

Pastor Russell's Sermon

HIGH STANDARD OF DIVINE JUSTICE

Two Pentecosts—One For the Church, Other For the World.

THROUGH REDEEMER'S WORK.

Pastor Russell Says the Divine Plan, as Revealed in the Bible, Provides Two Distinct Salvations, One For the Church, the Other For the World. Salvation of the Elect Will Be on a Higher Plane Than That of the World—Earth's Great Jubilee at Hand.



Chicago, May 29th.—Pastor Russell gave two addresses here today. We report one of his addresses, on "Pentecostal Blessings," from the text, "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared for all men." (Titus ii. 11). He said in part:

As Bible students we find it more and more necessary to study the Scriptures discriminatingly. Righteousness and Justice represent the Divine Law, the Law of the Universe. On the other hand, such words as Mercy and Grace recognize man's fall from righteousness and tell us of the Divine sympathetic provision being exercised toward mankind with a view to their deliverance from their unrighteous condition—the opening of a way for their return to perfection and harmony with God, and to eternal life privileges of righteousness.

Every suggestion and arrangement looking toward Divine mercy is Scripturally associated with our Lord Jesus—the world's Redeemer. His death provides the ransom-price for Adam and his race, while His Messianic Kingdom is provided as the means or channel by and through which the willing and obedient of the redeemed will be brought back to perfection and made able again to fulfill the requirements of Justice and enjoy its blessings.

Hence we find the Scriptures continually setting before us the high standard of Divine Justice, and also setting before us the fact that Divine Love has provided mercy for the sinner through the efficacy of the Redeemer's work. For centuries God exhibited the principles of Divine Justice, not only in His Law which He gave to Israel—the measure of a perfect man's ability—but also in the fact that Christ died, "the Just for the unjust," that He might bring us back into harmony with God and His righteousness.

Hitherto, however, God's people have unwittingly narrowed down the grace of God and minimized the work of Christ and the efficacy of His redemptive sacrifice by asserting that all of the blessings are for the Church and none for the world—that they are for the present Age, and that with its consummation all hope will expire, and the world, the non-elect, will suffer to all eternity without ever having tasted of the grace of God in Christ—without ever having come to even a knowledge of that provision for sinners.

Two Salvations—Two Pentecosts. A more careful study of the Bible is revealing to God's people all over the world the fact that He has for mankind two distinct salvations—one for the Church and the other for the world—and each of these salvations is introduced by a Pentecostal blessing. That the Church is merely a first-fruit unto God of His creatures is distinctly stated by St. James (i. 18), and this certainly implies that there will be after-fruit—the world in general.

Note the Apostle's statement respecting the meritorious value, the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, both for the Church and for the world; he says: "He is a Propitiation for our sins (the Church), and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) The Church is the elect "first-fruit," or as St. Paul declares, "The Church of the First-born, whose names are written in heaven." Through this elect Church eventually the blessing of God is to be extended to all the willing and obedient of the non-elect.

This does not mean that all mankind will attain salvation, everlasting life, but it does mean that to all will come the opportunity for escape from the curse of sin and death which came upon all through Father Adam's sin. Neither does it signify that all who gain life will gain the same kind of salvation—that all will gain everlasting life on the same plane of glory. Quite to the contrary. The fact that the elect Church is called and tested in advance of the world implies that her salvation will be on a higher plane than that of the world, and this the Apostle clearly states when he assures us, "We must all be changed," because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."

tution, therefore, is synonymous with the blotting out of the curse.

Our Pentecost—and the World's. There can be no dispute respecting the Church's Pentecost, that it began on the fiftieth day after our Lord's resurrection—ten days after He ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God—as the Church's Advocate. But just what that Pentecostal blessing meant to the Church is perhaps not clearly seen by all—all who have experienced a share in its blessings. It marks the Divine acceptance of the Church—the Divine grace which acknowledged the merit of the Savior as applied on her behalf, and acknowledged the Divine acceptance of the Church as a faithful band consecrated to walk in Jesus' footsteps.

