

“MERCY THROUGH YOUR MERCY”

(Discourse below by Brother Russell from 1909 Convention Report, start on page 27.)

Text: *“Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”*—Romans 11:31-33.

I presume, dear friends, that you have pretty well in mind the Apostle’s argument in this chapter, the verses of which I read constituting a part. He is talking about the Jews and the calamity that came upon that nation of Israel when they rejected God, and when He correspondingly rejected them, cast them off. He is calling the attention of the Church to the fact that this *rejection of Israel is not a permanent thing*, not to last forever, that God is going to receive them back again to Himself; and although more than 1,800 years have passed since the Apostle wrote these words, you and I have full confidence in the wisdom, justice, love and power of God; full confidence that God will receive them back as His special people. How glad we are.

As we look back at the experiences through which they have passed, our hearts are moved with sympathy as we remember, as the Apostle points out, they were heirs of God, of the promises of blessing which you and I are getting. All these things belonged to them and were upon their table, as represented by the rich man who fared sumptuously. Then to think that they have lost all those blessings, and the rich man, as a nation, has gone down into death, and as a people are in trouble, while you and I, represented by Lazarus, have been received into God’s favor, and now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise, through faith in Christ. And so the Apostle tells us in Gal. 3:29 that if we are Christ’s, then we are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The Apostle tells us that the branches were the Israelites, that the root of promise was the Abrahamic Covenant made with Abraham, and the nation of Israel grew up out of that promise, and they were His holy people, and the individuals were the branches of the kingdom of Israel, and were heirs of the promise, “In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” They prayed, and waited and longed for the good things to come to them. How sad it makes us feel when we find that when the good things did really come to them, so few were ready; merely a remnant were saved, only a few accepted God and came into Christ. All the rest of the nation were blinded. While it makes us sad when we see what they might have had, but lost, yet on the other hand, we are glad because of their casting off, we have been permitted to come in, and become fellow-sharers with those who did accept God, that thus the body of Christ might be completed in Him, Jesus the

Head, and you and I and the other consecrated ones members of His Body. So this was the great privilege that came to them first. (John 1:11-13.)

Born not of the will of the flesh, but of the holy Spirit. The Apostles and about 500 more, and then a few at Pentecost, and then a few more through the preaching of the Apostles. These were practically all of the Jews received into the Body of Christ. The end of their favor came and their table, which had been so richly spread, became a trap and snare. How could a spiritual Israelite be anything but sympathetic toward those who lost such a great blessing which we have received? The more we appreciate what we have the more we appreciate what they lost. We appreciate it a good deal more than they and we may be glad for them on that account. That is exactly what the Apostle is saying here, “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sake.” (Rom. 11:28) Practically 1800 years have passed, but they are still beloved because “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance”—whenever He gives a gift He means it; He knows the end from the beginning; He would not have promised the Abrahamic Seed anything according to the flesh that He was not able to give to them in His own due time, and this is what the Apostle is writing about in this connection: “I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery,” one which the Jew does not understand yet, and one which our Christian friends do not see or understand. They in general have the idea that God is now trying to save as many as He can, and as our Methodist friends say, is doing the best He can. We are sorry, but they do not get the right view. That is a mystery which they do not understand, that *God is not now* trying to save the world. What is He doing? He is finding the seed of Abraham, through whom all the families of the earth will be blessed; first, Israel, and then the other nations. The Apostle is leaving out the other nations in this chapter, merely showing how the favor went to Israel according to the flesh, how they lost it, and how they are to get it back: He is leaving them out because they are to be blessed through Israel in God’s due time.

Perhaps I had best refresh your memory about the history of the promise of God in the past. Abraham, you remember, was faithful, and because he was faithful God said to him, “You are My friend; I will tell you that I am going to bless the world.” Abraham did not know how and God did not explain. I will choose that the blessing shall come through your posterity and thou shalt have a son of promise in 25 years. He believed God that the promise would come to all the world and through his posterity. Then God confirmed the promise to Isaac. Isaac had two children, Jacob and Esau, and God confirmed the promise to Jacob, and when it came Jacob’s turn to die, instead of committing it to one son, God transferred it to his twelve sons, and the twelve tribes they would represent; all their children were to be the heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant, and that is what the Apostle said, “Under which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.” (Acts 26:7.) the Apostle further says in Hebrews, that God was so willing to impress the matter of the promise that He not only made the

statement that He would bless all the families of the earth through Abraham's seed, but He confirmed that statement by an oath, and as God could not swear by any greater so He swears by himself. Now the Apostle tells us that this Covenant was stated in this form and the oath added for *our* benefit, not for Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob, or the children of Israel: "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, *we* might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. 6:18, 19.)

