

Foreword

BY

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WITHIN these quiet borders you will find the last, sweet words spoken to the Church by that faithful Pastor whom you so sincerely loved. Receive them in the Lord in this simple way as a message from him, and accept them in this humble form as evidently his will. In so doing, you will receive a blessing from our Unseen yet ever-present Lord and Head, to Whom the thanks will be due.

Our dear Brother Russell had served the church faithfully for more than forty years during that period in the history of the church which was specially characterized by the spirit of brotherly love, and since the Harvest was now rapidly drawing to a close when the first work of the new age would be due to begin, within the next ten days he was going to lay aside his harvest clothes, in advance of those he was leaving behind to finish up the last few things remaining to be done before the Gospel Age would forever end, but, before doing so, he was to speak his last words to the church he loved so well, and these words are now sent to you in love and with prayer.

He had just attended the Convention held at Dallas, Texas, on Sunday, October 22nd, 1916, and had reached Galveston, after a night's ride on the train, weary and worn, and hardly able to proceed much farther. The harvest work had always made deep inroads upon his physical strength, but, at this crisis,



The above illustration pictures the beautifully located Hotel Galvez, Galveston, Texas. A, with arrow, points out the apartment of Brother Russell and B, with arrow, indicates the location of the diningroom where Pastor Russell ate his last meal on earth.

it was doing so more than ever. One could easily see him passing away with the harness on. He had often been weary, but now, more so, and soon he would rest from his labors.

Upon his arrival in Galveston, Texas, on Monday morning, October 23rd, 1916, loving friends were present to see that he was properly cared for in the Hotel Galvez, so beautifully located on the bank of the Gulf of Mexico. His apartment overlooked the rhythmic waters of the deep blue sea. Presently, he was alone, and in the quiet recess of a comfortable environment, the faithful servant, weak and worn, drew from his pocket his fountain pen, and wrote these words:

When ye see these things
begin to come to pass then lift up
your heads & rejoice knowing that your
deliverance draweth nigh

Then let our songs abound
And every tear be dried
We're travelling through Immanuel's ground
To fairer prospects nigh.

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This was to be the basis of his last message, and his mind was becoming so weak that it was written down beforehand, lest he should forget it at the time appointed for its delivery. We have these words in his own handwriting, and they carry a special blessing as we now gaze upon them.

Further down the Sea-Wall Boulevard along the Gulf front than the Hotel Galvez, in an Auditorium on the second floor, facing the beautiful Gulf, a company of the Lord's people had gathered for the purpose of hearing this aged man of God deliver his message. They had waited patiently upon the Lord, and now they were not to be disappointed. Wrapped

in the spirit of the Lord he came, in the presence of the Lord he spoke, and these words of heavenly benediction are herewith sent to you in the name of our blessed Lord Jesus.

They proved to be his last words for the church, and you have them as a gift of love.

“TRUTH, like the light, is pure;
And no device to rob it of its glory,
Or drag it down base purposes to serve,
Can e'er succeed. Ah, no! its heav'nly glory
Shall in due time the universe pervade.”

Pastor Russell's Last Message

“AND WHEN THESE THINGS BEGIN TO COME TO PASS, THEN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS; FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH.”—LUKE 21:28.

JESUS looking down to our day, said, “When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads, and rejoice knowing that your deliverance draweth nigh.”

There is a blessed thought here, that, the Master knew about us. He knew that the disciples of that day would never see these things, so He was thinking about us of this day. What a blessing to know that God knows all about us, all about our difficulties, and has planned our deliverance which is now so near! He took notice of us down here, and, knowing that we would have much opposition, and people would think of us as calamity howlers when we would call their attention to the time of trouble, and would say, you are pessimists to talk about the trouble to come, you are off in your minds, deranged a little, and that we would not have courage to lift our heads very high, He caused the words of our text to be written down beforehand for our comfort, so that we have quietly gone along while all the enlightened minds and all the Doctors of Divinity, and preachers as well, said, “Foolishness we are going to convert the world, and the world is pretty nearly converted now.” But we knew that the Master had said differently, and as enlightened Bible Students, we had God's Word for it that the time of trouble would come and that the Kingdom of Heaven would be established in the midst of it. We knew that these kingdoms were not God's kingdom in the world, and that that which calls itself Christendom, is not so. We had God's Word for it, and we were holding fast to the sure Word of the Lord. Therefore, we have not been discouraged. When we knew that the Gentile Times would end somewhere about 1914, we talked about it, and have done so for the last 40 years. We have been talking about the end of the age, of the end of the Gentile Times, the time when the present kingdoms would all fall down, and it required some courage to stand in the face of everything else,

