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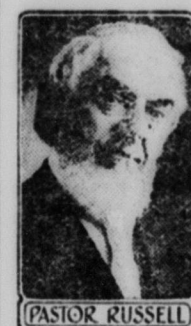


DRUNKEN WITH FALSE DOCTRINES

Man Worships Pleasure Rather Than Reveres God.

THE DAY DAWN IS UPON US.

Pastor Russell Proclaims the Rising Sun of Righteousness Will Soon Scatter the Clouds and Reveal the True Character of the Creator—Divine Justice and Love Will Be Made Clear to Human Vision.



Jersey City, N. J., Sept. 24.—Pastor Russell's address at the Opera House was the event of the day. As usual he had the closest attention and a crowded house. His text was, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. From such turn away." (II Timothy iii. 4, 5.) He said:

Our text could scarcely apply better to present-day conditions if St. Paul had written the words this very day. The world seems to be going pleasure-mad. Very evidently we are in the "perilous times" mentioned in the context. It is proper that we investigate this tendency toward pleasure and formality as respects religion. What is the cause of this condition? It is not because mankind have naturally more desire for pleasure than for God. On the contrary, Philology shows us that the very highest organs of the human mind are those which relate to spirituality and reverence. Under normal conditions, therefore, all mankind might reasonably be expected to have their chief pleasure in spiritual things, in harmony with a proper reverence for their Creator and His will.

What has changed this natural condition, and turned the hearts of men away from reverence for God and spiritual things to more sensuous pleasures, with merely an outward form of piety? The answer is that man's reverence for his Creator and for spiritual things has been taken advantage of by Satan. God has been pictured to men's minds as All-Powerful and devilish. These false doctrines, St. Paul declares, are "doctrines of demons" (I Timothy iv. 1). These misconceptions, formulated into multitudinous creeds, became their idols. Each idol creed contained a little nucleus of truth, around which monstrous errors were aggregated. For a long time we blindly and stupidly worshipped our creed-idols, fighting for ourselves and against others. Contributing our money to the point of sacrifice and self-denial, we built costly temples, each party for his own idol.

We were kept so busily engaged in thus fighting and working and building, that we did not stop to carefully notice the horrible outlines of these idols, nor to consider their blasphemous misrepresentations of the true God of Justice, Wisdom, Love, Power.

The Day Dawn Is Upon Us

The Apostle says, "They that sleep, sleep in the night and they that are drunken are drunken in the night." Many thus have been asleep and have dreamed terrible things respecting the future which our Heavenly Father has ordained for His creatures. Various hallucinations and nightmares have afflicted us. Many have been drunken with the wine of false doctrines, mentioned in the Apocalypse, which tells us that this "drunkenness" or stupefaction of error has extended to all nations of Christendom (Rev. xviii. 3).

We may well thank God that "the night is far spent and the day is at hand." "The Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in His beams" (Malachi iv. 2). The result will be the complete scattering of darkness, superstition and error, which for so long has more or less clouded the minds of many of us to the true character of our God and the true teachings of His Word. It is because we are in the dawning of the New Day that we are beginning to see, as never before, the horrible features of our creed idols.

The majority of Christians have not yet discovered the real character of the Almighty. They are in a transition state. They no longer worship their idols as formerly, yet they still worship them. We can direct them to worship the true God, but the idols so monstrously misrepresent the God of all Grace that the worship is necessarily faint and half-hearted; or, as the Apostle declares, it is merely "a form of godliness," without the power, the force, the strength which should accompany the worship of the true God, rightly understood and properly revered.

A Revolution of Sentiment
The dawning of the light of the New Day of Messiah begins to waken us from the nightmares of the Dark Ages. We have begun to doubt our creed idols. Many have ceased their worship altogether. Many others respect them merely as fetiches of the past. Some are afraid that if the masses cease to worship the idols all reverence for holy things will pass away and the world will lapse into heathenish darkness. We should remember, on the contrary, that we have been in

heathenish darkness, and are merely now escaping from it. The heathen has had his idol of wood and stone while we have had more ethereal ones. The heathen's idols are ugly enough, yet far less horrible than the creed idols of civilized lands. No excuse will longer maintain idol worship of any kind.

