

PEOPLE'S

PULPIT...



Sermon by
CHARLES T. RUSSELL
Pastor Brooklyn
Tabernacle.

PREACHING TO IMPRISONED SPIRITS

"By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (1 Peter iii, 19).

Knoxville, Tenn., Sept. 25.—A Convention of Bible Students is in session in this city. Pastor Russell of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, as President of the International Bible Students Association, addressed the Students twice today. His audiences were large and intelligent. We report one of his addresses from the text foregoing. He said:—

Much speculation has been aroused by our text. Some have claimed that it signifies that Christ, after his death on the cross and before his resurrection, went to some place where human spirits are imprisoned in some kind of purgatory and there preached to them. Not only is the Catholic theory in line with this suggestion, but many Protestants hold that the dead may be prayed for and thus be assisted to escape from eternal torment. All of this is wrong, as we shall show—quite contrary to the teachings of our text when viewed in the light of its context.

Those preached to were not human beings, but spirit beings—not men, but angels. This is clearly stated in verse 20, which tells us when these angels were imprisoned and why. They were imprisoned in the days of Noah at the time of the flood. They were imprisoned for disobedience. So we read (verse 19), "He preached unto spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." Turning back to the Genesis account of that time we find quite a complete record or history of these disobedient spirits, in the Sixth Chapter, verses 1-5.

Angels Preferred to Be Humans.
Some time after father Adam's disobedience and his expulsion from Eden—the holy angels were permitted to visit humanity with a view to assisting men back to harmony with God. This doubtless was permitted for two reasons: First, had such an opportunity not been furnished, the angels might in the conclusion of God's great Plan, have been inclined to say, "Yes, God accomplished human salvation but in a very roundabout way and at very great cost and trouble. Had he given us an opportunity to mingle with humanity we might have had an uplifting influence upon the people and have accomplished their reconciliation to God."

God wished to forestall any such misunderstanding of the wisdom of the Plan which he had arranged and would, in due time, work out; secondly, the angels themselves never had come in contact with sin of any kind. Hence they never had been tested or tried in respect to their obedience and loyalty to the Creator. They were permitted to attempt the recovery of humanity—partly in order to test their own obedience and loyalty to God.

Our knowledge of spirit beings and the powers granted to them by the Almighty is limited to our observation of the Bible record. The angels who appeared as young men at our Lord's sepulchre and again at his ascension and who, as soon as they had accomplished the purposes of their visit, vanished, are illustrations.

We remember the account of how Abraham sat in the door of his tent and, behold, three men came to him. He received them as men, entertained them at dinner and, we read, "They did eat and talked with Abraham." They had human powers though still spirit beings. When they dematerialized they vanished.

Genesis vi, 1-2, informs us that this privilege of materialization for the assistance of mankind was eventually misused by some of the angels as an opportunity for sinful intercourse with humanity. The time at which this began is not definitely stated. The expression, "When men began to multiply on the face of the earth," might safely be estimated at about a thousand years after Adam's creation and fall. This would leave a period of 655 years to the flood. It was approximately during that long period that the angelic sons of God, seeing the daughters of men, took to themselves for wives all that they chose of the fair daughters of men. And they bare children to them. The same became mighty men which were of old men of renown—and giants. We remember that at that early day human life was much longer than now and that manhood was scarcely reached before a century and that few became fathers sooner; and when we remember also that the children of the angels are not mentioned as boys, but men, mighty men, renowned men, it gives the thought that the angels, without Divine permission, had really started to propagate a new race and that their progeny was much stronger than that of the poor, Adamite stock.

The disregard of Divine Law meant that the strength of these giants would be used selfishly and the licentious example of the angels had a demoralizing effect upon the children of Adam, as well as upon their own children. All this is stated and implied in the words, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." What a terrible picture of the condition of things before the flood! But God was not astonished, for he had foreknown everything. Hence he had a great canopy of water in the sky which temporarily gave the earth an equable, temperate climate, but which he intended should fall upon the earth and cause the great flood in Noah's day. Hence at the appropriate time God gave instructions to Noah to prepare an ark for the saving of himself and his house. Noah and his family were the only members of Adam's race in all the earth who were not more or less contaminated by those angels. How wide must have been that influence when we read as an exceptional matter, "Now Noah (and his family) was perfect in his generation"—the disobedient angels had nothing whatever to do with generating them.