There has been no need of a repetition of this Pentecostal blessing. It came at the beginning of the Church's experience, and represents God's acceptance of the entire foreordained company, for all of whom Jesus appeared as Advocate. Those blessed with that outpouring of the Holy Spirit had already accepted Jesus as their Redeemer, and had already consecrated their lives to be His footstep followers. All of the same class who have lived since—all who will eventually constitute the elect Church, were appeared for by Jesus at the same time. Hence we are not to expect fresh Pentecosts upon the Church, but merely to expect to enter into and enjoy our share of the one outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which, like the oil poured upon Aaron's head and which ran down to the skirts of his garment, will anoint us, the Church, down to the "feet," to the very last member of the Church.

Many of us had not noticed until recently that two Pentecostal blessings are mentioned by the Prophet. Our overlooking this was doubtless because it was not due time for it to be clearly understood. Now, as the time nears for the fulfillment of the second Pentecostal blessing, the force and meaning of the Scripture shines out. Another reason for its being overlooked is that by Divine arrangement the world's Pentecost was mentioned first, and that of the Church last. But even this is appropriate, because the Divine intention was primarily the world's salvation, and that of the Church comes incidentally. "God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believed in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But before making known the riches of His grace to the world, God has been pleased to foreordain the election of the Church, to be joint-heirs with Jesus in the glorious work of blessing earth's teeming millions.

Notice How the Text Reads: "It shall come to pass, saith the Lord, at the end of those days, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, * * * and in those days I will pour out My Spirit upon My servants and upon My handmaidens."—Joel ii. 28, 29; Acts ii. 17.

St. Peter, in quoting the prophecy, properly applied only the portion which was due in his day, namely, that portion applicable to the servants and handmaidens of the Lord—the Church class. He left without comment the major portion of the promise, which relates to the world, and which cannot have fulfillment until the elect Church shall have been completed and glorified. The two features of the prophecy are distinctly marked, the one blessing to be upon God's servants and handmaidens only, the other to be upon all flesh. The one was to be "in those days," the other, "after those days."

How strange that this was previously overlooked, you say? We reply, it is not more strange than that the Jews and the Apostles themselves overlooked many statements of prophecy which indicated the ending of Jewish favor and the beginning of a glorious opportunity of joint-heirship with Christ to the Gentiles. That part of the prophecy was discerned only when the due time came, and so this feature of Joel's prophecy pertaining to the blessing of the world and the outpouring of God's Spirit upon them passed unnoticed until now, as the time nears for its fulfillment.

There can be no question that the Holy Spirit of God has not yet come upon all flesh, nor can it be questioned that it has come during this Age upon God's servants and handmaidens. The promise therefore is amongst the blessings that are to be accomplished after these days—after the completion of the Church and her glorification.

Jubilee Day—Jubilee Year. The day of Pentecost was the grand Jubilee Day in which God's blessing was attained marking the forgiveness of sin and the acceptance by the heavenly Father. It was the 50th day (7 x 7 plus 1). Every Jewish Sabbath pointed directly to this Jubilee Day as the culmination of the Sabbath day system. It was thus the antitype toward which all Sabbath days pointed. The word "Sabbath," as is well known, signifies rest, and this culmination of the Sabbath days in a fiftieth day signified the ultimate or completeness of rest. Thus was symbolically taught in the Law the fact that full rest from sin and the Law was to be attained.

On Pentecost Day the living believers of that time entered into rest in a sense and degree never before enjoyed or even understood. The Pentecostal blessings of the Holy Spirit brought to them the full assurance of sin forgiven, through the merit of Christ's sacrifice, and it also brought to them proof of their acceptance by the heavenly Father, as children of God, and "if children, then heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord." In this sense of the word Pentecost was the most notable day of the grace of God for the Church. And God's servants and handmaidens ever since, upon taking the steps required, have

been admitted to this grace of forgiveness and adoption.

But it will be remembered that in the Law given to Israel there was not only a seven-day series of Sabbaths, but also a seven-year series of Sabbaths. Each seventh year was to be a Sabbath year, leading up to a Jubilee (7 x 7 plus 1), the fiftieth. As the day Sabbath reached a glorious culmination for the Church, so the year Sabbath will reach a glorious climax for the world. The fiftieth year was the Jubilee Year, in which the people obtained rest in a very full and complete sense. In that year all debts were canceled, and all who had been sold into slavery for debt went free. The whole people had a fresh start every Jubilee Year; they had rest from all their past errors and imperfections of conduct and judgment.

