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GENERAL AGENTS FOR CANADA

VANESSA
(From our own Correspondent.)
Mrs. J. Lutes had the misfortune to fall and break her arm Tuesday. Mr. Edgar Roberts and wife have moved into their new home here. Clayton Henry has returned home after spending a week with friends in Burch.
Mrs. James Ripley and son are spending a few days with her parents in Scotland.
Miss Gladys Bartholomew underwent a serious operation on Saturday. David Bannister is spending a few weeks with his parents here.
A number from here attended Geo. Tutt's auction sale at Kelvin on Fri-

A SUNDAY SERMON BY PASTOR RUSSELL

NEW CREATURES PERFECT IN HOLINESS Not of the Flesh, But of the Spirit.

Holiness Means Completeness—Only the Church Are Holy Now—Jews Failed to Be Holy—How Christ's Followers Fulfill the Law—Development of the New Creation—Fasting on the Old Body—Judged by Heart Attitude—Self-Disciplining—Attaining the Spirit of a Sound Mind—Love the Bond of Perfection.

Brantford, Ont., March 19.—Pastor Russell gave an able address here today, based on 1 Peter 1:16: "Be ye holy; for I am holy." He gave a condensed report:

The word "holy" is related to our word "whole," which signifies complete, unbroken. Viewed from this standpoint, our text is a wonderful exhortation. Our Lord Jesus also exhorted us: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father is in Heaven perfect." (Matthew 5:48.) Very properly we note who are thus addressed. It is not the world; for the Bible is not addressed to the world, in their fallen condition, out of harmony with God and not seeking to know His will, mankind are not in a position where they can thus address them. They are aliens, strangers, foreigners, as the Lord speaks of them through St. Paul. At present they have neither lot nor part in the things of God. So far as they are concerned, His great plan is yet future. The Father loves the world sympathetically, and has made provision that ultimately they shall have a glorious place, rich blessings, but not yet.—Ephesians 2:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 1:21-25; John 1:10.

During the long period from Adam to the making of the Covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai, God recognized no nation. Man's race, the world's fellowship with His because of Adam's transgression, God did, indeed, speak through a few, such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and made certain declarations not clearly understood by any at that time. No one was permitted to come into covenant relationship with God except in the sense that Abraham did, and through animal sacrifices, which typified the great sacrifice for sins yet to come.

Then came God's dealings with the one nation of Israel. He separated them from all other nations. (Exodus 19:2-6; Amos 2:1.) He gave them His Law, and promised that if they would keep that Law they should have everlasting life and should exercise the greatest privilege which God mentioned to Father Abraham; namely, that through them all the families of the earth might be blessed. They thought that by obeying His Law, and that they found that they could not do so—that they could not be holy.

This holiness was briefly comprehended in the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke 10:27.) But Israel could not attain to this holiness, this completeness; for, like all the other races, they were imperfect. No imperfect man could keep a perfect law.

Year by year for over sixteen centuries God permitted the offering of typical sacrifices; and they renewed their covenant annually on the Day of Atonement. Thus they were made acceptable to God for the sin they committed, and were kept in covenant relationship with Him. Over and over again they tried to keep the Law, but failed continually. The Apostle Paul tells us that during all those centuries not one Jew was justified through keeping the Law.—Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:15, 16.

How Christians Can Keep God's Law. Then came the Gospel Dispensation. Our Lord Jesus, by His life and by His preaching gave forth a Message of mercy and peace, to those Jews who could not keep the Law, saying still to them, "Be ye holy." During all those many centuries the Israelites had tried to be holy, but had failed; and how could those of our Lord's day expect to be holy, complete, lacking nothing, any more than could their ancestors? Ah, there was a secret which Jesus disclosed to the earnest and sincere, the "Israelites indeed!" The reason why any could keep the Law after Jesus came, was that Christ accomplished an important work, applicable to those who became His disciples. The Law could not succeed in keeping the Law of God, but Christians can do so. This is not because they are born than the Jews, or naturally we are all "children of wrath, even as others."—Ephesians 2:3.

In the absolute sense, Christians cannot keep God's Law, any more than could the Jews, and for the same reason. Doubtless His disciples cannot keep that perfect Law in the sense of having no imperfection of thought, word, or deed. The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us (Romans 8:4), he means through Jesus made an arrangement by which our imperfections are legally cancelled, made as though they did

not exist. Thus, by keeping the Law of God, we are perfect, before God. As Christians, we keep His Law.

