

## SUNRISE PRAYER AND PRAISE MEETING

(The item directly below is a Sunrise Prayer and Praise Meeting, led by Pastor Russell, Norfolk, Va., as reported in the 1907 Convention Report, Part 2, Page 135)

When we entered the hall at 5:15 A.M. there were fully 100 persons present. Promptly at 5:30 Bro. Russell stepped upon the platform and there were by that time 225 present; before the meeting closed there were over 400. The service opened by singing No. 19, "Awake My Soul to Joyful Lays." This was followed with prayer by Bro. LaFerrey. Then we sang hymn No. 206, "O, How Happy Are We Who In Jesus Agree."

Bro. Russell: Dear brothers and sisters, I am very glad to greet so many of you this morning and to see that so many of you enjoy the prospect of an early morning prayer meeting.

As I saw a number of you headed this way as I was coming to this meeting, it made me think of some of the reasons that draw us together. I was reminded of the words of the Lord, that in this day, pointing down to the very time. He said we would all be gathered together, the disciples said, "Where, Lord?" and He said, "where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." So, one reason we like to meet together in conventions and on every occasion is because the Lord seems to give us something special to eat where we are in fellowship, where two and three are gathered together, etc., so when two or three of us meet in His name, we may be sure His blessing and a refreshment of spirit.

In this morning time, more than at any other time, though it has been true throughout all the ages where His people met, but now early in the new morning, when, the new day, the grand Millennial Day, He is inviting us together; He tells us that there will be a great gathering, all the wheat from the tares, all the sons of God, that glorious gathering, which will mean the establishment of the Kingdom of God, out of which will flow all the blessings of God to all the families of the earth. So we have many reasons for thankfulness this morning as we think of the blessed scripture references to this morning time in which we are living such as, "God will help her right early in the morning." You remember a picture in the 91st and 45th Psalm, and how the Lord in the 45th Psalm tells of the time of trouble. As we see that day gathering all about us, we hear the Lord's word coming to us with special emphasis and we will not fear though the earth be removed, though society be shaken and the Kingdoms be carried into the midst of the sea, because we have made the Lord our habitation. In this connection the Lord tells us He will help her, the church right early in the morning. How precious the thought that we are in the early morning, when the shadows are fleeing and we can see more clearly than they could in the centuries past. It was not the Father's purpose that the special light should shine then, they had all they needed as saints of God that they might be separate from things of this world, but it was not the time to give the glorious sunlight of truth as now. Thus,

dear brothers and sisters, if any fail to get that thought, they fail to get one of the most inspiring thoughts of our time, namely: that the light of the truth which you and I are now seeing is not that you and I are brighter than other men to see it, but it is God's due time—it is morning time. Why can you see brighter than you could an hour or two ago? Because the great sun has begun to shine upon the earth. Is that all we shall have? Oh, no, that is only the early light. By and by the great sun of righteousness with full power, strength and light will fill the whole earth with the Glory of the Lord. How glad we are that the blessed day is already dawning, what a blessing it has brought into our hearts; we cannot not feast on that thought too much.

I might tell you without any injury to any of you about a dream that I had some years ago that had great influence upon my life. Now do not misunderstand me, I do not wish to commend dreams, I think many are nonsensical dreams. I have had many myself, probably from indigestion. I know of a great many people who lay too much stress upon dreams. I pay very little attention to dreams, only so much attention as would be in harmony with God's word, so as to feel sure the dream came from neither a piece of pie nor inspired by the adversary and I think a great many dreams are inspired by the adversary. I think a safe course is to let no dream have any influence upon our minds except as we can prove them by the word of God. That is our standard. If it agrees not with the word it is because there is no light in it.

But this dream that I will tell you about may help some of you. I might remark that at the time I had this dream, I was giving attention to the Lord's work to some extent, I was publishing the Truth and some thought I was neglecting my business. I had five stores at that time, and people would say I guess Mr. Russell is fanatical on the subject of religion. I knew I was not, so was in no danger. I thought I was not giving enough time, that I ought to give all my time, and this dream helped me.