Fallen Angels Changed.

While the angels preferred to live as men in human bodies, they would not be overwhelmed like humanity in the flood, but merely dissolve, by dematerialization, their human bodies and be, as originally, spirit beings. Satan was the first sinner against the Divine government, in his endeavor to set up a separate empire and to have humanity for his subjects. Although God had full power to destroy Satan and the other disobedient angels, he has not exercised that power. Instead he merely isolated them from himself and the holy angels and imprisoned them, in the sense that he no longer permitted them to materialize, either as a serpent or as humanity for the tempting and injury of our race. In this sense they are imprisoned—restrained of liberty.

Now let us hear St. Peter's words respecting these angels who sinned. He says (1 Peter ii, 4), "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." The word *tartarus* here rendered "hell" in our Common Version, is found nowhere else in the Bible. It refers to our earth's atmosphere and to the fact that those fallen angels, called demons or devils, are "the power of the air." And Satan, who was originally an angel of much higher rank and nature, is their Prince, "The Prince of the power of the air," the Prince of demons. They are "cast down" in the sense of being treated ignominiously. They are "in chains of darkness," not in chains of iron. They can still go and come and be sources of temptation to humanity who are in a sinful attitude of mind. They are restrained in chains of darkness in the sense that whatever they do must be done in the dark—until their judgment time at the Great Day—at the beginning of Messiah's thousand-year day of the reign of righteousness.

Turn to St. Jude's Epistle. There we read (verse 6), "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in ages lasting chains, under darkness, unto the Judgment of the Great Day." Their first estate in which they were created was the spirit or angelic condition. They left their own proper condition of living and nature, in violation of the Divine will, that they might live on a lower plane—live in sin; for the angels are sexless, though always referred to as masculine. And our Lord declares that those begotten of the holy Spirit, who during this age shall attain to the resurrection of the dead, the "First Resurrection," will be "like unto the angels" in several respects—one of these being that they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but be without sexual distinction.

In harmony with this note how spiritualists hold their seances, either in absolute darkness or in a very faint light. They claim now that the spirits are getting more and more power of materialization and that soon they will be able to materialize in broad day light and go about amongst humanity as members of the race. We do not question the power of God to restrain these fallen angels, these demons—his power to restrain them from materializing and thus doing great harm in the world. Nevertheless, we wonder if they will not be permitted by God to find some greater powers of materialization, contrary to the Divine decree, that their course in this matter may more particularly manifest to what extent some of them have changed and reformed and desire to be obedient, for instance, while others are still as opposed to God and righteousness as ever. There is room for this understanding in the statement of the Apostle that the chains of darkness were to control them until the Great Day—not necessarily into that day—perhaps at its very beginning they may be permitted to gain certain liberties and do a certain amount of injury to humanity, to all who are not attentive to the Word of God, and who, therefore, will not know who these spirits are—that they are the fallen angels, the demons of the Bible.

"Wicked Spirits," "Lying Spirits." These are the terms used in the

Scriptures in describing the fallen angels, who from earliest days have attempted to deceive humanity—representing themselves as human beings who have died and who desire to communicate with their friends. And they attempt to do so through spirit mediums. This is their practice from of old. Their endeavor is to break down the human will and to more and more control it. The height of their ambition and success is to fully dominate the human will, so that they may use the human body as their own flesh, as when they had power to materialize. Those who come fully under their control become demented, often several spirits gaining possession of the one personality and attempting to use the same brains and body. It is estimated that one-half of all who are in insane asylums are merely victims of spirit-obsession. The great remedy against all this is the Truth of God's Word. Those who accept that cannot be deceived. But the masses of mankind are being deceived. The Scripture teaching is that when a man is dead he knows not anything, and will never know anything until the resurrection of the dead. Whoever knows this is fortified against all the deceptions of the evil spirits.