What hope? The hope of being members of the Body of Christ, of being sharers with Him of the great blessings coming upon Him and through Him upon all the families of the earth. It is an anchor to our soul. Is it to you, dear brother or sister? It is sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. Now, dear friends, *the more you understand that Covenant, and the more you realize how that hope is the anchor of your faith and trust, the more will be your blessing as children of the Lord's family.* This hope is the basis of all your hope of being sharers with Christ in the honor, immortality, and the great work of the Millennial age; it is centered in the Abrahamic promise. You see, this was given to natural Israel in the natural way; the Lord added the Law to the Abrahamic Covenant—added for a purpose. Added to show the children of Israel that they were not worthy of such a high position; also to show that our Lord was the worthy one and when He kept the Law it showed that He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. (Heb. 7:26.)

What was gained by keeping the Law? He became the heir of Adam and all of Adam's estate, who was king of the earth before he sinned. God had said that the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and all flesh were in his hands and power. He lost that relationship through sin and became a dying creature; so everything passed from him in death, and since then none of his children were able to inherit his estate. The offer to the Jew was that if he could take the place of father Adam he could become the heir of the world. They tried it for 1600 years and more and not one succeeded. Then what? In due time God sent forth His Son, born under the Law, so that He would come under all those terms and conditions, so that if He would keep it then He would inherit everything. Did He keep the Law? Yes, the Scriptures say so. As a Jew He kept the Law and inherited all of Adam's rights and privileges. Well, now, dear friends, He might have kept those rights and dominion and tried to patch up the old condition of things, and have thought that He might have brought a great deal of prosperity into the world, and He might have done considerable, not only for Israel but for other nations, and could have run the world much better than it is at present. But if He had done that He never could have suggested that they would have eternal life, because they were dying creatures and under the sentence of death, which would still have remained. Instead of keeping those earthly rights He laid them down in sacrifice, the Just for the unjust, that He might have in His hands a price or merit equal to the restitution of all. He merely made a preparation to give something.

Then the Father raised Him from the dead the third day and He appeared in the presence of God. What had He when He appeared in the presence of God? He had the Blood, which represented the sacrifice of Christ, the value of His earthly rights which He had secured by keeping the Law; He laid down His earthly rights for spiritual rights and had the earthly rights in His possession that He might give them away.

What did He do with these earthly rights? He had enough for every member of Adam's race, enough to satisfy for the sin of the whole world. We read that He presented it to God. For whom? Was it for Israel? No. However, we would have expected Him to have done that because they were His own people, according to the flesh. They fell when they could not keep the Law, and they prayed about it, and God sent them word, saying that He would send them a Redeemer, Prophet, Priest and King. How could He do more for them than Moses did? Surely, Moses was faithful to the nation of Israel. Well, said the Lord, I will make a better Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; I will make a New Covenant; I will take away their stony heart and replace it with a heart of flesh, and I will write My Law upon their heart. Israel thought: Well, that is good; now we will wait for that blessing of God. In Mal. 3:1 we read, "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts." Israel said, we are hoping for this new Covenant, and of course there will be a Blessor, a Mediator; we will wait for Him; when He comes then we will have a glorious time. But the Lord speaks further in the second verse, saying, "But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap." When He ascended on high, instead of presenting His earthly rights for the Jews, what did He do? *He brought in some more mystery.* What mystery is this? It was the mystery of the Church. When He ascended on high He presented that merit of His earthly rights for us, the household of faith. He did not have any spiritual rights to give; only earthly blessings. As a man, Christ kept the Law, and as a man He had the right to human life; it was Adam's rights that He laid down. He had the new life himself, but He did not have the new life to give away.

