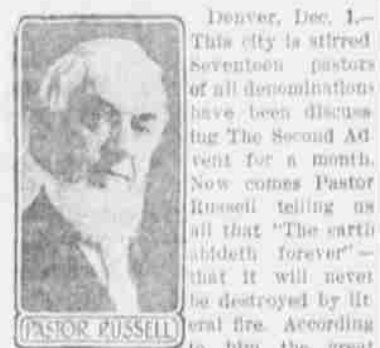


Pastor Russell's Sermon

HOW, WHEN, WHY A SECOND ADVENT

Denver Divines on Right Track, Says Pastor Russell.

No World-Burning—Satan to Be Bound
Sin, Sickness and Death to Be Con-
quered—Man to Be Delivered—The
Power Vested in Messiah—His King-
dom Near—How It Will Appear.



PASTOR RUSSELL

Denver, Dec. 1.—This city is stirred by the advent of the Second Advent. The Second Advent for a month. Now comes Pastor Russell telling us all that "The earth abideth forever"—that it will never be destroyed by literal fire. According to him the great event of Christ's Coming will bring blessing such as we all desire. He seems to have the Bible and logic on his side too.

Pastor Russell declared that false concepts of the Second Coming of Christ have done great injury. The view set forth in all orthodox creeds is that Christ will come again in the flesh. The resurrection will take place within twenty-four hours. The saints will rise in the air to meet the Lord. Then they will come down from heaven and consume the whole earth. A few—Pneumatics—claim that Christ will reign in fleshly glory for a thousand years to bless the living of mankind. The majority of Christians disown all this as ridiculous nonsense because they believe little or nothing, either of the creeds or of the Bible. A minority disown it because they perceive its inconsistency with the Bible. "Count me in with this minority," said Pastor Russell.

More than three hundred Bible texts refer to Messiah's glorious Second Advent. Our inquiry shall be first, Why does the Master come again? Did He not properly establish His Church? Has this Gospel Age been a failure? Will He come to rectify matters and to start His Church afresh in the work of world-conversion and blessing? Not at all. His work has carried out exactly as intended. Not a suggestion of Scripture implies that the Church is to convert the world during this Age. On the contrary, her mission has been to act as God's mouthpiece in calling out a class to be joint-heirs with the Redeemer. Properly enough Jesus said, "I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me." He loved the world. He died for the world. In due time, by His Messianic Kingdom, He will bless "all the families of the earth." But the time for blessing the world is not yet. First, a special class is invited to become separate from the world, to become sanctified or set apart to God and His service, following in the footsteps of Jesus. These, like their Master, must demonstrate their love for God, their loyalty to Him and to the brethren, even unto death. Their reward is to be sharers with their Master in His Heavenly Throne of Glory, which for a thousand years will rule, bless and uplift humanity.

The followers of Jesus have another work, in addition to witnessing to the world and calling out faithful saints to walk the narrow way. That other work is to "build one another up in the most holy faith." Each individual of the sanctified Little Flock is not only to "do good unto all men, and especially to the household of faith," but particularly to make his own "calling and election sure" by personal love, seal and loyalty.

The Kingdom Now in Embryo.
Our Lord's many parables refer to His Church as a Kingdom class, a Royal Priesthood. This does not signify that He intended them to occupy places of honor and distinction now. The Master Himself was neither a King nor a Priest on earth. He is the Melchizedek Priesthood of the Messianic Age. Then He will also be the Great King over all the earth, as well as the Great Prophet or Teacher and the Great Judge or Ruler. Well did He declare to Pilate: "My Kingdom is not of this Age." (John xviii, 36). As His saintly followers are to share in His Kingdom, they also must wait for its establishment. While waiting they are to pray: "Thy Kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven."

Of this Royal Priesthood the Apostle declares: "The world knoweth us not." We are priests and kings only from the Divine standpoint, which none are able to recognize except the "brethren." Only in embryo are God's saints spoken of as the Kingdom class. They are on probation. Jesus says that the overcomers will be granted to sit with Him in His Throne as actual members of the Royal Priesthood, to reign with Him a thousand years.—Revelation iii, 21; xi, 6.

