



SAN DIEGO, Cal., Oct. 29.—Pastor Russell was in our city today, and preached a stirring sermon from the text, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Ephesians 5:15.) He said in part:

The world in general is asleep. In one sense of the word it is dead. As we know, the death sentence passed upon all men because of Adam's sin. (Romans 5:12.) Since that time all of the human family have been going into the tomb; and even those still having a measure of life are spoken of in the Scriptures as "dead in trespasses and sins." (Ephesians 2:1.) But this death sentence resting upon all mankind has been transmuted by the Lord to be a sentence of a period of sleep to be followed by an awakening. God had this arrangement in His glorious Purpose from the beginning, from before mankind came into existence. In the Divine Program our Lord Jesus was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. God purposed the redemption and restitution of mankind. For this reason the Bible refers to the death state as a "sleep."

When God spoke to Moses at the burning bush, He called Himself the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, although these men had long been dead. Our Lord Jesus referred to this statement, and declared that the fact that God had so spoke to them when they were dead proved that there is to be a resurrection of the dead. (Luke 20:37,38; Exodus 3:6.) He did not say that this proved that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not dead, but alive in some other world, but that it proved that they were to be raised from the dead; "for all live unto Him" (God). In other words, it is God's purpose that all shall yet live (John 5:28, 29), and He can properly speak from the standpoint of His pre-determined purpose. In both Old and New Testaments death is spoken of as a sleep, because of the redemption and the deliverance from the Adamic death penalty purposed through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross.

An understanding of the Plan of the Ages given in the Scriptures reveals the fact that all mankind will be awakened from the Adamic death state, in order that they may "come to a knowledge of the Truth," which will be made plain to all during the Messianic Reign of our Lord. (1 Timothy 2:3-6.) This will be the individual enlightenment then brought to all mankind; and the attitude of each toward God's revealed provision for all will determine his case, whether he shall have life everlasting or shall be cast into the death state again. This will be the Second Death—eternal destruction. In the Bible the Second Death is never spoken of as a "sleep." This term is applied only to the Adamic death.

"Awake, Thou That Sleepest!"

Our text applies especially to those who, although still having an existence, are dead in trespasses and sins, who are sleeping so far as the highest interests in their souls, their being, are concerned, those who are under the benumbing influence of the potion administered by the great Adversary. (2 Corinthians 4:4.)

Since our Lord's death as the great Sacrifice for sin, the call has gone out in a general way to all who have heard the Gospel Message that they should repent of sin, should arise from their dormant condition, and live in accordance with the purpose for which they were created. To those who heed this Message comes the special Call of the Gospel Age.

The majority of the human family seem to be passing through life in a sort of maze. They are not awake; they seem to be in a dream. As a rule, they are not thinking about the more important things of life, but of the trivialities—what they shall eat, what they shall drink, where-withal shall they be clothed, where they shall find pleasure or amusement, how they can multiply their dollars. These matters are indeed very trifling compared to the weighty question—"Why am I living? What was the purpose of my creation? What are my responsibilities to my God and to my fellowmen? What is to be my eternal destiny?"—Matthew 6:31-33.

In the experience of practically all who have come to the Lord there has been first a soul awakening. Their coming to Him has been preceded by an awakening of their inmost being, their nobler self, a dissatisfaction with the things of this world and a yearning for something that will satisfy, a hungering and thirsting for God. To the one who is beginning to experience this soul-stirring, the words of our text should be especially effective: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!" First must come the awakening, the realization of our need, the hungering for God. Then the light will come, as the heart comes into the attitude to receive it.

An Important Crisis in Life.

This thought of the need of an awakening should give us sympathy for those who have never yet heard the voice of the Lord. They need our sympathy. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear," said our Lord to His disciples. (Matthew 13:16,17.) This benediction is for the disciples of Jesus today as well as for those to whom the words were directly spoken. These have had the soul-awakening; they see and hear these things unknown before—things of incomparable value. A very large number of the poor world of mankind are steeped in sin and degradation. They are living merely for the things of time and sense. They seem to do very little profitable thinking. Although they have heard of God and of Heaven, yet what they heard seemingly has made but little impression upon them.