We are not claiming that all mediums are fraudulent. Some of them we know to be most sincere. A large number have been delivered from their awful position of acting as tools of Satan by the reading of our little pamphlet, "Proofs that Spiritism is Demonism."

Jesus Preached to These Spirits.

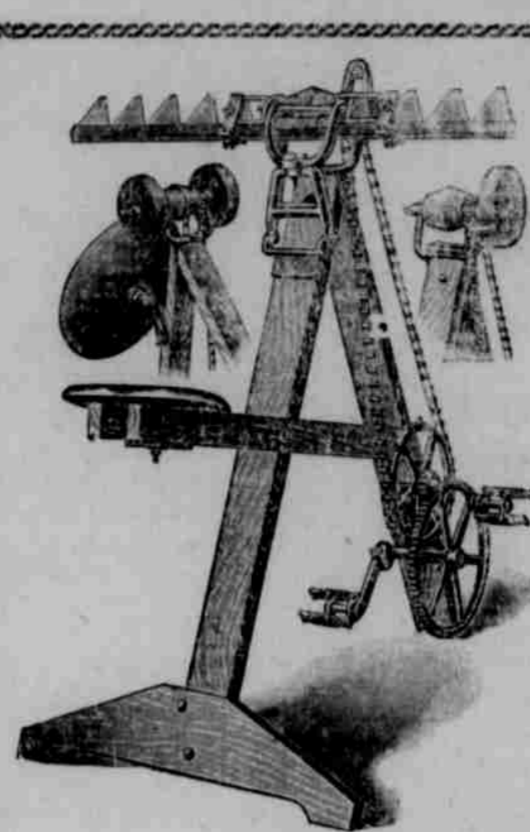
There are no human spirits to be preached to. Human beings are not spirit beings. The dead of humanity who have never heard of "the only name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved" will hear that name in God's due time—in the resurrection—during the thousand years of Messiah's reign when he, as the true Light, shall lighten every man that cometh into the world" (John i, 9).

But if Jesus died and in death knew not anything, how could he preach to the fallen angels? We answer that it is a common expression that "actions speak louder than words." The great actions or facts connected with our Lord's death and resurrection constituted a most wonderful sermon to the fallen angels. As they beheld the Redeemer's faithfulness to God, even unto death, even the death of the cross, and as they then beheld God's faithfulness to him in raising him from the dead to the highest nature—the divine nature—"far above angels and principalities and powers and every name that is named"—all this constituted a most wonderful sermon of love and loyalty, faith and obedience, etc. The sermon to them meant, How serious was our mistake in being disobedient to God in any particular. It meant also, May not God, who has thus gone to so much trouble for the redemption of fallen men, have in his heart also a place of mercy for us, should we repent? The Apostle intimates that these angels, with the exception of Satan, are yet to have a testing or trial, for he assures the Church that God purposes that we, as the Bride of Christ, shall not only be entrusted with the work of judging or giving trial to the world of mankind during the Millennium, but also that we shall judge angels—not the holy angels, for, of course, they need no judging on our part—but the fallen angels (1 Cor. vi, 3).

Quite possibly the hopes inspired by that great sermon preached by our Lord's resurrection to the spirit beings led some of those fallen angels to repentance. If so we may suppose that during the eighteen centuries since, they have suffered severely at the hands of the rebellious angels, who would be aroused to animosity by their reform.

The Scriptures seem to imply that "fallen angels," "wicked spirits," "lying spirits," "demons," will have much to do with bringing about the great "time of trouble" with which this Gospel Age will end, before the complete inauguration of Messiah's Empire and the binding of Satan (Revelation xx, 4). The intimation is that the trouble here will be short and sharp, as in the days of Noah. The declaration of the Apostle that these evil spirits will be in chains of darkness until the Judgment of the Great Day leaves room for the inference that when the Judgment of the Great Day begins, the chains of darkness will be broken. If, therefore, we have the right understanding of this matter great events are near at hand. Spirit mediums are already declaring that the spirits tell them that they will soon be able to materialize in broad daylight. With the power to counterfeit and personate humanity what may this not mean in the way of deception mentioned by our Lord, who declares that it will be so strong that it would deceive even the "very elect" were they not specially protected and guided.