and against all the people, and learned minds of our day. We believed God although everything was going in the other direction. We said the world was far from being converted, although they said it was nearly converted. But now, we see, and the whole world is seeing, especially we of America who can look over with calmness of mind, and can see that there is a lack of any confidence that these are kingdoms of God, for they are fighting like demons with all manner of devices trying to blow each other off the face of the earth and of the sea. Twelve million shells costing from \$16 to \$350 a piece were thrown in preparation for a single attack. Supposing only one-tenth were thrown, still it would be awful that one Christian should throw such stuff against another Christian. They call themselves Christians, and each claiming to be Christians and saying each other is a Christian nation. Confidence is lacking everywhere that any of these are Christian nations. They have not the spirit of Christ. They have no meekness, but are boasters of what they will do with those Germans, etc. Both sides boast of what they will do. Gentleness! Where is the gentleness in raining down fire upon each other and blowing each other up? How much patience do they have, or brotherly kindness, or love? There is not a sign of any of these fruits of the Holy Spirit among them—not a sign of any of these fruits anywhere among these contending nations. We see just the contrary; the spirit of the Adversary, anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, bitterness—works of the flesh and of the devil, St. Paul and St. Peter say, and all the Bible says.

The time has come when you and I may lift up our heads a little, not with pride and boastfulness, and say, we did or did not do so and so. Oh, no! the spirit of the Lord is always to be a meek and quiet spirit, and always be humble under all circumstances. We feel sorry for those who are in this great struggle. How glad we would be to bring the views to the world which the Lord says we will bring to the world shortly, only His time has not yet come. They must learn a lesson that will last them throughout all eternity, for all future time; what all this spirit of pride and anger and malice lead to. They must see the culmination of it all in that time of trouble, so terrible as to be greater than any trouble since there was a nation. They must! It is God's arrangement. They must have learned the

lesson before He will pour out the blessing. He is waiting, and has been gathering the church for this very purpose of blessing all these people. We will rejoice in the time when the spirit of the Lord will be poured out upon all flesh helping them.

But now is the time when Jesus said to lift up your heads,—when you see these things begin to come to pass. It may be two, or three, or more years, I cannot say. I will not prophesy. I know nothing beyond 1914. It is not for us to prophesy, but to await God's time and see His salvation for ourselves. We see these things now beginning to come to pass. Lift up your heads, says Jesus. Rejoice; not at their suffering. Nothing could be further from the spirit of our Master than that we should rejoice because of the sufferings of any, but rejoice because our deliverance draweth nigh. How glad we will be to pass beyond the veil! How glad all of us will be to pass beyond and hear the Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things—not many—I will make you ruler over many things." No one can accomplish anything great in this world. We have merely tried to stand loyal to the Captain of our salvation, and to God and the principles of His character which represent Him. We have tried to lift up the Royal Banner and show men the right way. We have not done much, or been very successful and accomplished much in the world. He told us that darkness would hate the light, and would not come to the light, and we would have to suffer for righteousness sake. We have found it so. Any sufferings for righteousness sake we may have had will be so many marks in our favor. Along this line the Apostle said, "I bear about in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ." He was talking about slaves. He declared that he, himself, was a bond slave of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the custom that slaves should be branded the same as pack mules when they take them to the army. So, they would mark the slave. Wherever you find him, bring him to his master. So the Apostle Paul says, "I bear about in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." I am His slave, a marked slave.

What were these marks? They were the stripes that he bore. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in

perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the City, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.” His back was lacerated with stripes until the blood flowed, and the wounds were washed in salt water, and the Apostle was glorying in these things. In any way that we can suffer for righteousness sake there is something in which to glory. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy... If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.” “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters” put these all away. But, if we suffer as Christians, no matter where, from our feelings being lacerated, or our bodies, these marks will by and by be cause for rejoicing, the Lord will say, You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you a ruler over many things. Every mark will be something that we will rejoice in. These marks will indicate the amount or degree of our glory. How is this? This suffering will indicate faithfulness on your part and mine. The Lord is going to glorify His people in proportion to their faithfulness. The more faithful you are, the more you will suffer for the truth, or for righteousness sake. We are not to feel hard toward them for doing evil against us. We are to remember that they are blinded by the God of this world. “They know not what they do,” St. Peter said, about those who crucified the Lord, on the day of Pentecost, addressing the Jews, “I wot brethren that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers, for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Prince of life.” If they had known, they would not have persecuted any of the body of Christ. The world does not know the followers of Jesus. The Apostle, therefore, says, “The world knoweth us not, even as it knew Him not.”

Never mind these things in the past. Lift up your heads, and rejoice! Rejoice that the time is so near when the suffering

will be over, and our opportunity for blessing all the families of the earth will have come. What a glorious future we have. The Apostle calls it an inheritance. Everybody is anxious to enter upon their inheritance. The Apostle says we have an inheritance reserved in heaven for us, ready to be revealed in the last time. It is now the last time, and it is ready to be revealed. When you see these things, they are signs that the kingdom is soon to be set up, your blessing is nigh, and the things promised are about to be accomplished these things you have believed in are about to be fulfilled therefore, rejoice! This reminds me of the words of the poet,

“Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dried,
We’re travelling through Immanuel’s ground
To fairer prospects nigh.”