According to God's Plan, our Lord Jesus laid His life down as a ransom, a corresponding price, for the life of Father Adam. Adam sinned, and must meet the penalty of sin—death. He died; and all of his posterity have been born under the conditions of sin and death, which his disobedience entailed upon them. Mankind die because sin entered into the world through one man's disobedience, as the Apostle explains. (Romans 5:12.) But through His death our Lord Jesus secured the right to annul Adam's death sentence and to take possession of all mankind. Thus Adam and all of his posterity will be awakened from death; otherwise the entire human race would suffer eternal death; for the penalty of sin is death, not the mere act of dying, but remaining dead forever.—1 Corinthians 15:21, 22; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

At the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom our Lord will take possession of the world. Mankind are something like a scrap-heap of old machines, engines, boilers, etc., all rusted and twisted out of their original shape. But the one who will take control has infinite power and ability to repair and to reconstruct all these defective beings. During the thousand years of His Reign this will be His work. It will affect the dead as well as those having a measure of life when that Reign begins. The Messiah will bring all who will out of sin and death conditions back to the perfection lost in Eden, redeemed at Calvary.

Offices of the Glorified Christ. God purposed, before the foundation of the world, to permit sin to bring forth its evil fruitage for six thousand years, and then to usher in the Millennial Day, the Millennial Sabbath, during which He would do, through Jesus, His appointed Channel, a work for mankind which they could do for themselves. Meantime, He has been selecting and preparing the classes that will be His agents, under Christ, to usher in His great work for humanity—first, an earthly class (enumerated in Hebrews 14), and then a spiritual class, the Church.

Jehovah God has also purposed that our Lord Jesus shall be the great King of the world during the Millennial Sabbath, and that this spiritual class shall be associate kings under Him; moreover, that Jesus and the Holy Spirit shall be the great Priest, and His great work for humanity—first, an earthly class (enumerated in Hebrews 14), and then a spiritual class, the Church.

Whoever will make the Church of Christ is separate and distinct from the world at large, as Jesus said. (John 17:14; 15:16, 19.) Jehovah God has also purposed that through our Lord Jesus during the Incoming Age, by restoring whosoever will to all that was lost in Adam, bringing them back to human perfection, is something very different from what He is now doing for the Church. The inheritance of the faithful Church, is to be spiritual, not earthly; and it is the Church that are now called upon to be holy.

During the Millennial Age all mankind will be called upon to be holy; but the standard of holiness will be set before them, and by the assistance of the Christ all the willing and obedient may attain human perfection. Whosoever will may become holy, as was Father Adam before he sinned. While on earth, our Lord Jesus was holy in the perfection of human nature. (John 1:14.) During the Millennium the whole world will be expected to come up to the standard of holiness, of completeness, of nothing lacking, nothing imperfect. The merit which our Lord has, by virtue of His faithfulness to the Father, even unto death, gives Him the right to purchase the human family and to help them back to that condition of completeness, of holiness, in which they can be holy, as God is holy.

God's Crowning Work. The difference between the call to holiness now extended to those who have a "heart to hear" God's holy Message and the call to holiness to be extended to all mankind during the Millennium is this: It is not the death of the Christian that is holy, but the New Creature. His human imperfections are covered with the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness. This unique dealing with the Gospel Church is for a specific purpose. We understand that God, who had already created various ranks of spirit beings, and who then created man "a little lower than the angels," had planned before the foundation of the world that in due time He would have a New Creation, different from anything created before then, and the greatest, the most wonderful, of all His creations.—2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:4, 2:10.

This New Creation, God tells us (2 Peter 1:4), is to have the Divine nature. His nature, it will not only be higher than the human nature, which in perfection is the image of God, but higher than the various orders of spirit beings, who are also in the image of God. It will be the spirit nature in its highest form. The God first began to develop this New Creation in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ at the time of His baptism in Jordan. The Father's purpose was sending the Spirit into the world as: (1) That He might be the Redeemer of the world; (2) That

He might become the Leader of the Church. (Hebrews 2:9, 10.) God has made our Lord to be Head over the Church, which is His Body—in the same sense that Congress is a Body. The work of the Gospel Age has been the gathering of the members of His Body. The blessing until this work of gathering and developing the spiritual Body of Christ shall have been completed.

