

A SUNDAY SERMON BY PASTOR RUSSELL

OUR GREAT CREATOR'S "UNSPEAKABLE GIFT"

"Good Tidings of Great Joy, Which Shall Be Unto All People."

Generosity an Element of Godliness—God "The Giver of Every Good and Perfect Gift"—Including the "Unspeakable Gift"—Our Appreciation of God's Gifts—How Expressed—"More Blessed to Give Than to Receive."

Dec. 19.—Pastor Russell preached a Christmas sermon here to-day to a very attentive congregation. His discourse was based upon the text "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." (2 Corinthians 9:15.) He said in part:

There is an appreciation of the general good cheer of the Christmas season. The happy custom of giving tokens of love and friendship prevails wherever the story of Jesus has gone. Surely this is just as it should be. While some may have been injured by receiving bounties, but few, if any, have been other than blest in the giving of them. Herein we see corroborated our Saviour's words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

In our dealings with God it is necessary that we realize our dependence, our own insufficiency, and His greatness and beneficence; and that we learn to go to Him as His "children," to whom He delights to give His favors, and who receive them and appreciate them with gratitude of heart. In every sense of the word we are debtors to God and His ways shall be. We can never dispute the obligations under which His mercy and loving kindness have placed us. The sooner we realize this fact, the better will it be for us. Some possessed with a false pride declare that they ask no favors from God or man—that they pay their respects our of duty to Him as their fellow-men, something of this spirit is praiseworthy; but the entire proposition is inconsistent with our relationship with the Almighty.

As we did not create ourselves, neither can we maintain our being, as the Scriptures assert: "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). This we have been true of us whether born in an angelic plane or as perfect human beings; for we could not have created ourselves, directly or indirectly, through the arrangements of His providence in nature, God was responsible for our birth; and He is the Provider for His creatures on every plane. The fact that He causes His sun to shine upon the just and the unjust, and sends His rain upon the just as well as upon the good, and thus provides for the world, is proof that in general He is in rebellion against Him and His authority, does not prove that the laws of nature are autocratic and that the rebellion would not be otherwise than as the Scriptures show, the mercies of God scattered broadly, as a part for the necessities of His creatures. That He allows these things to be interfered with at the present time and permits adverse conditions upon our race He does so, not because of their sinful, rebellious attitude, because the sentence, the curse of death, has been justly pronounced against mankind, and because He sees a way by which present lessons of adversity and tribulation may be made instructive as respects "the exceeding sinfulness of sin."

"All Taught of God." Two of the great lessons for us to learn are (1) our complete dependence upon God, and (2) His loving kindness and tender mercies over all His works. But these lessons can be learned only from one standpoint, that from the inside only will be surely understood, misinterpreted, and many of the operations of Divine providence.

"The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence Him, and He will show them His covenant"—His future plans, His agreement. (Psalm 25:14.) In order to see, to understand, and appreciate them, we must accept certain matters by faith: (1) "that He is"—that there is an Almighty Creator; (2) "that He is the Father of them that diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6.) Seeking the Lord diligently, we find in the Bible that which commends it to our hearts as well as to our heads. The right here we are beset by a danger and a difficulty: for while it is possible to receive great assistance from fellow-believers in the understanding of the Divine Word, yet there is much danger of our becoming even more confused by such assistance—by the creeds and theories of men, particularly those handed down from the Dark Ages. What, therefore, we receive from men we must accept tentatively—for examination, for proving and testing of the Word of God. Thus we try

the spirits' or doctrines, as the Apostle admonishes. (1 John 4:1.) Thus we permit God to be His own Interpreter and to make the matter plain to us. Those teachers who refer to the Word of God, who point out to us its harmony with itself and with reason, giving the citations and showing the relationship between text and context, these are the teachers who are really helpful. All others are apt to be injurious, whether they address us orally or in print.

"Every Good and Perfect Gift." Only after we have been for some time in the School of Christ can we comprehend the force of the Apostle's words, "Every good and every perfect gift is from Above." (James 1:17.) Then we begin to look about to find some of these good and perfect gifts. We soon find many gifts and blessings, but very few of them perfect, purely good. Everything is imperfect. Even the sunshine and the rain, which are common to all God's creatures, are evident not in their perfect conditions. Imperfection seems to be written upon everything we have, as well as upon ourselves.