To some who have lived thus for years comes a time of awakening. Suddenly, through the experiences of life, they are aroused from their lethargy to a realization that there is something to live for beyond what they have heretofore seen. They come to realize that they are sinners needing a Savior, that they are helpless and need a Helper. Perhaps they get the right view—that the sentence resting upon fallen man is death. (Genesis 3:19.) More likely they get the wrong view—that it is eternal torment. But from the moment of their awakening they faced a crisis in their lives. How would they respond? Would they come near to God and receive a blessing? Or would they turn from Him and the voice of conscience, and wander off into greater darkness, greater sin, and thereafter be more difficult to reach than ever before?

In the case of others, however, it was not an awakening to a realization of sin; for from childhood they had been children of the Lord, accustomed to the Bible, the hearing of prayer and the singing of hymns. They were Christians; yet their soul was not really awake. They were going through the form of singing hymns, of reading the Bible and of offering prayer, without thinking seriously of what the words meant. They were asleep, in a sort of somnambulistic condition, as it were, going around in a stupid way, having a form of godliness with little or none of its power.

Then, in the Lord's providence, they were brought to a sudden standstill. They received a mental shock which shook them out of their torpid condition. They were brought face to face with a crisis in their lives. They saw in just what condition they were. They heard the Call to a

higher, nobler life. We well remember when we received this soul-awakening. We were about 15 years of age at the time.

Suggestions to Parents and Teachers.

This time of soul awakening is an important period in the life of the young. About this time there seems to be a great change in human nature. It is the age when conditions of thoughtfulness are reached, the time when the forces making for spirituality have the most favorable effect upon the youthful mind. This is a thought which parents, guardians and teachers of youth do well to have before them. By this we do not mean, however, that no special attempt should be made to bring the child to the Lord previous to this time. Quite to the contrary, from birth the child should be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Indeed, the child's training should begin even earlier than this; for the parental influence upon the mind of the infant during the prenatal period is of the utmost importance and has a decided bearing upon the character in later life.

In speaking of the importance of the period of life at the age of 15 years or thereabouts, our thought is that at about that time the child mind is sufficiently developed to begin to reach out as never before, to wonder, to question, to see things in a new light, to look beyond the trivial things of the present time, to lose interest in previous childish diversions. Parents and teachers should use much wisdom in dealing with children at this crucial age. They should neither reprove nor seek to check these first stirrings of the mind toward higher, more important things.

It seems somewhat remarkable that at this age children reason with a great deal of accuracy, about as accurately, perhaps, as they will ever reason; but experience seems to show that this is true. It is afterward that their minds frequently become perverted by false reasoning, and their brain power becomes so confused that they do not know how to think or what to think. From their elders they learn deceit, and get improper views of life and its responsibilities. They imbibe erroneous teachings, which are often difficult to unlearn.

Parental Responsibility Very Great.

Strange to say, there are parents—and some of them professedly Christian—who say, "All children must sow their wild oats." How surprising that any parent could so reason! Whoever sows wild oats will reap in kind. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7.) There is no escape from this inexorable law of nature.

From the first dawn of its understanding the child should be kept very near to the Divine standard. The parents should be able to express to the child in sympathetic terms those qualities of nobility and righteousness which the opening mind is so ready to receive, just as a sponge sucks up water. The child mind is ready to absorb very fully the thoughts which are given to it by sincere parents or by any one in whom it has confidence. But children soon lose confidence in one whom they find to be deceitful, one who tells them untruths.