This pictured the coming blessings—the Day of Messiah—when He shall reign and when through the merit of His sacrifice all sin will be forgiven and all slavery to sin and death will be abolished. This is not a new thought. Long centuries ago Bible students discerned that the Jubilee of Israel's time was a feature of the Law foreshadowing a blessing world-wide. It was in the spirit of this knowledge that this beautiful hymn was written: "Blow ye the trumpet, blow The gladly solemn sound; Let all the nations know, To earth's remotest bound: The Year of Jubilee has come, Returning ransomed sinners home. 'Ye who were sold for naught, Whose heritage was lost, May have it back unbought, A gift as Jesus' cost: The Year of Jubilee is come, Returning ransomed sinners home.'"

As the Church has been, for more than eighteen centuries, enjoying the blessings and privileges typified by the fiftieth, or Jubilee Day, so the world for a thousand years will enjoy the blessings and privileges typified by the Jubilee Year. But let us not be misunderstood; the Millennium blessings will not be forced upon all men. Rather, they will be exhibited to all, and the eyes of the blind of the world will be opened and all will thus be privileged to know of, to appreciate and to enter into the enjoyment of the Jubilee blessings. But those desiring to share in the world's Pentecostal blessings will be required to take the necessary steps to attain them; but with the clear knowledge then granted the Bible declares that those steps will be

"The Desires of All Nations." Note the correspondence between the coming of the Pentecostal blessings to the Church and the world's attainment of its Pentecostal blessings. God did not pour out His Holy Spirit upon His servants and handmaidens all at once, but gradually throughout this Age. And each individual in order to obtain his share in this Pentecostal blessing, has been obliged to take very definite steps of consecration, vows of obedience and loyalty. Just so the pouring out of the Divine blessing upon all flesh during the thousand years of Christ's reign will be gradual.

In order for the children of men to obtain that great blessing, it will be necessary for them first of all to recognize the Redeemer, the Savior, the great King of that time. Moreover, it will be necessary to fully surrender themselves to Him, and to come under the terms of His blessings. Only such will be fully liberated and be received of God as children upon the human plane. Thus it is written, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son shall not see life."

The work of setting the world free from sin and death will be a gradual one. Collectively it will be gradual, because the resurrection of the dead is to be a gradual work; as the Apostle declares, all will come forth, but "every man in his own order." (1 Corinthians xv. 23.) It will be a gradual work because, although the Messianic Kingdom first offers satisfaction to Justice for all, at the very beginning of the Kingdom, nevertheless release will be granted only in proportion as loyalty is demonstrated to the principles of righteousness and truth.

Nevertheless their full attainment of the Heavenly benediction—their full acceptance of life eternal—will not come to them until the close of the thousand years. Then, after having been lifted up to perfection by the great Mediatorial King and Messiah, after having been taught of Him, after having enjoyed the full privilege secured by His Ransom sacrifice, they will still be required to stand a further test before receiving a Divine pronouncement respecting their worthiness of eternal life as sons in the flesh.

That testing is pictured to us in Revelation 20, in the statement that "Satan shall be loosed for a little season" at the end of the thousand years, that the loyalty or disloyalty of heart of all the human family then brought back to human perfection may be tried, tested, proved, demonstrated. Such as shall prove themselves loyal to God at heart will stand in that hour of temptation, and all who prove disloyal will be but showing that if they had opportunity they would resume the life of sin and disloyalty to God; and such—we know not the proportion—will be destroyed in the Second Death.

The testings of the faithful, both in this age and in the next, are designed of the Lord to be so crucial, to so thoroughly demonstrate the thoughts and intents of the heart, that Divine Wisdom is able to guarantee that those who will pass these tests will be forever loyal. Hence the prediction of the Scriptures respecting the eternal future—that there shall be no more dying, no more crying, no more sighing, because all the former things of sin and death will have passed away. Then every creature in heaven and on earth will loyally acclaim honor to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, forever.

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