The Bible explanation of this state of affairs is that while God's work is perfect (Deuteronomy 32:4), our race to-day are not really samples of His workmanship, but are depraved, fallen, imperfect through the sin of our Father Adam and its entailed weaknesses and blemishes upon his posterity. The good and perfect gifts of God are to be seen only by the eyes of faith, only by those whose hearts have been opened to see by faith Jesus, the great Redeemer. By faith this class see accomplished in God's due time His great work of Redemption, the wiping away of all tears from off all faces and the re-establishment of everything on the plane of perfection—the destruction of death and every thing connected with it, and the re-establishment of perfect life conditions, such as God has promised.

Those whose eyes of understanding have to some extent been opened, and the fogs of superstition and error all flee away before the rising of the Sun of Righteousness and its glories of the Millennial Kingdom! The few who now see and appreciate God's gift are indeed, as the Scriptures declare, a "little flock," mentioned in our text. What is this gift? It is the entire Scriptures set forth in various presentations. Of these statements one of the most forceful is St. Paul's declaration, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Romans 6:23.

A Gift Not Appreciated. False theologians have diverted or taken away from this Bible statement that eternal life is the GIFT of God, and that He will supply it only to those in fullest harmony with Himself. False theologians have taught us that eternal life is a natural quality—yes, that it is a persistent one, that not even God Himself can destroy our lives or being. This erroneous thought has distorted all our reasonings, and has left the issue as between an eternal life in torture or an eternal life in bliss. But the Scriptures clearly define a different issue, namely, as between extinction, destruction, and a life in harmony with God, a life which Divine Love and Mercy had provided. For those who are in accord with the Almighty, let us hearken to the testimony of our Lord, the Apostles, and the Prophets on this subject, and see that God is now proffering the church a gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us note the Scriptural proposition that if we are willfully, deliberately, intelligently, rejecting the gift it will be withheld, and that the effect upon us will be the Second Death, everlasting oblivion, from which God offers no hope of recovery.

Let us note that this is the general calling of God; and hence that while His time shall come for dealing with the world of mankind in general, during the Millennial Age, in order that it be made to them will be a similar proposition of life or death everlasting. Those who will accept God's gift upon God's terms are welcome to it. He is pleased to give it. Those who will then reject it shall die the Second Death.—Acts 3:22, 23.

"Through Jesus Christ our Lord," is the Apostle's statement. The gift is not offered to us by the Father directly, but indirectly through the Son. To those whose eyes of understanding have been opened, the Apostle says: "This is the record, that God has given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 4:12.) Other Scriptures inform us that this life is merely reckoned to the Church now, and that they will not get it until they shall experience the change of the First Resurrection, at the Second Coming of our Lord. Of these it is written, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:3.) Only as we become united to Him, related to Him, can we have this unspeakable gift of God. Hence it is not improper that we should sometimes both think and speak of Jesus Himself as being

Both Jesus and the eternal life which the Father has provided through Him are unspeakable in the sense that it is impossible for us to present fully to others the richness and the glory which inhere in both. Who can describe the wealth of either a Divine representative in our Lord, or a spirit plane or as restored and perfected humanity? It is beyond all the powers of our mental comprehension. Even the thought of it can only be imperfectly conveyed, and it is perfectly grasped. It must gradually dawn upon us, grow upon us in appreciation and comprehension. Similarly the wealth of grace Divine represented in our Lord is unspeakable. We cannot tell it; and the natural man cannot receive of the things of the Spirit of God, neither know them.—1 Corinthians 2:14.

Only those who are especially favored of God can get even the first

fringe of the riches of God's grace in Christ. If this glimpse be appreciated, it leads to clearer and still clearer views; for all who will appreciate either our Lord Jesus or the gift of life must be "taught of God." (John 6:45.) As our Redeemer said to St. Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father in Heaven" (Matthew 16:17), so all who would grasp spiritual things must be taught. All our teaching and preaching cannot overcome the blindness of the natural fallen mind in respect to God's gift and the Channel through which it comes.

