

Pastor Russell's Sermon

PAINS OF HELL EXPLAINED TO US

Pastor Russell on Misconceptions of Bible's Teaching.

TRUTH AND BEAUTY HIDDEN

The Dangers of Ignorance and Superstition—The Worship of Hypocrisy and Fear Great Spurs—God Seeks Worship Only From the Reverential and True-Hearted—Popular Misconceptions of Hell—The Injury It Has Done and Is Doing—True Christians Should Awake to True Bible Study.



Pateron, N. J. April 27.—Pastor Russell preached this afternoon in the Opera House his topic was "Beyond the Grave." We report his discourse to Bible Students on the text "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me."—Ps. 116:3.

stand them to signify that they recognize the Lord Jesus as the great Divinely appointed Shepherd of the true sheep, and that they desire me to serve them in any way that I can as an under-shepherd.

Through the columns of THE WATCH TOWER, I visit these classes regularly twice a month, doing a pastoral work to the best of my ability—leading them to the Fountain of Grace and Truth and breaking for them the Living Bread, the Word of God. Additionally, they have my weekly sermon and a weekly treatise on the International Sunday School Lessons.

The True-Hearted Should Rejoice. One would suppose that all of the one hundred thousand ministers and all their flocks would rejoice to know that the unburied, straying sheep are being reached with a Message of God's Love and Mercy which is appealing to their hearts and working a transformation in their lives. Many do rejoice, but alas! a few are jealous, as were some of the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day. Of these we read, "They were grieved that He taught the people"—the people whom they could not reach, the sheep that were straying and famishing.

As those jealous scribes and Pharisees antagonized Jesus and the Apostles, because their hearts were out of harmony with the Good Tidings, so it is today with some. Unable to uphold the doctrines which have driven away so many of the intelligent of their flocks, famished for Truth, a few ministers are angry with us. True to the Master's property, these seek to say all manner of evil falsely against us, for His sake, for the Truth's sake. Yet, in spite of their unchristian course, the poor straying sheep are hearing and recognizing the Voice Divine, are coming back to the Word of God, are being sanctified by the Word of Truth.

I Proceed With My Text. If this were the only text mistranslated and misunderstood, the ordinary reader would doubtless pass it by, saying, "I do not understand it. Probably it is a figure of speech." But this text is merely a combination of mistranslations, all of which are connected with an eternal torment system of doctrines invented during the Dark Ages. It is this combined system which has such power over men's minds. This power of error, this power of fear, is turning intelligent minds away from the Bible. Hence it is our duty to break down the false doctrines, and to clear away the obstacles which hinder the sowing of Truth to the minds and hearts of the people of God—the straying sheep. Nor are these straying sheep all, or chiefly the ignorant. They include many of the ablest minds and truest hearts in the world—minds and hearts too true and too logical to believe palpable falsehoods, or to profess what they do not believe.

The Psalmist is merely telling of his severe illness, from which by the grace of God he recovered. He would have us understand that it was not merely a slight ailment. He described his emotions in the language of our text, saying, "The sorrows of death compassed me about"; that is to say, the sadness associated with the thought that he was about to die, about to leave his friends. In the poetic form of the Hebrew language, he repeated this thought; namely, "The pains of hell gat hold upon me." In our modern language this would mean the pains of death, or the pains of the tomb. They were pains that indicated the approach of dissolution. Nothing in this text has the slightest reference to anything in the future life.

Our Baptist friends, in their revised translation of the Bible, have chosen for such passages as this the expression, "the underworld," instead of the word "hell." Yet even here there is danger of the average reader not catching the true thought. Far simpler and far less liable to be misunderstood, would it have been, had the translators said, "The pains of the tomb." The Revised Version of the English Bible reads, "The pains of Sheol."

Why Not the Whole Truth? Every learned minister knows that the Hebrew word Sheol really means the grave, the pit, the state of death. Why do they hesitate to tell the people the whole truth on this subject? Why do they translate it part of the time "the grave" and at other times "the underworld"? Why do they use the translation, "the grave" in one place, and "the pit" in another, and then refuse to translate the word at all in the third instance, but give the word Sheol? Was it their intention to confuse the people? What is the motive? We wish that some of these great men would explain.

