

Short Discourse “Go up and possess the land”

The item directly below is a short address by the Pastor Russell as reported in the 1911 Convention Report, starting on page 109.)

Dear Friends, I will not speak to you very long. It is a warm afternoon to sit so constantly. My mind was running along the lines of the words of Moses. When the Lord directed him to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt up to the promised land, Moses answered, “Unless thou go with us, send us not up hence.” The Lord replied, “My presence shall go with thee; I will give thee peace.” I was thinking that this represented to a considerable degree the sentiment we all have, that we all ought to have, in respect to the great transactions that we are now engaged in. We are going up out of Egypt; we are going up to the promised land, and the heavenly Father sent us word that he will give us the heavenly Canaan— “go up and possess the land.” And it sounds very easy to us, “Go up and possess the land,” and I presume Moses was the only one of all the Israelites that really felt any hesitation about leaving Egypt. But Moses was able to see that a considerable amount of difficulty lay before them. What is it going to cost before we get into the glorious land? How many difficulties will there be in the way? How much will be the travail of soul before we shall enter into these glorious things? Then these words of Moses, “Unless thou go with us, send us not up.” I think that you and I feel the same way; that unless God is with us it would be in vain if he should tell us, “Come out from amongst mankind, and be a separate and peculiar people, and take up our cross and follow the dear Redeemer,” to accept him as our leader and the Captain of our salvation, to go on in this narrow way from grace to grace and from knowledge to knowledge, and from faith to faith, until we shall enter into all the glorious things which God has in reservation for them that love him—“Unless thou go with us, send us not up hence;” let us stay in the world unless we would have the Lord’s blessing and assistance. How could we ever expect to reach these glorious things unless we had the dear Master for our guide, and counselor, and assistant all the way? What a precious comfort it is that the heavenly Father gives us this same assurance he gave to Moses—“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee peace.”

And now dear friends we have found it so. Those of us who with earnestness of heart left the world behind, left the antitypical Egypt, and are going up, following the Captain of our salvation, have found that the presence of the Lord goes with us. We have found that he gives us the peace; we find in him the peace of God that passeth all understanding, and is ruling more and more in our hearts—not having attained the full rule there yet perhaps; we have not reached the glorious Canaan, and have not entered in to all the glorious things in reservation, the things God has promised us, but we are on our journey and faithful is he who called us, the one who gave us the invitation, the one who said, “Go forth now and possess the glorious things;” faithful is he who called us, who also will do for us exceedingly, abundantly more than we could ever ask or could ever have thought.

Our heavenly Father, when he marked out the narrow way in which our dear Redeemer walked, knew the trials and difficulties of the way. Our dear Redeemer knew not the way he would take, as the Psalmist says, "Thou wilt make known to me the path of life," and God made known to him step by step the path that would lead to the glorious consummation—glory, honor, immortality, the divine nature; and he was faithful in taking all of these steps. And then the Father through him, and through the apostles, by the Holy Spirit, made known the steps that we should take. He shall show us the path of life. He will make us know the steps that will lead us to glory, honor, immortality; he knows the way we shall take. How comforting that is! And to know he is our Father, and that he is not cold and indifferent, and looking on to say, "Well if you do it then I will give you the prize, but I have no care whether you get it or not." Not that mind, but like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence him; and he has adopted us into his family, and we are his children, and he says, I have been watching you all the journey long, and I know the way you will take, and I know the difficulties and trials; I have planned them all; I want you to have trials; you must have these conditions; you can never have the development of character unless you do have the opposition of the world, and the flesh, and the devil; these are necessary to prove you. "The Lord, your God, doth prove you." What does he prove us for? "Whether ye love the Lord, your God, with all your heart," etc. What does he expect of us? He expects of us *obedience*. Our dear Master learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Obedience means to my mind, loyalty to God, absolute loyalty to God under all circumstances and under all conditions—in the light, and in the dark, when we can see what his leading is, and when we cannot see the leading of the Lord—to be faithful, faithful when all seems unfavorable; faithful when the sun is shining on our way, and faithful when it is dark sometimes, and when the rain comes down, and when the sorrows of life overtake us. Be thou faithful, loyal to God, obedient to him. So Jesus says, "Be thou faithful." How long, Lord, must we be faithful? Can we finish it today? No. How long must we be faithful? "Be thou faithful *unto death* and I will give thee the crown of life."

Then the Lord has sent us forth, and the apostle says he is able to do for us better than we could ask or think, and we have assurance on the way that all things shall work together for good. Sometimes we can see them to be working for good, and sometimes they seem to be working ill, but we are to know and be assured that he knows the way, and he is interested in us, he is our Father, and we have his love; that he makes all the provisions necessary, that nothing can in any wise harm those that are trusting him. "Unless thou go with us, send us not up hence." Let us not even love the world; we had better stay right with the world unless we have the assurance of God's Word that he will carry us through. But he has given us that assurance. "My presence shall go with you." Has it been so with us? Have not we found it just as the Lord told us? We have had his presence on the journey. "In all their afflictions, he was afflicted." We read of the Israelites, as they passed through the afflictions on the way to Canaan—in all their experiences he was