Only as the Heavenly Father shall grant His blessing may fruits to our labors be expected. It is written, "As many as the Lord your God shall call," and "No man can come unto Me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." (Acts 2:39; John 6:44.) Hence we see that our present appreciation of Divine goodness implies three gifts: (1) the Divine promise of eternal life; (2) Christ the Channel, and (3) the knowledge by which we are enabled to appreciate both the Gift and the Channel. Receiving and Rejecting God's Gift. Only as the Heavenly Father shall grant His blessing may fruits to our labors be expected. It is written, "As many as the Lord your God shall call," and "No man can come unto Me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." (Acts 2:39; John 6:44.) Hence we see that our present appreciation of Divine goodness implies three gifts: (1) the Divine promise of eternal life; (2) Christ the Channel, and (3) the knowledge by which we are enabled to appreciate both the Gift and the Channel. Receiving and Rejecting God's Gift. Only as the Heavenly Father shall grant His blessing may fruits to our labors be expected. It is written, "As many as the Lord your God shall call," and "No man can come unto Me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." (Acts 2:39; John 6:44.) Hence we see that our present appreciation of Divine goodness implies three gifts: (1) the Divine promise of eternal life; (2) Christ the Channel, and (3) the knowledge by which we are enabled to appreciate both the Gift and the Channel. Receiving and Rejecting God's Gift.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson XIII.—Fourth Quarter, For Dec. 26, 1915.

THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Text of the Lesson, Hos. xiv.—Quarterly Review—Golden Text, Ps. ciii., & Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

Lesson I.—Elijah in Naboth's vineyard, I Kings xxi, 11-20. Golden Text, Num. xxxiii, 23, "Be sure your sin will find you out." The wicked may act as if they owned this world and may oppress and even kill those who seem to have no helper, but "He that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they" (Eccl. v. 8). The blood of the righteous Abel cried unto God (Gen. iv, 10; Matt. xxiii, 35). Lesson II.—Elijah taken up into heaven, II Kings ii, 1-12. Golden Text, Ps. xvi, 11, "In Thy presence is fullness of joy, in Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." It is especially helpful in this lesson to note the devotion of Elijah and how he steadfastly clung to God used to martyrdom, which his heart desired. The two going on together suggests how we may walk with God if we will.

Lesson III.—Elisha heals Naaman, the Syrian, II Kings v, 1-14. Golden Text, Ex. xv, 26, "I am Jehovah that healeth thee." A little captive maid and a great man of God used to martyrdom, which his heart desired. The two going on together suggests how we may walk with God if we will.

Lesson IV.—Elisha's heavenly defenders, II Kings vi, 8-17. Golden Text, Ps. xxxiv, 7, "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them." Vain are the efforts of man against a child of God unless God permit. He delivered the king of Israel from the king of Syria by His servant Elisha. He delivered Elisha in a wonderful way by sending blindness on those who sought him. He caused Elisha's servant to see the angelic hosts.

Lesson V.—The boy Joash crowned king, II Kings xi, 4-12. Golden Text, Prov. xiv, 11, "The house of the wicked shall be overthrown, but the tent of the upright shall flourish." This is an assurance of heavenly care and preservation and of God watching over His Word to perform it, for if all the seed royal had been slain the Word of God to David would have failed. The preservation of Joash was to preserve the line of David. God uses human agencies.

Lesson VI.—Joash repairs the temple, II Kings xii, 4-15. Golden Text, II Cor. ix, 7, "God loveth a cheerful giver." Both the tabernacle and the temple said that God was in the midst of His people, and neglect to the temple was an insult to God. Athaliah had said that she treated God, but Joash obtained funds in the appointed way by willing offerings and repaired the temple and restored the worship.

Lesson VII.—Daniel in the king's court, Dan. ii, 1-12. Golden Text, I Cor. xii, 13, "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bone." Both the tabernacle and the temple said that God was in the midst of His people, and neglect to the temple was an insult to God. Athaliah had said that she treated God, but Joash obtained funds in the appointed way by willing offerings and repaired the temple and restored the worship.

Lesson VIII.—Jonah a missionary to Nineveh, Jonah iii, 1-10. Golden Text, Matt. xxviii, 20, "Go ye therefore, * * * and lo, I am with you always, striking the sea and the land." A man, even unto the end of the world, is a man, and God's unwillingness that any should perish, and His difficulty in finding willing messengers; also the great results from preaching the message He bids us, then the foreshadowing of the conversion of nations by a converted Israel.

Lesson IX.—Amos the fearless prophet, Amos v, 1-15. Golden Text, Jer. xxiii, 28, "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." Let his great need of believers is to be turned away from all idols, and especially from self, to walk with and serve the Living God, who has revealed to us will it abound in our hearts, that we may be fully agreed with Him.

Lesson X.—Uzziah's pride and punishment, II Chron. xxvi, 8-21. Golden Text, Prov. xxix, 23, "A man's pride shall bring him low, but he that is of lowly spirit shall obtain honor." We have seen a great man healed of leprosy when he was willing to be humble and obedient, but here is a great king becoming proud and dying a leper. God resisteth pride, but blesses humility.

