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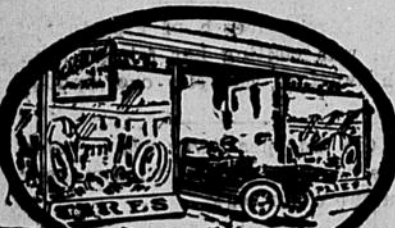
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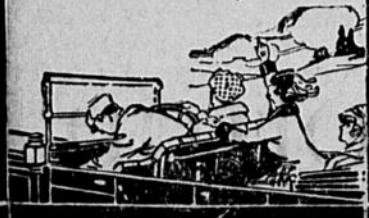
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PASSING OF THE OLD ORDER

Many of the Psalms Messianic—Figurative Descriptions of the Work of the Millennium—Passing Away of Sin and Selfishness—A New Order of Peace and Righteousness—The Heavenly Over-Lord Master of the Situation—Glorious Outcome of Joy and Blessing to All Mankind.



Sept. 2.—Pastor Russell's discourse today dealt with the symbolic language of the Psalms. His text was, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea" (Psalm 46:2). Those who have seen the beautiful film, "Christ Walking on the Sea," in THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, will all the more readily appreciate the line of thought which the Pastor set forth. He said:

I have chosen for my text a symbolic prophecy which I believe to be rapidly nearing fulfillment. All Bible students recognize the fact that many of the Psalms are Messianic; that is to say, they apply to the time of the inauguration of Messiah's Millennial Kingdom. Some of them detail the joy, peace and blessings which will then prevail amongst men, when the great leveling processes of that time will raise all the worthy poor and degraded and will humble all the proud, establishing society under such conditions that the new order of things is symbolically styled in Scripture "a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Others of the Psalms describe in highly figurative language the work of the Millennium.

By way of illustration the Pastor quoted at length from Psalm 45: "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty; and in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under Thee." Here, he declared, the great Redeemer is pictured as the glorious conquering King of the Millennial Age, and His victory over every opposing influence is emphasized. As the Prophet Isaiah says, "Every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" to the King of earth. His right hand, which shall teach Him terrible things, is an expression symbolic of the Divine Power which will be exercised at the inauguration of the Kingdom. The sharp arrows that will pierce the King's enemies to the heart and cause them symbolically to fall before Him represent His messages of truth and grace, which will then conquer as they do not now, except in the case of a few.

A sample of those now slain by the arrows of God's Word is furnished us in the account of St. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. There the Apostle preached the Truth plainly, thrusting in the "Sword of the Spirit" up to the hilt. He told the hearers that they and their rulers had crucified the Prince of Life. The record is that "they were cut to the heart"; and this was the greatest blessing that could possibly have come to them (Acts 2:33). Similarly, during the Millennium, the arrows of Truth will smite down all opposition; and mankind, cut to the heart with proper appreciation of their own sinfulness and of God's mercy, will fall before the great King, accepting mercy upon His gracious terms of full surrender.

The Day of Trouble Pictured. The Psalm of which our text is part is a Messianic Psalm. Prophetically and symbolically it tells about the trouble incident to the passing away of the present order of sin and selfishness and the inauguration of the new order of righteousness and love under the great Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ. Whether the events predicted in Scripture come to pass in our day or not, we hold that they will come and will be in full comportment with these prophetic pictures; for they were surely written for our instruction, as St. Paul declares.—2 Timothy 3:16.

As Bible students we do well to take heed to every item of the Divine revelation, in order to keep ourselves in touch with the Infinite One and in sympathy with all the features of His great and wonderful Program. Let us note the particulars of the Psalm in detail.

The Psalm begins with the beautiful assurance, "God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in trouble." How comforting! How strengthening! Those who have entered into covenant relationship with God through Christ, through faith and consecration, and who are abiding in His love, may feel serene in every trouble. Not merely in the final trouble, with which sin and sorrow will be brought to an end, not merely when Satan shall be bound,

will God be the Refuge of His saints, but in all times and under all circumstances, will "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" keep the hearts of His faithful people.

"Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Fear is the great torment of the majority of our race. It is the lash which the Adversary uses to drive away from God those who need His sympathy, love and succor. To such the Lord speaks, tenderly saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

God declares His name to be Love. Through the Prophet Isaiah He says, "This people's fear toward Me is taught by the precepts of men"—not by His Word. He would have us trust Him as a great, loving Father; for He says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord compassioneth those who reverence Him." (Psalm 103:13). As love, more love, perfect love, comes into our hearts, it more and more casts out the fear which the Adversary would inculcate and which has burned into men's minds and consciences the "doctrines of demons," to which the Apostle Paul refers.—1 Timothy 4:1.

Biblical Symbolism Explained.

To His people the Lord says, "Fear not their fear, neither be afraid." "Let the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, rule in your hearts." Be faithful; be trustful! Accept the assurance that "all things shall work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." This class will not fear when the earth shall be removed and when the mountains shall be carried into the midst of the sea. They might indeed be astonished and in trepidation if the reference were to literal mountains; but the language is figurative. The people of the Lord, under His instruction, will not be in darkness, that the Day of the Lord shall overtake them as a thief, although it will come as a snare upon the whole world.—Luke 21:35.

In the symbolism of the Bible the term earth is used to represent the social structure; for the mountains, which constitute the backbones of the continents, symbolize the kingdoms of the world, supported by the social structure. As the earth represents the fixity of the social order, the sea represents the restless, turbulent, dissatisfied classes which lash against the "earth" and continually seek to swallow it up. The removal of the "earth" symbolizes the disturbance of the social order. The swallowing up of the "mountains" by the seas represents the overwhelming of some of the great kingdoms of the earth by the uprising of the people in anarchistic rebellion against social order.

The fact that the Scriptures prophetically describe the overwhelming of the social order and the great governments of the earth must not be understood to signify that the Bible counsels revolution or anarchy. On the contrary, God's people are counseled throughout the Scriptures to live peaceably with all men, so far as possible. They are instructed not to use carnal weapons, not to take to the sword for the settlement of disputes, but rather to suffer injury. They are counseled that God is the great Over-Lord, and that although He is not now ruling directly amongst men He is fully the Master of the situation in that at any time He could overthrow all of His opponents.

God does not acknowledge that His will is now done in the earth, but He tells us that by and by it will be done here, and He encourages us to pray for it, to hope for it and to wait for it. He tells us that Satan is now the "Prince of this world" by virtue of the fact that he deceives the minds and the hearts of the majority. God would have His people understand something of His great Program, but He would keep this hidden from all others. Hence arises the impossibility of explaining spiritual things to a carnal mind (1 Cor. 2:14). "None of the wicked shall understand."—Daniel 12:10.

Divine Supervision of Human Affairs.

The great Creator has contented Himself with such a supervision of this world as leaves much responsibility for human affairs in human hands. He merely interposes to raise up or to cast down when the interests of His Program may demand. For instance, take the case of the Pharaoh who was raised to the throne of Egypt in Moses' day. There God raised to the throne a man of great determination, and hindered from reaching the throne other men not so favorable to the carrying out of the Divine Purposes. Thus, without interfering with the free moral agency of the king of Egypt, God used the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder He restrained. Similarly, He had previously raised Joseph to the governorship of Egypt for His own purposes.

The Psalmist describes the tumult of that day of overwhelming trouble, when God's Kingdom will be established, saying of the sea that it will swallow up the mountains, "The waters thereof roar and be troubled; the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." It is probably true that such socialistic and anarchistic roarings have many times in the past caused the kingdoms of earth and their rulers to tremble. But, according to the Scriptures, some day the final catastrophe will occur. Who can tell how near that day may be!

Quite a large number of earnest Bible students concur in the thought that such a climax is indicated in the prophecies, and that it will be reached in the year 1915. But be the date as it may, the fact remains. The prophecy which we are examining is nearly three thousand years old, but it is as good, as sure and as meaningful today as ever it was.