Children are very quick to note whether the parent is untruthful or unjust. Thus their confidence is destroyed; and in time they learn to deceive others, to practice falsehood and injustice. We regret to say that there are parents who seemingly think it wise and proper to teach their children to be shrewd and "thrifty," as they call it—to take advantage of others and to fib a little. We are sure that all who come to a real knowledge of Divine Truth, and who have imbibed its spirit, will have no such sentiments. Having learned the right way themselves, they will be very desirous that their children and all whom they can influence shall take the same Godlike viewpoint as themselves.

After Awakening, Remain Awake!

Those who have experienced an awakening of soul should be very watchful lest they fall asleep again—drift back into the old worldly ways. After one has awakened in the morning, and his senses have become fully aroused, it is possible for him to turn over and fall asleep once more. Upon a second awakening, however, the energies are sluggish, and the mind is more or less dull and

stupid. Upon first awaking after a refreshing sleep there is a freshness of mind which seems to be lost if one permits himself to doze off again; and perhaps after his second awakening there is a languor or torpidity of feeling for the entire day.

So it is with those that fall asleep again after having been awakened to a realization of the higher and nobler aspirations and enjoyments. Such may be awakened a second time; but if they are, the perceptions of the soul are likely to be less acute, the conscience less sensitive. For this reason we should encourage those who have awakened to arise at once from the dead world and to be separate from those around them who are still asleep.

After one has awakened and begun to arise from the dead world, the soul is in the attitude to receive the light of Heaven. "Christ shall give thee light." "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." (Psalm 97:11.) Those who are arising from the dead world are approaching this condition of uprightness. The dead are represented as being prostrate. (1 John 5:19.) Arising to a standing position represents an entire change of sentiment.

The awakened one should at once seek to know what the Lord desires him to do. He should begin to study the Word of God. There he finds that the Way to God is Christ—the only Way. The path that leads to God is by way of the Cross of Calvary. The soul must lay hold upon Jesus, by acceptance of the merit of His sacrificial death and by a complete surrender to God through Christ Jesus as the great Advocate. When he has taken this step, the light will begin to dawn upon him. Heavenly things can now for the first time be grasped by the soul. Light, increasing light, is his portion; for each step of obedience brings greater knowledge. "The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day."—Proverbs 4:18.

In the past many of us made the great mistake of supposing that we became Christians when first we awakened, when first we arose from the dead world about us. But we were merely looking toward Christianity, merely awakening to the fact that there is such a thing as harmony with God and an escape from the condemnation that is upon the world because of sin.

There is still condemnation upon all except those who are in Christ. The Apostle truly says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1.) From the moment we come into Christ we are counted members of His Body, and we lose all condemnation of Adamic death. His sacrificial merit has been imputed to cover all our imperfections, as well as the sins of the past. Arising from the dead, in this sense of the expression, means that we are living the resurrection life, that the new life in Christ is begun in us. (Romans 6:4.) This life will, if we continue in the good way, be completed when we receive our glorious spiritual bodies in the First Resurrection.

On Trial for Life or Death.

From the time that we lose the condemnation of death that came upon mankind through Adam's disobedience, by taking the steps of faith in Jesus as our Redeemer and of full consecration to God through Him, we are again placed on trial for life. The first trial for life was given to Father Adam; and when he failed, condemnation came upon all his posterity. But no one can be tried twice for a capital offense, unless in the meantime he has been cleared of the previous condemnation.

Therefore no one can have a second trial until he gets from under the condemnation that came through Adam.

Only the Church of Christ is now on trial for life eternal. They are reckoned as having passed from death unto life, but this is a salvation only by hope. They have yet to be proved, to be developed as New Creatures in Christ. They are now on probation. They have entered the School of Christ, to be perfected in character, to be made copies of God's dear Son, who is their great Instructor. They must be prepared for their future work in the Kingdom; for, if they prove faithful even unto death, they will become the teachers of the next Age—instructing, uplifting, encouraging, blessing, the whole world of mankind, who died in Adam and who are to be awakened

and dealt with during the Incoming Dispensation.