Lesson XI.—Jehovah yearns over backsliding Israel, Hosea xi, 1-11. Golden Text, Hosea, xi, 4, "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." Israel the Son of God condescended with Christ, the True Israel; the one utterly selfish and sinful; the other with no self and no sin. As the Father loves the Son, so He loves us and would have us live in His love (John xv, 9). Our difficulty is that we do not know Him.

Lesson XII.—The song of the angels, Luke ii, 8-20. Golden Text, Luke ii, 10, "Be not afraid, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people." Note simple faith of the shepherds and their making known what they saw and heard. Consider the ministry of angels at His birth, in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, at His resurrection.

VARIETIES

The wreck record of the Baltic Sea is greater than that of any other part of the world. Owing to the dry cold atmosphere, not a single infectious disease is indigenous to Greenland.

Some of the finest tapestry ever woven in Japan is to be seen in the Peace Palace at The Hague. The volcano Aso-an, in Southern Japan, is believed to have the biggest crater known. It is fourteen miles across one way and between ten and eleven the other.

ALCOHOL AS BAIT FOR FISH. A wounded Russian officer who has arrived from the front recounts an amusing instance of the benefits of teetotalism. The commander of a company ordered eight hundred cases of spirit found in a captured German village to be poured into a fish-pond. The fish became intoxicated and floated to the surface, where they fell an easy prey to the Russian soldiers. The supply lasted some days.

AN ANCIENT PERFUME. It seems strange to us to-day to read of saffron as a perfume; but such it undoubtedly was almost universally, and an element of romance about it lies in the story told by Herodotus of a pilgrim smuggling, at the risk of his life, from the Levant, a head of saffron in a hollow made in his staff, from which grew the plant, which gave its name to Saffron Walden.

CANTEEN SUPERSTITIONS. Tommy Atkins' superstitions are not all connected with the serious side of his work, and many of them have a decided touch of humor. In the latter category are some connected with that popular institution which is so often jocularly referred to—the canteen. It is unlucky, for instance, to refuse to have a drink with a stranger, and it is also unlucky to have a cheaper drink than the person who is treating you. Ill luck too attends the seemingly harmless action of leaving any beer in the pot or mug.

PAPER CLOTHING. "Kamikoi," as paper clothing is called in Japan, is made of real Japanese paper manufactured from mulberry bark. The paper has little "size" in it, and, though soft and warm, a thin layer of silk wadding is placed between two sheets of the paper and the whole is quilted. Velvet shirts and drawers made in this way are more comfortable than flannels. The Japanese soldiers realized the value of this kind of clothing when they had to weather a Siberian winter. The only drawback to this clothing is that it is not washable.

SEALING-WAX IN THE MIDDLE AGES. In the annual report of the Government Chemist for 1913-1914 an interesting account is given of analyses of old impressions on documents in the Public Record Office. The seals ex-

amined dated from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, and differed but little from modern sealing-wax. Two seals of the dates 1399 and 1423 respectively, were composed of wax, the characteristics of which agreed more nearly with those of East Indian than of European beeswax. The wax of Great Seal of 1350 agreed in chemical and physical characters with pure beeswax of to-day. The pigment in the red seals was vermilion, while the green seals contained verdigris.

A TREE THAT WEEPS. In the Canary Islands is a weeping tree, so called because it drops tears. It is of the laurel variety, and in the early morning a copious shower of tears or water drops from its tufted foliage. This water sometimes collects at the foot of the tree and forms a kind of pond from which the inhabitants supply themselves with a drinkable beverage that is absolutely fresh and pure. The water comes out of the tree itself through innumerable little pores situated at the margins of the leaves, and known as water stomata—minute apertures or slits in the epidermis of leaves, or young stems, etc. These are somewhat different from the almost similar apertures in the surface of the leaves, whose function is to regulate the constant passage of air to and from the internal tissues.

As we look out of the tree as vapour during the daytime, when the heat is sufficiently great; but in the evening, when the temperature is lowered very much, a considerable quantity is exuded in the form of tears or liquid drops that collect near the edges of the leaves, and these membrane bend down under their own weight until the drops tumbling off on the ground below in a veritable shower.