We are not of those who would harass the minds of our fellows with fear. Rather would we point them to the fact that behind this cloud of trouble there is a glorious "silver lining" of Millennial joy and blessing for all the families of the earth. Rather would we encourage all who have the hearing ear to zeal and faithfulness in their consecration, that they may "make their calling and election sure" to a share in the Kingdom glories and "escape those things coming upon the earth." In a word, the Gospel of Christ is not a message of damnation, fear and torture, but "Good Tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people," as the angel declared.

Deliverance of the Church Pictured.

In the fourth and fifth verses of Psalm 46 the Church of Christ is symbolically pictured as the City of God, His dwelling-place; and the Truth is represented as a river, making the City clean, fresh, glad. The proclamation is made, "God is in the midst of her; She shall not be moved! God shall help her early in the morning"—early in the Millennial morning. The Church is to be "a First-fruits unto God." Her salvation as the Bride of Christ will be accomplished early in this Millennial morning.

Oh, how glad will be all those accounted worthy of a place in that elect Church—the Church of the First-borns, whose names are written in Heaven! The promise, "She shall not be moved," is in agreement with the first verse in assuring us that the people of God will be preserved from fear, doubt and misunderstanding of the events of that Time of Trouble, and that their faith will enable them to triumph at a time when others will be in great distress and perplexity, as our Lord foretold.—Luke 21:26.

"The Gentiles Raged."

Beginning with the 6th verse, the Prophet gives a brief synoptical picture of the Time of Trouble and its consummation and of the inauguration of universal peace. "The heathen [Gentile peoples] raged." These words describe the tumult which will prevail amongst humanity before the climax of the great Time of Trouble is reached. Angry voices arise from public meetings, and in the more private meetings of the lodges of Labor and Capital, as well as through the columns of the Press to the extent permitted. In the various nations there is a fear of tumult through the raging of the public Press, and everything possible is being done to restrain it. In some countries the Press has been "muzzled" for some time past.

Whoever sees that anarchy is the most dreadful terror confronting civilization must realize the wisdom of reasonable restraints upon his own tongue and upon the tongues of others. Nevertheless, the Scriptures show us that all effort to suppress the tumult and the angry voices of men selfishly raging against each other will fail.

The prophetic picture continues—"God uttered His voice, the earth melted." The unfaithfulness of humanity, the clamor of greed, both in rich and in poor, will be answered by the Almighty, "Giver of every good and perfect gift." He will "utter His voice"; or, as another Prophet declares, "He will speak to the people in His anger," for their correction, for their reproof. The result will be that the symbolic earth (society) will melt—the social structure will disintegrate. Another Scripture declares that so great will be the disintegration that "every man's hand will be against his neighbor."

But the Prophet hastens to assure us that in the midst of all this tumult the Lord will be with His consecrated people. We read, "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our Refuge." This promise applies primarily to the consecrated Church of Christ—Spiritual Israel; but it also applies secondarily to Natural Israel, the Jewish nation. These will participate in this Time of Trouble, but will be saved out of it. As another Prophet declares, "It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."—Jer. 30:7.

In this Time of Trouble the Lord's jewels, His saints, will be gathered to their Heavenly home. After this has taken place, Divine favor will begin to return to Israel, as pointed out by the Apostle in Romans 11:25-30.

The Psalm closes with a picture of the devastation which will prevail throughout the world as a result of human selfishness and blindness. Capital and Labor will rise to a terrible cataclysm of anarchy, awful for rich and poor alike. Only God's saints will then have peace; and it will be the result of their knowledge of the grand outcome, of their faith in God and of their willingness to accept whatever His providence may send.

All this trouble, however, will but prepare the world to realize that although men may plan and arrange ever so wisely and well, all their plans will prove futile as long as selfishness and ignorance are in control. It will convince all that the only feasible way of correcting the difficulty is by the setting up of a strong and righteous government, which will enforce the principles of righteousness, until gradual by the stony-heartedness of men will, under favorable influences, give place to tender-heartedness—the image of God, in which Adam was created and which was lost through disobedience.

Mark the grand symbolic apostrophe with which the Psalm closes. May its lessons draw us near the Fountain of Grace and give us rest, peace and joy! "He [Immanuel] maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen [Gentiles]; I will be exalted in the earth."

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