The Reason For All This. We would like to have our ministerial brethren state their reasons for pursuing a course of hiding the truth on the subject of hell. Only because they neglect to give the reasons do we feel at liberty to suggest them. It seems to me that these ministers are of two classes, and that their reasons are therefore slightly different. All of them seem to agree that it would be dangerous to tell the people that God is really a God of Love, and that the doctrine of an eternity of torture is entirely unscriptural, finding no foundation whatever in the writings of the Apostles.

They fear to tell the people that these doctrines were built up during the Dark Ages by the very men who manifested so little of the Spirit of God and so little knowledge of God's will respecting His people that they burned one another at the stake. They fear to tell the people that during the Dark Ages our blinded forefathers took the parables and dark sayings of Jesus as literal statements, quite contrary to the Master's evident intention. These they supplemented with

certain crude misconceptions of the symbolism of The Revelation. From the combinations they made scarcely doctrines, blasphemous in the extreme, which never produced saints, but which led men astray into thinking that they were copying God in the devilry which they accomplished one toward another.

The fear now seems to be lest the public should once perceive that the creeds of Christendom, while containing much good, are cankered, wormy and vitiated by those doctrines of demons. Why should they fear to tell the people the truth? Perhaps it is because the religion of our day is built so largely upon man-worship, system-worship, creed-worship and not upon the Bible. Perhaps they fear that if the creeds were thus discredited it would mean that the ministers of those creeds will be similarly discredited. Perhaps they fear that the people would never again have confidence in their teachings, and that thus all the various party walls of Christendom which for so long a time have divided the sheep would fall. We cannot definitely know of their reasons, because they do not tell us, we can only surmise.

Others, very worldly-wise, have become Higher Critics, and do not believe in the Bible at all. They are really agnostics. But they do not desire to advertise their lack of faith, lest it should detract from their esteem among men. They prefer to pose as believers, and to hope that the time will come when all the wealthy and intelligent will become unbelievers also. Then they will declare, "We have not been believers for many years, yet we kept the matter secret, fearing to be misunderstood as opponents of the best interests of society."

All the while, this latter class constitutes the greatest menace in the world to law and order, and are the best agents Satan has in making void the Word of God and destroying faith therein. Robert Ingersoll's methods of antagonizing the Bible were far less successful than the methods of modern Higher Critics and Evolutionists.

Fear to Tell the Truth. All who oppose the telling to the public of the plain truth respecting hell seem to have one common ground of objection. They say, "With all the fear of hell that has been preached for centuries, see how wicked the world is and how little human life is worth! See how every law of God and man for the protection of life and purity and property is endangered! Note that if it were not for our telegraphs, telephones and immense police forces of today, nobody would be safe, so much more wicked does the world appear to have become within the last fifty years! If the fear of eternal torment and of purgatory were lifted from the minds of mankind, would it not make the dangers tenfold greater than they are now? Would it not speedily be necessary to double our police force, if the masses lost their belief in a force of eternal torture?"

This is lame reasoning, it seems to us. It confesses in one breath, in spite of all the false teachings of centuries, wickedness has been growing. Would it not be wise to inquire to what extent the false doctrines, the misinterpretations and mistranslations of the Bible, have been responsible for the increase in wickedness? Are men wiser than God? Is it possible for man to invent some monstrous, unthinkable delusion which will have a greater power with men, than the plain, simple Message of God's Love?

But if we were sure that by blaspheming God's holy name and by playing upon the ignorance and superstition of the masses we could make the wicked preserve peace, would it be wise to do so? Could God's blessing be expected upon such a course? Would it not be wiser for us, as the people of God, to have faith in Him and to trust that, while we faithfully present the Truth, Divine Providence will oversee and overrule its effect, and will influence for good?

