Covenant had sacrifices of bulls and goats and was inaugurated first by a sprinkling of the tables of the Law, representing a satisfaction of Divine Justice, and secondly the sprinkling of the people, representing their reconciliation through the same sacrifice, so the antitypical Moses, the Mediator of the New or antitypical Covenant, must first produce "better sacrifices," the antitypical, and then with the merit of those make satisfaction to Divine Justice and reconcile the people—all who are willing of the whole world. When Moses slew the animals whose blood made effective the typical Covenant which he mediated, that sacrificing was merely a preparatory work. The Law Covenant was not mediated in any sense of the word until the animals were all slain and the blood was sprinkled on the tables of the Law.

So in the antitype, Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, must first, after the pattern of Moses, complete all His sacrificing before He begins the work of Mediation. First of all, as we have seen, He offered up Himself without spot unto God, finishing that work at Calvary. Since then He has been accepting and offering up as a part of His own sacrifice the members of the Church, as they come unto the Father through Him, presenting their bodies to be living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God. (Romans xii:1.) This sacrificing of the flesh of Christ has been in process for nearly nineteen centuries. Not until these "better sacrifices" (Hebrews ix, 25) shall have been finished will the real

work of Mediation and Atonement for the sin of the world take place.

"Able Ministers of New Covenant." All those who now present their bodies to Jesus, desiring to share with Him in suffering for righteousness in this present time, that they may have share with Him in His coming glory and Kingdom—all these are in Bible language "able ministers (servants) of the New Covenant." They are serving the New Covenant, although it has not yet been sealed with the precious blood. They are serving in calling those who have an ear to hear, in showing them the privilege of suffering with Christ, that they may also reign with Him. They serve the New Covenant in helping to build one another up in the most holy faith and in assisting one another in the narrow way of faithfulness and self-sacrifice even unto death.

But specially these, each for himself, serves the New Covenant arrangement by fulfilling the terms of his "Covenant of sacrifice." (Psalm I, 5.) Jesus was the first Minister, or Servant, of this Covenant. All of His members are associated in this ministry. When the ministry service of sacrifice shall have been completed, the grander ministry of this New Covenant in glory will begin. The Christ, the Messiah, the Mediator in glory, as the Antitypical Melchisedek, will combine the office of King with His other office of Priest, or Instructor and Helper.

The first work will be the application of the blood of Atonement, the Ransom—price for the sins of the whole world. As soon as this presented on man's behalf, Divine Justice will accept it. Forthwith the world will no longer be enemies of God, children of wrath, without God and without hope, but on the contrary, the Ransom—price for their sins having been accepted, the sentence of death against all will be cancelled, and the whole world will be turned over to the control of the Mediator. He having mediated towards God, and having made satisfaction for human sin through the merit of His own sacrifice, will then proceed to reconcile the world.

During the six thousand years of the reign of sin and death the world has become so alienated from God that the majority do not earnestly desire reconciliation. This, however, is because of their weakness and ignorance. For a thousand years the great Mediator will instruct them, giving chastenings where necessary and in proportion to their spirit of wilfulness, and thus gradually He will uplift them out of their ignorance, blindness and sin defilement—out of the tomb and out of all the weaknesses of the dying condition—back into the image of God, from which all fell in Father Adam.

The only exceptions to this rule will be that such as willfully, intelligently reject the Divine provision for their recovery will be punished with everlasting destruction. They will perish "like brute beasts," as St. Peter declares. (II Peter II, 12.) The grand finale will be attained when "every creature in heaven and in the earth and under the earth" shall be heard acclaiming praise to Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever.—Revelation v, 13.

Jesus the Church's Advocate. From the foregoing it will be seen that the world's salvation is to be a Restitution to human perfection—an earthly Eden lost through Father Adam's disobedience. It will be noted also that the Church has no part with the world in that Restitution, nor in that Mediation for a thousand years. The Church will confer the Restitution blessings and privileges on the non-elect.

But the fact that the Church will not be numbered with mankind in the human Mediation, which will take place during the Millennium, does not mean that the Church now has no sins, nor that those sins do not need to be covered and cancelled. It does mean that the Church is not to get back the human life and earthly rights forfeited by Adam and to be restored under the Mediator's Kingdom. Instead, the Church is promised glory, honor and immortality—heavenly nature. As a reward for participation in the sufferings of Christ she shall be made sharer in His eternal glories.

What the Church needs and has is an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the Righteous. Thousands of humanity who are weary and heavy-laden with sin and desirous of reconciliation with God and who hear the Message of this Gospel Age and accept its terms, present their bodies—living sacrifices, and purpose to be footstep followers of Jesus. But because these are by nature sinners, children of wrath, under Divine sentence, imperfect, their sacrifices could not be accepted of the Father as was that of Jesus; hence they need an Advocate.

Jesus has merit in the bands of Justice, the result of His sacrifice, which is being kept to be given by and by to the world of mankind, justifying them to full Restitution. As the Advocate of His footstep followers Jesus imparts a share of the merit of His sacrifice to the Church to make good her imperfections, so that her sacrifice may in God's sight be holy and acceptable. This imputation of the merit of Jesus' sacrifice was made for all of the Church at once—long ago—when He "ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God for us (as our Advocate)." The already consecrated disciples in the upper room received the Pentecostal blessing as the evidence that Jesus as their Advocate had appeared for them, and imputed of His merit for them, so that their sacrifices were acceptable to the Father. The same principle holds true throughout this Gospel Age for this same class.

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