The Holiness of the Saints. Now we see what the Apostle means when he says, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1.) We should rejoice to know that if we offer our little all to God, Jesus will make up what is needed, to render our sacrifice fully acceptable to the Father. When the Holy Spirit comes upon one, an union from on High, it constitutes him a son of God, on a new plane. He is no longer counted as a human being. He has been begotten as a spirit being; but he has no spirit body as yet. He still has the old body, the old brain, although a new will is there, a new mind, "the mind of Christ." He had the mind, the disposition, of Christ to present himself a sacrifice; but when he is begotten of the Holy Spirit, he received from God the start of a new nature. He became a New Creature in Christ.

During the present life the New Creature must dwell in this earthly tabernacle. (2 Corinthians 5:4.) If he continues to walk humbly and faithfully before the Lord, seeking to do the Divine will, as the consecrated have agreed to do, he will be more and more filled with the Holy Spirit, until eventually God will complete the matter by giving the resurrection "change" the birth of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:51-53; John 5:7.) Then the New Creature will be transferred to a Divine spirit body, and the New Creature will be complete.

New Creatures to Judge Themselves. It is the New Creature that is to be holy, perfect, as the Father in Heaven is holy, perfect. This does not give any one liberty to sin with the body, however. "How shall we who have died to sin live any longer therein?" asks the Apostle. (Romans 6:2.) If we consecrated ourselves voluntarily unto death in opposition to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Whosoever enjoys sin thereby manifests that he has not the Holy Spirit. The mind of the Lord does not enjoy sin. We are to make a clear distinction, however, between the impulses of the flesh and the desire of the heart, through the impulses of his fallen human nature, any one of God's people might be overtaken in a fault, and under stress of circumstances might do or say something that he did not approve. But so surely he is a New Creature he will make amends for his fault, in order to return to full harmony with the Lord.

God is judging His people according to the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7.) The world cannot know all about God's people. They look at things from the natural man's standpoint; and when they see a child of God do or say something unkind or improper, they draw their conclusions accordingly. But we must not judge them. Our heart attitude must ever be to wish to do the Lord's will. Should any of God's people willingly consent to sin, he would be a partaker of that sin. If overtaken in a fault, he must correct it. Whoever as a New Creature in Christ is seeking to be holy as God is holy, will watch his words and conduct, and will try to keep a strict rule over his mortal body; and if that body should temporarily get from under control, he will discipline it by way of punishment, will correct it in order to make it remember for the future.—1 Corinthians 11:31, 32.

All true Christians should be on the alert to note God's providences. Nothing can come to us without being by accident; for all things must work together for their good. Should one of them meet with what would appear to be an accident, if he should have some peculiar experience, he should think, "Is this something to teach me a special lesson, or is it a chastisement from my Father for wrong-doing?"

Every child of God must receive discipline, in order that his character may be developed. Even our Lord Jesus had discipline. But in His case these experiences were never punishments; and it is for the Lord's people to be on guard to see that their disciplines are not in the nature of punishments, so as to get the greatest benefit for them.—Hebrews 12:5-11, 12-13.

The Lord's people should also study the character of God, to see His wholeness, His completeness, that they may copy His example. They are to have "the spirit of a sound mind." Our minds are not sound naturally, being blighted by sin by accident; but the New Creature is always loyal to God. The Scriptures tell us what God's will for us is, what His mind is; and we are to copy Him. God is LOVE. But He will not be loving at the expense of Justice. So let us copy God in His Wisdom, Mercy, Justice, and Love. All these noble qualities will be manifest more or less in the Church of Christ.

We should ever remember that our chief work is with ourselves. We are interested in the Lord's people, however. But God has not given us the work of making them over. He will attend to that work Himself. We are all soldiers under the one great Captain, we are members of the same Bride class, all called by the same Heavenly Calling. We have all been begotten with the same Holy Spirit, have one Father and one Saviour. If we are in the love of Christ and are learning of Him, how should we love the brethren, then? The Bible gives this as one of the unmistakable evidences that we have passed from death unto life—love of the brethren. (1 John 3:4.) God's Word points out to us what it is to be holy as our Heavenly Father is holy, to be perfect as He is perfect. Then let this mind be in us which was in Christ. Jesus our Lord.

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