They are very true. We are travelling through Immanuel’s ground. The whole world belongs to Immanuel, our Lord,—the whole earth, because He has already died. As a perfect man who kept the law, He had a right to the earth. Whoever would keep the law would be the one who would inherit all things. He, therefore, merited it because He kept the law perfectly. This was the divine arrangement. If He had not died at all, He would be the owner of the earth. So then, this is Immanuel’s ground. Everything is His. When we are His, all things are ours. “All things are for your sakes, for ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” Everywhere it all belongs to our Lord. Jesus has not yet applied the ransom-price on behalf of the world, but there is a difference between the world and the earth. He did not need to give His life to become the owner of the earth. By keeping the law He became the owner of the earth. But the merit of His sacrifice was necessary to purchase the world in due time. The imputation of that merit was necessary during this age that we might be acceptable to the Father and be received into His family by the begetting of His spirit to be sons of God. All this He has done through the imputation which He has in the Father’s hands as a deposit; and this He is about to apply for the world of mankind, and all the children of Adam, in a short time. He is about to purchase the world of mankind, but the right to the earth He has had ever since He proved Himself able to keep the law. That is one of the reasons that

restitution, so far as the earth is concerned, can begin before such blessings come to the world of mankind. Restitution has been going on since 1874, especially since entering the seventh great day. He had a right to bring these restitution blessings to the earth even before He applies the merit for the world of mankind.

We need not hold our heads down. Others are holding down their heads. We want them to do so because we know that unless their heads and hearts be down they will never be ready to receive the blessings that will come from the Lord to the world of mankind. We know this is necessary, and so the Apostle says, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." The world must learn to humble itself, the same as we have. They need to look away from self and look to the Lord for every blessing. They have not learned this, yet. They are still boastful. Some great Professors tell us that they can get along without God, that everything will go along all right without Him. But they will have quite a different idea by the time the trouble is past. They will say, "Oh, God, have you forgotten the world?" when everything is going to ruin and wreck. They will call upon the Lord and He will hear them and deliver them. We see they will. We would like to give them the blessings right away, but they are not ready, and so He will not give it to them, since giving it prematurely would be an injury to them. So, let our tears be dried, and let us fill our hearts with songs of praise to Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light!

A closing word. I find that many in the world, and some Christian people who have not seen with us in the past, are becoming much more reasonable, and are thinking seriously. I am told that many of the ministerial conferences are studying about what the Scripture Studies say about 1914 and the time of trouble, and they are wondering if there is not some truth in it. They are wondering—a whole lot of them. It will do them good. Not only ministers, but thinking people generally who have not had their minds so thoroughly perverted by false theories. The people are waking up. I find them on the trains, and everywhere. People come to me on the train and say, "Is this Pastor Russell? I have been reading your sermons, have seen your picture, and am glad to meet you." It shows they are interested.

In Chicago on our last trip, while passing through the railroad station after purchasing ticket, a lady with her daughter came up to me, and said, "This is Pastor Russell. We know you very well. We used to live in Pittsburgh when you did." (I did not know them.) I inquired, "Are you a Bible Student?" "No, but our sister was a Bible student." "Are you interested in the Bible?" "Yes, especially since the great trouble came on in connection with the war. We saw it then, that it was exactly what we had been told about it, and we have been interested ever since." "Have you given your heart to the Lord?" I asked. "Not yet, but I am thinking about it," she replied. "Don't think too long," said I, "if you want to have a part in the great blessing, if you want to have a share in all the good things which He has now for those who love Him more than friends, houses, etc." She said again, "we are thinking about it, and are going to think about it very seriously."

Another said, "Brother Russell, in our town, and a small town at that, we recently had an experience in a Methodist Bible class, wherein the whole class stood against the teacher on a certain point, and the teacher said, 'we took Pastor Russell's view of the matter.' All were on our side except the teacher. Similarly, in many of the little towns such things are going on."

I believe people are thinking, and are remembering that they have gotten some impressions somewhere about these things. All that we desire now, is, that all of the people of the Lord shall come to the knowledge of the present truth, the same as we have. We are not expecting the world to come to this knowledge now, but all of the people of God will appreciate it, even as others have. We wish them to have a share in this precious truth, and bid them God-speed in this connection. Even worldly people who have not thought of consecrating themselves to the Lord they say, I don't believe in that doctrine of eternal torment, anyway; I believe what you teach about God's love must be the right thing." It commends itself to the natural mind.

THEN, LET OUR TEARS BE DRIED, AND FILL OUR MOUTHS WITH PRAISE; AND LET US SHOW FORTH HIS PRAISES WHO HAS CALLED US OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT—PATIENTLY, MEEKLY, LOVINGLY, HUMBLY!