Looking For the Truth
The great difficulty with the masses is that, repudiating the idols, they are lapsing into agnosticism—doubt. They know not what they believe. They are looking for the Truth. They find the leaders of the creeds still bowing formally to the idols, but privately repudiating them. Such leaders are unworthy of confidence and only partially honest. Hungry and thirsty for something to satisfy the craving of their hearts, the famishing people are turning toward pleasure. "They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

Comparatively few any longer believe in purgatory or everlasting torment, but they believe that these doctrines have a Scriptural foundation, which they proportionately discredit, and charge with being the source of all their ignorance and superstition in the past. With faith in the Bible gone, the masses know not where to go nor whom to trust respecting enlightenment regarding the future. They are reaching the conclusion that everything is a big guess, and that they may as well do their own guessing as to pay a minister to do it for them.

The situation is a deplorable one. As we have already intimated, humanity is so constituted that religion holds the very highest place in its mental organism—the seat of power and control in all the affairs of his life. With no fixed conviction, men are drifting. The learned are going into infidelity, under the more refined name of Higher Criticism. The poor and less learned are going into doubt respecting any intelligent Creator or Supervisor. As a matter of fact they are saying not only there is no God who would torment mankind eternally, but apparently, there is no God who takes any interest in humanity.

In this frame of mind Socialism appeals to them. They propose to bring about "Paradise Restored," by the power of Socialism. They say to themselves, "We are without a God, without a future hope, and without confidence in our former views, let us eat, drink and be merry—let us enjoy life—let us get all that we can of pleasure out of present existence, for we are hopeless respecting a future one." Is it any wonder that the Apostle foretold that, under these conditions, the masses would become more and more pleasure-mad?

Thus we account for the great lament that is going up from all churches that the pews are empty, and the collection-boxes empty, and that the system would go down except for the benevolent wealthy, who really do not believe in the creed idols, but who desire that others shall believe in them and worship them. In a word, the crowds which once flocked to the churches, with their nickels and pennies, now make for the theatres and crowd the hard, rough "bleachers" of the ball grounds. They have become lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, because the representations of God in the various creeds are too repulsive, too irrational, too devilish, to be longer believed in or worshipped. What the people need is a general smashing of all the creed idols and the unanimous return to the study of the Bible, and to the worship of the true God, which the Bible sets forth.

Preachers Are in Perplexity

No men in the world are to be more sympathized with than the preachers. The creed idols have been richly endowed by well-meaning votaries of the past. The interests of the clergy are all wrapped up with the interests of the creed idols—not only their financial interests, but their honor, dignity, titles. The question with the clergy today is, How can we smash the creed idols? How can we destroy them without ourselves perishing with them? If we tell the common people plainly what we believe, they will all leave the creed idols. They will ask us, How long is it since you came to this conclusion? If we tell them that we have not believed in our creeds for many years, will they not call us hypocritical and lose their confidence in us? And, besides, what could we offer them instead?

It is no secret that the great majority of the educated clergy are total unbelievers, not only in the creeds which they profess, but also in the Bible—they call themselves "Higher Critics" and "Evolutionists." They have nothing that they could teach the people, except their doubts, their misunderstandings. Having lost faith in the creed idols, they are seeking for the true God, in whom the masses believe little enough as it is. They are bound to God and religious things by a very slim cord composed of three strands—ignorance, superstition and natural reverence. The ignorance and superstition will soon break, and all that will be left will be man's natural reverence. Now is the time for replacing ignorance with knowledge, and superstition with loving obedience to the true God.

"A Famine In the Land"
When I was in Boston last June the largest opera house of that great city, seating thirty-six hundred, was crowded; four hundred more were behind me on the platform besides those who stood, and I learned afterwards that hundreds were turned away from the doors. The next day the editor of a religious journal called on me. His leading question was: "Pastor Russell, how do you explain the fact that the people of all creeds, and of the world, come in such crowds to your meetings? I was present yesterday

at the Boston Theatre and witnessed that vast concourse of intelligent people. As I looked at them I asked myself the question I am now asking you, 'How is it that such crowds attend your services, even in this sultry, summer weather, when the summer resorts and seashore pleasures would call them elsewhere, and while many of our leading and able ministers, supported by talented choirs, have small attendance—twenty, forty, fifty or so? What is your explanation?'"

I replied, "My brother, I believe we are witnessing a fulfillment of the Scripture which says: 'There shall be a famine in the land: Not a famine for bread, nor a famine for water, but a famine for the hearing of the Word of the Lord' (Amos viii. 11). The public are getting their eyes too widely opened to ever again respect the God whom Brother Calvin pictured—a God, All-Wise and All-Powerful, but thoroughly unloving, who foreordained and predestinated a saintly handful to glory, and the unsightly thousands of millions to an eternity of torture. We once believed those things, but the new morning of God's grace in Christ Jesus is gradually scattering the darkness."