afflicted. So we say in all our difficulties and trials our elder Brother, our heavenly Bridegroom is interested deeply, and he is able as well as willing to provide all the little incidents of the way. And he would have us learn the lessons of faith and patience, and obedience, and loyalty, and all these various graces about which the brethren have talked this afternoon. Are we learning them dear friends? I trust we are, and I trust that the Lord's grace is going with us, that his presence is with us, and he will give us peace—not only that he will give us peace when we get to the end of the journey, and we shall enter into the joys of the Lord, and enter into all the glorious things which he has in reservation, but I trust he is giving us peace now. It is our privilege; as the apostle says, "We who believe do enter into rest." There is no doubt that there is a still more perfect and complete rest for the people of God, for God has promised and he assures us now, that we who believe enter into rest. Are you getting your share? You are not getting your share unless you are exercising faith, and exercising it not merely as an abstract principle, but a faith that manifests itself by works, a faith that works with zeal.

I will close my remarks on this occasion by saying that the dear friends here and on all our journey along, and indeed wherever I go, have, I believe a great blessing whether the worldly and nominal church get any blessing or not; the faith and works come right home to the door, and there is necessity for work; and if we do not have faith we do not have the works. So the faith and works come right along. One dear brother said to me on one occasion as I got off the train on Sunday morning, "Brother Russell, it is a very unfavorable morning I will admit, but I want to tell you I already have a great blessing. I never did have anything special to do with any meetings before today, but the responsibility fell on me, and there were not many to help, and I had to take care of it myself, and it was awfully hard, I was so inexperienced in such matters, it was such a new experience to go out and distribute tracts, and it was hard at first, but I said to myself, 'Here now, you are going to shirk your duty in serving the Lord; you said you would like something to do, now he has given you something to do, are you going to do it?' I said, 'No I will not shirk it, Lord; help me.' The Lord helped me, and I have gotten such a blessing. I am happier than I have ever been before; if the convention does not amount to anything to the others of this city, I have gotten a blessing in my heart." So I think it is everywhere that all of those that love the Lord, who serve him, who have faith in him, and are trusting in him, and are having the faith that works by love—not which works in a combative way that hurts people; we do not want to have that, but the faith that works by love, let us get that kind, dear friends. I have had many experiences in having fights, but I have found that there is very little good results come from having battles with people. The love and kindness and tender mercy, of our God appeals especially to our hearts, and as we exemplify the same loving kindness and mercy of God in presenting this glorious plan to others we have his blessing.

So, then, we are on our way, we are still going up, and when we started we said, Lord unless you go with us we will not go up. The Lord said, "My presence shall go with you,

I will give you peace.” And has it not been so? The Lord’s presence has been with his people—“Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” So in all our experiences let us look to the Captain; let us remember, too, that the Captain of our salvation is also our Counselor and tells us what to do.

One of the speakers this afternoon referred to the fact that the general in the army laid out the work and told the others what to do. And so it is with our great General. You and I are not competent to lay out our work; we have all the confidence in the great Captain of our salvation. So it is not for you nor for me, nor for any other brother or sister to attempt to tell the Lord to push and pull things out of his way, but simply to seek to find out what is the Lord’s way, what is the Lord’s will. The Captain of our salvation is ordering the battle and he knows the results will be all right. And if he is not giving us all the opportunities we think we ought to have, we ought to have confidence that he knows how to manage his own battle, and if our hearts are fully submitted to him we will more likely be called upon for more service.

I am very pleased to congratulate the dear ones of the convention company who have come on the train, and the dear friends who came from Los Angeles, Oakland and San Francisco, and finally the dear ones of Sacramento, and the blessings of the Lord have been with us richly and abounding. How grateful we are to him, the giver of all things! We rejoice with the dear friends here in Sacramento that they have made such kind arrangements for our entertainment, and for our meeting here in this hall, and for the evening meeting. I am glad that they have so cheerful and happy a company here, and that this shall be an occasion long to be remembered.

No doubt when we get into the great convention, the general assembly of the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, we will talk about the different conventions—I remember seeing you at this one, and that one, and what a time we had at the other place—do you remember the little speech I tried to make? We will have a good time, dear friends, all of those who love the King. The Lord has a blessing for all those who seek to do anything in his name, and to help the brethren, or to cooperate in his service. He is able to do for us exceedingly and abundantly more than we could ask of him, according to the riches of his grace.

PRAYER PARTNERS

Links in a Chain of Prayer

Do you realize the power
Of the prayers said every day

By the many faithful Christians
Who love God and who can pray?

Have you ever kept a record,
Even for a year or two
Of the many, many answers
God has given just to you?

It's impossible to reckon
All the victories we've won
Through the prayers of godlike people
Ever since the world's begun.

Do you know that prayer is service
Of a very special sort
And that much can be accomplished
When we give it time and thought?

For the Scriptures surely tell us
In our prayers He doth delight
And our fervent, earnest pleadings
Are availing in His sight.

Prov. 15:8; Jas. 5:16
Selected

“... our powers are limited to this small planet, except as we further extend them by means of prayer, and thus set in motion influences whose extent we are not now able to fathom.” (Reprints page 5547, last paragraph.)

(All the above in a letter from a Brother in Florida.)