What He gave away was that which He had before He consecrated, and He presented it on our behalf, which only gives us earthly blessings—there was nothing more. He gives us those earthly rights under certain stipulations or agreement. He gave them only with the consideration that we should lay them down. If you don't lay them down you can't have them; you must take up your cross and follow Him. If you do not you cannot be His disciple. "If we would reign with him we must suffer with him." Those are the considerations; we must sacrifice these earthly rights as He did. When He appeared in the presence of God He appeared for the Church, for those who would present their all in sacrifice. None of this merit is going to be lost, because if any goes to you it must pass through you; you cannot hold on to any of it; you must agree to lay down that earthly life.

This promise came to the members of the Church; all benefited, and all the Church are called upon to sacrifice—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." You cannot be members of the Body unless you do sacrifice—"For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin." Any man who does not offer is not a priest. Offer up yourself; present your body a living sacrifice.

The whole work of the Gospel Age has been the finding of these disciples, priests, who have the same spirit as Christ; and you and I are to lay down our lives for the brethren. The agreement is that if we suffer with Him, not differently, or something else, but if we do so we shall reign with Him. All down the Gospel Age the Church has been suffering, "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24.) So the time is going on until the last member of the Body of Christ has laid down these earthly rights in death as a sacrifice. Then what? Then we will be able to do the greater work of the Seed. We are not the Seed of Abraham now, except in this figurative sense. It is only if we make our calling and election sure. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29.) If you finish your course faithfully then beyond the veil you are the Seed of Abraham. Very shortly we will all be glorified and then the whole Seed of Abraham on the spiritual plane will be complete. Then what? We have a lot of blessings and mercies to give away. Now, you and I individually have no right to give anything away; our Lord has all the right. Then these rights will be passed on to Israel, as we read, "Through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." (Rom. 11:31.) They needed this mercy long before the Gospel Age, and are still hoping, and I am glad of the hope. Well, what kind of mercy will they get from us? Why, it will be God's mercy. Does it say so? "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:32, 33.) It is the Father that will have mercy upon them, through the Church, which is the Body of Christ—Jesus, the Head, and the Church His Body. They constitute the great Mediator between God and men—the world.

We came into Covenant relationship with the Father through faith; no Mediator was necessary, even as no Mediator was necessary with Abraham, but his faith was counted unto him for righteousness. Jesus Christ, the Righteous, is the Advocate for the Church. All things are now working together for our good, so that He may fit us for the Bride to share His own glory. The work for us to do with our Lord will be the blessing of the world. Are we the Mediator? Not yet. You are in the world, but not of the world, but the Mediator is between God and the world. Every member of this great Mediator must have the spirit of Jesus, the Head, "For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8:29.) What are we to do? Well, there is that Covenant God made with Abraham,

and it must have a fulfilment. God told Israel that He would make a New Covenant with them; that He would put His Law in their inward parts; that He would be their God and that they should be His people. Does the Apostle say that? Yes, read Hebrews, eighth chapter. Under this New Covenant He says that He will take away their sins. He did not take away their sins under the Law Covenant. The only way to get rid of the things under the Law was to die to it. Whatever Jew does not accept Christ and die to the Law Covenant will never be accepted of God. But “blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles come in.” (Rom. 11:25.) Then the great Deliverer will be complete who will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. This Deliverer is born out of Zion; the Head is the Lord Jesus, the Body is the Church; and this finding of the Head and Body has been the work of the Gospel Age. The Head of the Church is distinctly separate from the Body in some respects, and our Lord Jesus was the firstborn 1800 years ago, and it will be a long time before the Body will be born, so the Prophet states, “Shall I bring to the birth, shall I cause the head to come forth and not deliver the body?” No, thank God! It will be the same resurrection Jesus had that you and I are invited to share. You remember how the Apostle Paul puts it, “if by any means I might have part in his resurrection.” We are to share in that.

Then will be the time when we will apply our earthly rights to Israel; then will be the time that they will obtain mercy through our mercy, the New Covenant being made with them. If anyone wants to come to God during the Millennial Age he must come through this New Covenant, just as the Israelites do, by becoming members of Israel; so that eventually the whole world will be Israelites, and then will be fulfilled God’s promise to Abraham where He said, “I will make thee father of many nations.”