Experience proves that there is not the proper thought. When we go to the records of the various prisons, penitentiaries, etc., we find that nearly all the worst criminals have been taught the doctrine of eternal torment. Many of them confess full faith in it. On the other hand, many infidels—once violent opposers of God and of the Bible and Christianity—after hearing of the Love of God, have thoroughly melted, and with tears in their eyes have become loyal soldiers of the cross.

We heard of an interesting case recently. A colored man in prison for crime, somehow came to touch with my sermons, and then with my books on Bible study. He became a thorough Bible student, and a master at handling the Word of God. His fellow-prisoners came gladly to hear this colored man preach the Divine Plan of the Ages from God's Word, while they cared not at all to attend the chapel services addressed by the ordinary chaplain.

In the "wonderful words of life," started by the Master's lips, and handed down through His Apostles, there is a sweetness, beauty and power that cannot be associated with the doctrines of demons, which became attached to the Message during the Dark Ages. The Message of life everlasting through the Redeemer and by obedience to Him, has its offset, or alternative, in death everlasting to those who refuse to obey after full enlightenment. Eternal life is the gift of God, tendered to all the willing and obedient, through the Messiah. All rebels will be destroyed in the Second Death (Acts 3:21). Their punishment will not be everlasting torment, but "everlasting destruction"—a destruction from which they will never be recovered, will never be resurrected.

Tariff Changes Welcomed and Condemned

Views of Men of Affairs



Photo © by American Press Association.
OSCAR W. UNDERWOOD

Country Ready For Revision, Says Framers

Braced For Change

By Representative OSCAR W. UNDERWOOD, Who Framed Tariff Bill

WE are willing to concede that immediate free sugar would put the producer to grave disadvantage. But free sugar in three years WILL DESTROY NO LEGITIMATE INDUSTRY in the United States.

I DO NOT ANTICIPATE MUCH DISTURBANCE FROM THE TARIFF REVISION; THE COUNTRY IS BRACED FOR THE CHANGE.

No Ill Effects

By GEORGE W. PERKINS, President Cigarmakers' International Union

GENERALLY speaking the present tobacco schedule is left intact. My opinion is that there will be no great business disturbance. THE COMMERCIAL INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY ARE WELL FORTIFIED FOR TARIFF REVISION DOWNWARD. I DOUBT IF IT IS GOING TO REDUCE THE COST OF LIVING as much as some men seem to expect it to do.

Bad For Fish Industry

By M. F. BLANCHARD, Director of the New England Fish Exchange

THE salt fish men will be directly affected by the tariff. Many of them will be forced to go out of business. The others will be compelled to move to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. The fresh fish business will be affected only indirectly at first, but the ruining of the salt fish industry will, of course, have its effect upon all other branches of the business.

Will Watch Effect

By COURTENAY WALTER BENNETT, British Consul General in New York

OUTSIDERS will watch the effect of the tariff changes on the industries of this country with great interest. Big businesses have been built up behind a big tariff wall. It would seem likely that when the wall is taken down the BUSINESSES MAY FEEL IT.

Protects Birds

By WILLIAM T. HORNADAY, Director New York Zoological Park

THE effort to protect American birds by tariff legislation is SPLENDID and is the second attempt of the kind. There was one made many years ago, but at that time the birds in this country were not sufficiently well guarded by legislation to make the measure practicable. In recent years, however, laws protecting birds have been passed in many states and preserves have been established.

Money Saved

By CLAU S. SPRECKELS, President Federal Sugar Refining Company

I HAVE consistently advocated the placing of sugar on the free list and have done all in my power to reduce or remove the duty on raw sugar. My stand is due to the fact that I am convinced the AMERICAN PEOPLE WOULD BE SAVED NO LESS THAN \$125,000,000 A YEAR through this revision of the tariff.

An Uncertainty

By ROBERT E. MANDELL, Wool Dealer

THE free wool tariff will have a FARREACHING EFFECT, and none at the present time can tell what it will be.



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To Meet Socialists. (ENTERED PRESS LEASED WIRE.) Berkeley, Cal., May 2.—To attend the national convention of Socialists, called to discuss municipal ownership and other civic problems, Mayor J. Stitt Wilson left for Chicago today. He was granted a month's leave of absence by the city council.

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