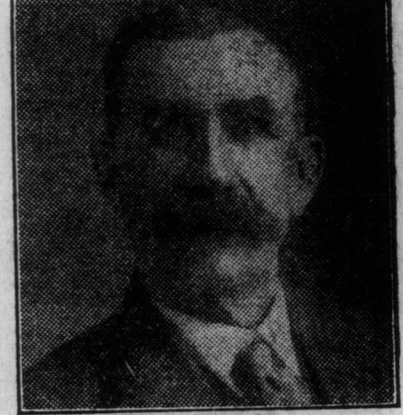
"FLOWERY" NAMES. Many of the Chinese names are of a "flowery" character. The Chinese Minister at Washington, for many years was Wu Ting-fang, a name which signifies "fragrant place." The name of the Minister to England at the same time was Lo Fei-lo, meaning "a rich harvest." The name of the contemporary Minister to France, Yu Keng, signified "much gold." The regular name for a little Chinese girl baby is "My thousand ounces of gold."

May Be Released. Amsterdam, via London, Dec. 23.—The newspaper, Rotterdammer, announces that Britisa officers interned in Holland, may be released henceforth on parole.

Bedfordshire education committee have decided to close the schools half an hour earlier in order to save fuel and have ordered that the fires are not to be made up in the afternoon.

WILL WE EVER WALK ON AIR?

Train Of Thought Inspired By A Letter About "Fruit-a-tives"



Orillia, Ont., Nov. 28th, 1914. "For over two years, I was troubled with Constipation, Drowsiness, Lack of Appetite and Headaches. I tried several medicines, but got no results and my Headaches became more severe. One day I saw your sign which read 'Fruit-a-tives' make you feel like walking on air. This appealed to me, so I decided to try a box. In a very short time, I began to feel better, and now I feel fine. Now I have a good appetite, relish everything I eat, and the Headaches are gone entirely. I cannot say too much for 'Fruit-a-tives', and recommend this pleasant fruit medicine to all my friends." DAN McLEAN. "FRUIT-A-TIVES" is daily proving its priceless value in relieving cases of Stomach, Liver and Kidney Trouble—General Weakness, and Skin Diseases. 50c. a box, 6 for \$2.50, trial size, 25c. At all dealers or sent postpaid by Fruit-a-tives Limited, Ottawa.

For having a bonfire in his garden without permission of the naval or military authorities, William Bunting of Brixton was at Lambeth fined \$10.

Liver Sluggish?

You are warned by a sallow skin, gully eyes, biliousness, and that grouchy feeling. Act promptly. Stimulate your liver—remove the clogging wastes—make sure your digestive organs are working right and—when needed—take

BEECHAM'S PILLS

Largest Sale of Any Medicine in the World Sold everywhere. In boxes, 25 cents.

A War On Waste Economy is best practised by cutting out waste One bar of N.P.SOAP costs 15¢ and contains more and better soap than four or five cakes of other kinds at 5¢ a cake. Why not save the 10% by cutting up the soap yourself? N.P.SOAP has been Made in Canada for over 35 years



Martyred Belgium Cries for FOOD!

You have Plenty — Share it! We cannot—MUST NOT let the destitute Belgians starve! No victory could be lastingly glorious if it involved the decimation by famine of a small nation that deliberately sacrificed itself rather than sacrifice honor!

Earl Curzon of Kedleston, says: "We have to relieve from privation, and from worse, these unhappy people during the forthcoming winter, the second winter which they have passed under these cruel conditions; we have to keep alive their vital resources, to support their courage, and enable them to continue to endure."

Belgian Relief Fund

has been and is administered with an Efficiency and Economy never before equalled in Public Relief Work. All accounts are audited, and every pound of food and supplies is accounted for. The arrangements are absolutely effective for securing that none of the food or money goes into the hands of the Germans, is requisitioned by military authorities, or in any lump sum to Local or Provincial Committees, or to the Central Executive Committee, 59 St. Peter St., Montreal. MAKE HER DREAM COME TRUE

Nearly 3,000,000 Belgians must depend this winter on charity! Without help hundreds of thousands will starve! We in Canada have plenty! In the name of humanity and of the cause for which we are fighting, let us do our part toward saving these heroic allies! Send your subscriptions weekly or in one lump sum to Local or Provincial Committees, or to the Central Executive Committee, 59 St. Peter St., Montreal. \$2.50 FEEDS A BELGIAN FAMILY ONE MONTH

KEY S Gents' shoes, all colors, black, support or to shoes to purchase. BNE Wholesale St. S' SE ET st ture n- or SO or es as ill g. te USE en ENCY LETS. g. rring physical ediate onable three angest s, and gdown, Dance, of Brain loss of ss and able in Toronto, at Tax, S S edy