"Neither can we longer believe with Brother Wesley that our God is good and loving, and would like to save everybody if He could, but was unwise in His creation of man, and is lacking in power to direct the matter now. The people are hungering for something better—for something consistent and rational and in accordance with the Bible declaration, that Divine Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power are co-ordinate—that God is Love, and is as just and wise and powerful as He is loving. The people need to be shown a theology which will accord with this Divine character and with the Divine statement that 'known unto the Lord are all His works from the beginning of the world'; and again: 'My Word that goeth forth out of My mouth shall not return unto Me void, but shall accomplish that which I please,' saith the Lord, 'and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.'"

Bible Doctrine of Election

Christian people need to believe the Bible doctrine of Election, but must see it in a different light from that which Brother Calvin threw upon the subject. They must see election from the Bible standpoint—the election of a saintly Church, a "little flock," "a royal priesthood, a holy people," to be the Bride of Christ, and His joint-heirs. They must see that this "elect" Church with the Redeemer is God's appointed channel for the blessing of the non-elect world. They need to be shown clearly that the saintly few, gathered first from the Jews, but subsequently completed by additions of those of saintly character of all nations, are with Christ to become the great Seed of Abraham, the great Messiah, Abraham's spiritual Seed, "like the stars of heaven." It must then be shown why this spiritual Seed has been "called," "elected," selected from amongst mankind—that it is for the very purpose of blessing the non-elect, the masses of Adam's race, in harmony with God's promise to Abraham—"In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

St. Paul refers to this spiritual Seed, saying, "And to thy Seed, which is Christ," and "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians iii. 16, 29). All these are Heirs of the great promise that has not yet been fulfilled. The fulfillment waits until the completion of a foreordained number, an elect "little flock" of the saintly few. Then these, changed by the power of the First Resurrection, from human nature to divine nature (I Peter i. 4), will constitute the glorious Kingdom of Messiah. The Kingdom blessings will go first to Abraham's natural seed, and through them to all nations.

God's character is so great, so grand, that, if seen by men, it would be revered. God's Plan of Salvation is so grandly beautiful that, when rightly understood and comprehended, it proves more fascinating than any novel.

The world has been kept away from God and from the Bible by the machinations of the Adversary. He has had much to do with the formation of our creed idols. Seeing men breaking away from error, in the Reformation time, and groping after the Truth, Satan presented himself "as an angel of light" and misguided our fathers into the formation of their various creeds. This is corroborated by St. Paul's words, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the goodness of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, should shine into their hearts" (II Corinthians iv. 4). The Adversary did not wish us to see with "the eyes of our hearts" the glorious character of our Creator. His love for mankind and His glorious provision for us. He wished, on the contrary, to blind us with prejudice, to turn us away from God and from the Bible. And surely His plan has been measurably successful.

Nevertheless, Satan has gained no real victory, he has in no way hindered the finding of the "elect." Rather, we may assume that these various, blinding influences and stumbling stones have but served to prove, to test the love, loyalty, faith and obedience of the "called and chosen and faithful."

If we have seen why the world is going pleasure-mad, and if we have seen the steps which should be taken to guide the well-intentioned into the ways of the Lord, let us, my beloved hearers, not only be faithful ourselves to the Lord's way, but let us lift high the Royal Banner of our God and of our Savior, and "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

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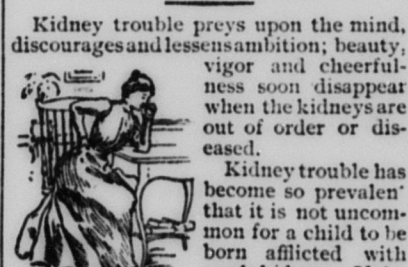
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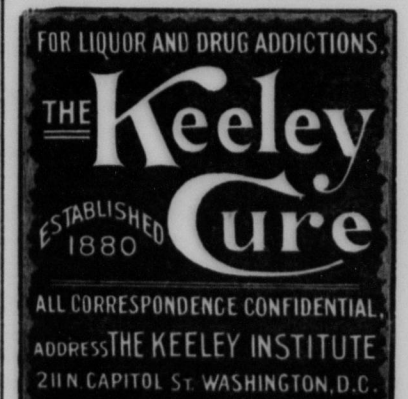


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