"He Must Reign Until"—
St. Paul, after telling about the resurrection of the dead, explains that the resurrection of the Church to glory, honor and immortality will be first on the program. Subsequently all will be resurrected, "every man in his own order," and Christ will reign until He shall have put down all in subordination. Other Scriptures clear-

ly inform us that the length of His reign will be a thousand years. It will constitute the great Seventh Day of earth's history—six thousand years after the Curse, and the seventh thousand in recovery from the Curse. St. Paul adds that after Jesus shall have accomplished the work assigned to Him in connection with rebellion man, He will deliver up the Kingdom to God, and Himself be subject to the Father.—1 Corinthians xv, 22-28.

To some it may appear that a thousand years is too short a time to fully uplift humanity—those living at the time of the second coming and all that are in their graves. Some think that it will be even too short to bring the whole earth to the promised Edenic perfection. We are to remember, however, that while Messiah will probably use human instrumentality in connection with His work, nevertheless the inventions and developments of the past century give us a glimpse of the wonderful intelligence which may be granted to humanity in proportion as the Curse is rolled away and Divine blessing fills the earth. The majority of our race have never had fifty years of life experiences, good or bad. But the promise is that each shall have twice that length of time to learn the Truth, under the blinding light of that New Dispensation—a hundred years, in which to fully decide his eternity, either for life everlasting or death everlasting.—Isaiah, lxx, 20.

From the Bible viewpoint the Day of Christ is ample for the great work to which it has been consecrated by the All-Wise Creator from before the foundation of the world. Nor should we get that all power in Heaven and in earth is vested in the One who then shall take the Throne. Neither should we forget that the Church has for eight hundred years been under special preparation and instruction in the School of Christ, preparing them for their work as a Royal Priesthood. They will be able to sympathize with the growing creation and be merciful, even in the administration of stripes necessary to many for their assistance along the Highway of Holiness, then opened up.

Messiah's Kingdom Invisible.
Some of the noblest minds have been repelled from faith in the Second Advent by the thought that an earthly Kingdom with Christ and the saints in royal state is unreasonable. They were quite right in thinking that earthly court and state would be beneath the dignity of Messiah and His Bride. The Scripture declares that Jesus left His glory, humbled Himself to become a man, in order that He might be the great Sin-Offender for our race. But the Redeemer prayed to be glorified with the glory that He had with the Father before the world was. Yes, and He promised His Church, His Bride, to share in His Heavenly glory. Did He lead us to expect a Heavenly glory, Heavenly inheritance and glorious change from earthly to Heavenly condition, and will He then, instead, give us earthly glory and merely perfection in the flesh?

Oh, no, no! We have all sadly overlooked certain features of God's Word. Jesus did not remain poor, did not remain flesh, did not remain human. In His resurrection not only was He received by the Father up where He was before; but He was glorified "far above angels, principalities and powers," made a "partaker of the Divine nature." The promise to His Church is to share His glory. The Apostle distinctly tells that in the resurrection the faithful will be "changed" (1 Corinthians xv, 51, 52) and made like the glorified Redeemer, and also of the Divine nature. (1 Peter i, 4.) The Apostle explains the necessity for this change, saying, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."—1 Cor. xv, 50.

How slow we have been to see that God never purposed that either Jesus or His faithful Elect should remain in the flesh! A few Bible statements misunderstood got us into difficulty. We read, "Every eye shall see Him," and forgot that there are eyes of understanding, as well as natural eyes. We forgot that Jesus declares that very few now see or hear—only the saintly, whose eyes of understanding have been opened by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We forgot that Jesus said also, "Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more." When once we discern that He has been glorified—that He has been given a spirit nature again, that He no longer has the human nature, which He surrendered as a Sin-Sacrifice, then we can see why the world will see Him no more, and why the Church must be changed by resurrection power before she can see Him.

We misunderstood our Lord's manifestations after resurrection. Unless He could establish the faith of His disciples in His resurrection, they could not receive the Pentecostal blessing. Therefore He spent with them forty days, watching over them, appearing in various forms, as a gardener, as a traveler, etc., all to convince them, first, that He was no longer dead, but risen; and second, that He was no longer a man, but a Spirit Being. He demonstrated this by doing exactly what the angels did. As they appeared in the flesh, ate, talked and vanished, so did He. Then He ascended up on high; not as a human being, "a little lower than the angels," but as a Divine Spirit far above angels. He received the homage of all the Heavenly host.

