

Morning Cometh and A Dark Night Also

Pastor Russell's Last Sermon

The Night Was Long—It's Sorrows and Tears Were Many—God's Promises Alone Illuminated It—the Morning Here at Last—a Wonderful Dawning—The Day to Be Still More Wonderful—Proofs All About Us Considered—A Brief Night of Trouble Settling Down—Already Begun in Europe—After it a Glorious Sunburst.



Pastor Russell died Tuesday, October 31st, at 2:30 o'clock. The following sermon was read at a memorial service for Pastor Russell, in the New York City Temple, November 5th, at 8 o'clock, the same time and place where he was scheduled to deliver it.

"The literature of the world shows that intelligent men have refused to believe that the Divine Purpose in the creation of our earth has yet been attained. Continually we find references to 'the Morning of the New Day,' to the 'Golden Age,' etc. Yet not to the longings of men's hearts, but to the promises of our God, do we look for real instruction on this subject. The Bible most emphatically declares that the entire period of human history thus far has been a night time.

The Prophet David explains, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the Morning." (Psalms 30:5.) Thus prophetically we are assured that there will be a Morning whose glory, brightness and blessings will fully compensate for all the dark shadows of the Night time past. Our text is another prophecy along the same line. The message of the Lord is, "The Morning cometh!" St. Paul writes that up to this time the world had been under a Reign of Sin and Death, not under a Reign of Righteousness and Life. (Romans 5:21.) He points out also that the Day of the Lord will come, and will come gradually, stealthily, taking the world unawares—"as a thief in the night."—1 Thessalonians 5:1-6.

All of the Apostles assure us that it is not God's purpose to permit the Reign of Sin and Death to continue for ever. They tell us that the Divine Program is that Messiah, in the Father's appointed time, will take to Himself His great power and reign King of kings and Lord of lords—putting down sin and every evil thing, uplifting humanity and granting a Divine blessing where for six thousand years there has been a Divine curse. The Bible writers explain that this does not signify a change in the Divine Purpose, but that God had planned this thing in Himself from before the foundation of the world; and that although He had permitted Sin to enter and Death to reign, He had made fullest provision for the Redeemer to die for our sins and eventually to become the Restorer and Life-giver to Adam and his race—to as many of them as will accept everlasting life on the Divine terms.

The Apostles tell us that during the "night time," since Jesus' death, God has been doing a special work—selecting from mankind a special class, a saintly few—"the Church of the First-born, whose names are written in Heaven." These are not taken from any one nation or denomination. This "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom (Luke 12:32), is composed of all the saintly followers of Jesus, who walk in His steps in the narrow way during this Gospel Age. Their experiences are to qualify them for association with their Redeemer in His Messianic Kingdom. Their trials, their obedience and their sufferings for righteousness' sake are to work out for these a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Suffering with the Master for the Truth's sake in the present life they are to share His glory, honor and immortality in the life to come. They are to be His joint-heirs in His Kingdom.—Galatians 3:29; 2 Timothy 2:11,12.

THE KINGDOM SUNRISE NEARING.

Amongst the Lord's people even, few yet understand that Jesus distinctly teaches that the "Sun of Righteousness," which will arise with healing in His beams and whose light will constitute the New Day, will be composed of the Church of Christ glorified—changed from human to Divine nature by participation in the First Resurrection. Our Lord Jesus tells this in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. He declares that in the end of this Gospel Age all of the wheat class will be gathered into the Heavenly Garner, and that "then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father." (Matthew 13:43.) We must not think, however, that this signifies the Church without the Redeemer, but must remember that Jesus is "the Head over the Church which is His Body."—Ephesians 1:22,23.

How wonderful, how beautiful, how appropriate are the word-pictures of the Bible! No one but the Lord knew of the great Divine Plan. No one but

Him, therefore, could give these pictures of its development. In various terms and figures of speech the Bible attempts to give us a little glimpse of the glorious conditions of that Day. The New Day and the Kingdom will be "the desire of all peoples." In that Day the righteous will flourish, and evil-doers will be cut off from life. During that thousand-year Day of Messiah's Kingdom, Satan is to be bound, "that he may deceive the nations no more." (Revelations 20:3,2.) Landlordism will come to an end; for "they shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat the fruit thereof," but "shall long enjoy the work of their hands."—Isaiah 55:22.