I dreamed that I was in an attic room, the front looking to the east, and the ceiling was sloping and I thereby knew it was a top room in a house. All around the room was a platform raised about ten inches and on it were mattresses strewn and upon them bed coverings of various kinds; some had been occupied and were vacant and others were occupied by sleepers, and I was in one corner. Over yonder was a door on the right. I heard a knock that awakened me and I remember how sleepy I felt, I could hardly get my eyes open. There I saw a servant, one that I never saw or knew, he said they are waiting for you for breakfast and they sent me up to see if you were coming. Oh! my, it is late, I have overslept myself. Tell them not to wait for me. With that I thought to get up, but as I started to rise, I was heavy with sleep and my foot caught in the arm of the man sleeping next to me and I went sprawling. I thought well, what will he do? But he was sound asleep, my falling over him had not awakened him. Something in my dream told me that it was Sunday morning, with that I awakened.

What did it mean? Well I might take a meaning out of it, that might be in full accord with the truth. I said first of all, this is in an upper room and the Lord speaks of housetop saints. Well, then I am glad. Seemingly I was amongst the housetop saints, I was glad that I was not down in the basement. Then it was Sabbath morning, early in the morning. The sunlight was coming in, all that fits well, the sun is coming in and it is time I was thoroughly awake. Then the empty beds around us, yes, yes, so far as we know, most of the housetop saints have gone in, here a few of us still sleeping; in a dozing way over-charged with the cares of this life. Well, you remember how tired and sleepy you feel almost as if you had been intoxicated. Yes, well that is a good deal the spirit of the world. You are glad you got awake, you felt so stupid, but still next to you was one still more so, and even your falling over him does not awaken him. You are glad you are awake and did not need a knock. What was that you told the servant? Have me excused, tell them not to wait for me. Our dear Lord has provided a bridal feast, not a supper or a dinner but a breakfast. So I knelt down and asked the Lord to wait on me for a little; I determined to be more earnest and diligent in His service. So I say that while I do not attach much weight to dreams and consider most of them fleshly and of the adversary, but if we think upon them and the words of the Lord, and accept nothing but what will agree with the Scriptures, we may get a good lesson from it.

Well, we are house-top Christians; we have heard the knock informing us that it was morning, that it was the time of the feast and informing us that there is but little time to get ready. We have heard the knock and how glad we are. Yet we find some here and there who are still asleep. Let us help them also to hear the knock that it may go to all parts of the world and let it not be said that there were some in some parts of the world to whom you failed to give the knock. The Master said: "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." So we have heard the knock and already on this side the vail we have entered in and are getting some of the food and refreshment—how glad we are.

The whole world, a greater part of it, as we came here, are still asleep. Some others are awake besides ourselves; you saw the butcher and the baker and the milkman and others all busily engaged looking after their dollars and cents and that was proper in its way. We also have a business, we have left the world behind, we have become new creatures in Christ Jesus and we must be about our Father's business. A principle proper to apply, how energetic have you and I ever been in the affairs of earth in our scramble for dollars and cents? In that proportion let the Lord see that you will be no less energetic in the Spiritual. Some say Brother Russell, you work late and early; well I used to work late and early for selfish interests, I now have something I love far better, why not work late and early in the Lord's cause as well as in the earthly interests? If the Lord should find that I was careless of His interests in comparison of my previous experience in life, what would He say? It would indicate that I would love the earthly more than the Heavenly.

We do not want Him to say that we ever loved earthly things more than the Heavenly. We are not children of the night, but of the day—let us walk in the light.

Ye brethren are not in darkness that that day should come upon you as a thief, but it shall come as a thief and a snare upon the whole world and they shall not escape. Ye brethren are not to fear or measure yourselves from a worldly standpoint. They have no hope such as we have. Surely, very few persons hope as we do. What manner of persons ought we to be, said the Apostle, in all manner of conversation, etc., hastening to that glorious time which shall be ushered in by the great time of trouble, the time of refreshing from the Lord, because the times of restitution shall then be near.

I am glad that we have this blessed privilege of meeting this morning. Then a prayer and praise service followed:

No. 152, “A Thousand Years.”

Prayer.

No. 318, “Watching For the Day.”

Prayer.

No. 72, “Hail to the Brightness.”

Prayer.

No. 316, “Watchman, Tell Me Does the Morning of Fair Zion’s Glory Dawn?”

Prayer.

No. 14, “Only Waiting for the Dawning.”

Prayer.

No. 282, “Let the King of Glory In.”

Prayer.

No. 21, “Christian the Morning Breaks Sweetly O’er Thee.”

Concluded with Doxology,  
“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him aloud with hearts and voice,  
And always in His Son rejoice.”