"I Will Come Again."
One of Jesus' parables truthfully represents Heaven as a far country, to which Jesus as the young Nobleman went to be invested with Kingdom authority over the world. It tells how on His return the faithful ones will be rewarded with a share in His Kingdom. Some of them will be given to rule over two cities, some over five cities, etc., and will enter into the joys of their Lord. But we are not to un-

derstand this necessarily to mean that Heaven itself is so distant as to be beyond communication. Rather the parable shows that the time between the going and the returning would be long. The parable also shows us our position as to the inheritance of the Nobleman and his servants in the interim. As a matter of fact, only ten days elapsed between our Lord's ascension and His shedding forth of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Jesus left the world and His disciples in the world, not so much in the sense of going so far away that He could not see them and communicate with them, but more particularly in the sense that He would not see them or communicate with them. He would compel them to "walk by faith and not by sight," to "search the Scriptures," and to receive their spiritual blessing through the fellowship of the Spirit of the Truth. By His Holy Spirit He would be with them, and not by personal contact or further manifestations.

His Second Coming would be at the conclusion of this Age, to awaken His sleeping saints and change them to the heavenly state. Thus He would come again and receive them into Himself—first the sleeping ones, and subsequently those alive and remaining, who would experience the resurrection change in the moment of death. Additionally, in the Harvest with which this Age ends, He promised to take special supervision of the gathering of His Elect.

This stage of the Redeemer's coming is, in the Greek, His *Parousia*—His presence. The world is not to know of the time of His *Parousia*. On the contrary, it is described as secret, hidden from the world—"as a thief in the night." Jesus described His *Parousia*, saying that at that time the world would be eating, drinking, planting, building, and know not of His coming in the Harvest of the Age, even as the world was eating, drinking, planting, building and marrying in the days of Noah, "and knew not." The intimation is, however, that some of God's people would be made aware of His *Parousia*—the Wise Virgins, while others of God's people, the "foolish virgins," would be "overcharged with the cares of this life," and know not.

Revealed in Flaming Fire.
If, then, only the Church may know of the *Parousia* of Jesus in its time, until they shall be changed to the heavenly, Divine nature, how will the world ever know of Jesus and His Kingdom? If He really meant it when He said, "A little while and the world seeth Me no more," how can humanity know about the new, invisible Kingdom?

The Bible answers most distinctly. It tells us of the shining forth or *epiphania* of the Lord's Kingdom. It tells of His *apokalypsis* manifestation or revelation. "He shall be revealed in flaming fire." This flaming fire signifies severe judgments, as elsewhere. These are to be so severe that the elements of earth's society will melt with the fervency of the heat in a terrible time of trouble. Additionally "the heavens," the ecclesiastical systems, will be involved, and pass away with a great noise or commotion. It is from this revealing in flaming fire, Divine censure upon the world, that the great, the high, the mighty, the poor, all shall seek to "hide themselves in the dens and caves of the earth"—in the social Orders and in affiliation with strong governments, etc.

Gradually mankind will come to understand. Gradually their eyes will open and they will see that it is "the wrath of the Lamb" that causes the "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." The plowshare of trouble will go so deep that the world will effectually learn the intended lesson. Their eyes opening to the truth of the situation, they will learn war no more. They will "beat their spears into pruning hooks, and their swords into plowshares." As their eyes of understanding open still more widely, they will discern the beauties and blessings of Messiah's Kingdom, "the desire of all nations."

Under Messiah's Kingdom, Israel will return from the east-off condition in which she has been during the selection of "the very Elect." The nucleus of Israel will be the resurrected Ancient Worthies, mentioned by St. Paul in Hebrews xi, 38-40. They will be perfected in the flesh, as the Church will be perfected in the Divine nature. But the Christ, Head and Body, Bridegroom and Bride, must first enter into the glory of the Kingdom. Then will be established the earthly Kingdom in the hands of the Ancient Worthies. The world will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets; but they will not see the King in His glory, nor the Bride, nor "the virgins, her companions," on the spirit plane. They will all be as invisible to humanity as the Prince of Darkness and his demon hosts at the present time. The first work of Messiah's Kingdom will be the binding of Satan, the spilling of whose power indicates the deliverance of humanity from the bondage of sin, ignorance, superstition and death.

One of our great obstacles in the past has been that we failed to discern that God has been prosecuting two distinct salvations: first, that of the Church, to the spiritual, heavenly, Divine nature; and later, through the Elect Church, salvation must be extended to humanity, the non-elect. Then will come the privilege and opportunity of earthly Resurrection to human perfection in the image and likeness of God, as was Adam, in a world-wide Paradise. God's glorious feetstool. The First Advent of the Savior was necessary for the redemption of our race. His Second Advent is equally necessary; that He may by His glorious Kingdom bind Satan, overthrow Sin and release slaves.

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