The earth is to yield her increase. (Psalm 67:6.) Streams are to come forth in the desert; the solitary places are to be made glad. The entire earth is to become like the Garden of Eden. It is God's footstool, and He declares that He will make it glorious. It is not to be burned up with literal fire, as once we supposed. It is to "abide for ever." (Ecclesiastics 1:4; Psalms 104:5.) "He formed it not in vain; He formed it to be inhabited."—Isaiah 45:18, 66:1, 60:13, 35:1,7.

WONDERFUL FOREGLEAMS OF LIGHT.

The most wonderful thing that the Bible tells us respecting that New Day is that it will bring great intelligence and enlightenment to every creature. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the face of the great deep. (Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14.) "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 31:34.) Ultimately every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess, to the glory of God.—(Philippians 2:11; Isaiah 45:23.)

What an enthusing prospect the Bible holds out before the Church and before as many of the world as can exercise a measure of faith to believe! The world indeed sees to some extent that great blessings are coming; but just what these are and how they are to come mankind know not; for "the world by wisdom knows not God." (1 Corinthians 1:21.) The worldly wise have rejected the Bible, and do not trust it as a Revelation from God. Thus the wise are caught in their own craftiness. (1 Corinthians 3:19.) Their boasted wisdom ensnares them and blinds them to the Divine Revelation.

Nevertheless, some of our greatest thinkers—Mr. Edison and others—are rapidly seeing that the world is just on the verge of the most wonderful inventions and knowledge, which will transform the face of the earth and the people thereof. They are corroborating the Bible unwittingly; for they believe it not and know not of its messages.

THE DAWNING BEGUN IN A. D. 1874.

Let us not stop now to discuss the darkness of the Night and its weeping. Let us awake, and take note of the fact that the dawning of the New Age is already here. For the past forty-two years we have been in it and enjoying many of its blessings. But those blessings came so stealthily—"like a thief in the night"—that few recognize their import. Some few have been calling attention to the fact that we have been in the Millennial dawn ever since 1874.

Bible chronology quite clearly teaches that the six thousand years since Adam's creation have ended—six great Days of a thousand years each, mentioned by St. Peter—"a Day with the Lord is as a thousand years." (2 Peter 3:8.) Now the great Seventh Day, also a thousand years long, has commenced. We have been enjoying its dawning. It is to be a grand Day! What wonder if the dawning be remarkable!

It may surprise some to be told that the past forty-two years mean more to the world in increase of education, increase of wealth, increase of all manner of labor-saving inventions and conveniences, increase of safeguards and protections for human life, than did all the six thousand years which preceded them—many times over. The world has probably created a thousand times as much wealth during these forty-two years as during the entire six thousand years preceding. Yet these changes have come so gradually that few have noticed them.

FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY EVERYWHERE.

Forty-two years ago man labored from sun to sun; today we are rapidly approaching an eight-hour day. Forty-two years ago nearly all the labor of the world was done with sweat of face; today it is nearly all accomplished by machinery. Forty-two years ago the sewing machine was just reaching perfection; today it is everywhere indispensable. So with the thousand household conveniences. So with nearly all of our sanitary and plumbing arrangements. So with farming implements. Reapers and binders, mowers, automobiles, gas engines, etc., all belong to these forty-two years. In our cities the modern conveniences are wonder-

ful. Solomon in all his glory never even dreamed of such things as the poorest human being in America may enjoy!

Prophecies respecting streams in the desert and the wilderness blossoming as the rose are having fulfillment—not miraculously, but in harmony with the Divine order of an increased intelligence amongst men. Artesian wells are being drilled, irrigating canals constructed, not only in the western part of the United States and Canada, but also in far-off Mesopotamia. The results are marvelous. Land previously not worth fencing is valued at \$500 per acre today. The increase of knowledge has been supplemented by governmental arrangements for the distribution of that knowledge amongst the people. The soils of various localities are being analyzed at public expense; and the tillers of the soil are given knowledge as respects what kind of fertilizers as required to bring satisfactory results.

Under these conditions it does not surprise us to know that as much as 156 bushels of corn have been raised to one acre, and that 600 bushels of potatoes and over are not an uncommon record. Is not the Bible being fulfilled? Who can dispute these facts? What do they signify? We answer that they exactly corroborate the Divine declaration which describes our day: Many shall run to and fro; knowledge shall be increased; the wise of God's people shall understand; and "there shall be a Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation."—Daniel 12:4, 10:1; Matthew 24:21.

INCREASE OF WORLD-WIDE DISCONTENT.

We are in the Morning of our text. Ah, what a glorious Morning! How changed the human conditions from those of our grandfathers! How thankful the whole world should be! Paeans of praise should be rising from all the people of the favored lands of civilization; and helping hands should be outstretched to carry the same blessings to heathen lands. But is it so? Are the people happy and rejoicing? Are they appreciative of the New Day?—of the gifts of Divine Providence?

No! In proportion as the blessings of God have come, the discontent of humanity has increased; and unbelief, not only in respect to the Bible as the Divine Revelation, but in many instances in respect to the very existence of an intelligent Creator. Notwithstanding the great increase in the world's wealth, and the fact that there are some noble souls who are using their share of the wealth in a praiseworthy manner, nevertheless the general operation of the law of selfishness prevails; and all the legislation which has been enacted, or which can be enacted, fails to restrain the giant institutions—corporations—of our day, fails to hinder them from the exploiting of the masses in the interests of the comparatively few.

Did God know all these things? What will He do about them? Will He bring in the Millennial blessings, and risk that men shall take for granted that they have won the secrets of nature by their own wisdom and perseverance and forget God entirely? Will they become more discontented? Would a Millennium of discontent be advantageous? What will God do about it?

THE DARK NIGHT ALREADY SETTLING. According to the Bible, God foreknew of the conditions of our day as we are now reviewing them; and in our text He gives a key to the situation—elsewhere in the Scriptures made very plain. Through the Prophet, God tells of the Dark Night coming—after the Morning Dawn had been well ushered in—a dark storm-cloud just at sunrise. This dark hour is described in the prophecy of Daniel, and also in that of our Lord Jesus, to be "a Time of Trouble, such as never was seen since there was a nation."

Bible students see this great Time of Trouble already beginning in the letting loose of the winds of strife in Europe. In the light of the Bible they perceive that the result of this present war will be the great wakening of the nations—of the governments of the earth—an increased knowledge and discontent amongst the people.

The next phase of the Trouble, according to the Bible, is to be the "great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." (Revelation 16:18.) This is not a literal earthquake, but a symbolic one—revolution. Then the third phase of the calamity—the darkest of all—will be the symbolic fire of anarchy, which will utterly destroy our present civilization. Then, in the midst of that most awful Time of Trouble, Messiah, the great King, will take His great power and will exercise it, with the result that the raging waves of the sea of human passion will all be quieted, the fires of anarchy will all be extinguished, and the Reign of Righteousness and Peace will begin.

Cannot we see the wisdom of the great Creator's Program? He has determined to permit mankind to convince themselves of their own impotency, of their need of a God, and of the fact that there is a God, and that His glorious purposes for humanity are revealed in His Word. Ah, it is no wonder that the Bible speaks of the "still small voice of God," speaking to mankind through Messiah's Kingdom! No wonder the Lord declares that "then He will turn to the people a pure Mes-

sage, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent!"—Zephaniah 3:8, 9.

MESSIAH WILL "MAKE ALL THINGS NEW."

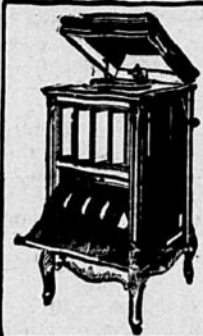
St. Peter gives us a vivid picture of the New Order of things in Messiah's Kingdom. He says, "The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also; and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. . . . the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved. . . . Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—2 Peter 3:10, 12, 13.

The "new heavens" will be the glorified Church, consisting of Jesus the Head and His Bride class, selected from the world during the past eighteen centuries. The "new earth" will be the new social order under the control of the new heavens. There will be no patching of present institutions, but a clean sweep of them by the fire of Divine wrath preceding the establishment of the New Order, wherein only that which is righteous, just, equitable, true, will be recognized.

We rejoice that such glorious things are coming—even though the world must necessarily reach them through the tribulation of the Time of Trouble. Happy are those whose eyes and ears of understanding are open now, and who are in such heart relationship with the Lord that He can make known to them in advance something of the riches of His grace, and show them how the coming troubles will work out blessings for the human family.

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Timothy Straw Stack
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