We remind you also of the great stride which Spiritism, Occultism and Psychic Science have made within the last few years. These now number amongst their friends and advocates some of the brightest scientific minds. One of these, Prof. James, of Harvard College, recently, before dying, declared that he would speedily communicate with his friends. Already the newspapers tell us that he has begun to communicate, but the mediums claim that he has difficulty in operating through them, because of the great force and power of his intellect and that they must gradually become able to act as his mediums. From the Bible standpoint all this is a fraud—a deception—but not on the part of the mediums who are themselves deceived, but on the part of the fallen angels, who are thus tricking humanity.



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DEATH TAKES AWAY GEO. A. DERLETH

Business Man of Ashland For
Over Twenty Years.

The following is taken from the Ashland Gazette of September 16, and refers to the death of the husband of a lady who was born and reared in Cass county. Mrs. Derleth's maiden name was Mary Ann Bachelor, who was born on the farm now owned by Isaac Nelson, four miles south of Plattsburgh. Her father was David Bachelor, who died in 1868, and her mother passed away in 1872.

Death has again invaded the business circles of Ashland, removing one who has been a prominent figure for the last twenty-two years, in the person of George A. Derleth, of the firm of George A. Derleth & Son, proprietors of the City Meat market.

For several months it has been known that Mr. Derleth's days were about numbered, as he was afflicted with internal tumors from which the best medical and surgical skill could promise no relief. The end came on Tuesday, the 13th instant, at 3:12 o'clock, p. m.

George Adam Derleth was born at Sank City, Wis., March 28, 1875, where the first fourteen years of his life was spent. At the age of fourteen he went with his sister, Julia Derleth to Algona, Ia., to live, remaining there one and a half years, after which he returned to Wisconsin, remaining for three years at Portage where he learned his trade, that of a butcher. From Portage he went to Chicago, where he remained one year, going from there to Omaha. At the age of twenty-one he was married to Miss Mary Ann Backler, September 25, 1878, in Mason City, Ia., and made his home for the following year at Algona, Ia., where he engaged in business. From Algona he came to Nebraska, settling on a farm in Cass county near Louisville. After two years spent there he went to Joplin, Mo., remaining two years, after which he returned to Nebraska, making his home near Ashland, where he worked at his trade. In 1888 he engaged in business in this city and was identified with the meat business to the time of his death.

Mr. Derleth was the youngest of a family of eight children, five boys and three girls, and was the first of the family to be taken away. His father died at the age of fifty-three years. His brothers are Killian, John, Frank and August, and his sisters, Mesdames Susan Janek, Julia Reuland and Margaret Schleck.

He was the father of five children, namely: George, born in 1883; Joseph, born in 1885; Homer, born in 1887; Margaret, born in 1892; Vercella, born in 1902.

Mr. Derleth was a man of excellent character and standing in business circles, being always perfectly honest and dependable and stood high in the community. He was a prominent member of the Odd Fellows and United Workmen lodges.

The funeral was held at the home Thursday afternoon, the Rev. J. W. Hilton, a former pastor of the Church of Christ, conducted the services. The attendance was large and the floral tributes beautiful. The remains were laid at rest in the Ashland cemetery.

Homer Derleth was away at the time and could not be reached in time for him to reach Ashland to attend his father's funeral. While the funeral procession was on the way to the cemetery a telegram was received from him, requesting that the remains be held till he could reach Ashland. In compliance with that

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GOVERNOR SHALLENBERGER HONORS MR. W. H. HEIL

W. H. Heil, one of Cass county's wide awake stock breeders and progressive farmers has been appointed by Governor Shallenberger as a delegate to the 30th session of the Annual Farmers National congress that convenes at Lincoln from the 6th to the 11th of October. This is the third time Mr. Heil has been given this distinguished honor, and the governor could not have made a better selection as Mr. Heil is one of the representative progressive farmers in this county. His experience in stock breeding and success in all departments of the farm fits him for this important duty. Mr. Heil expects to be on hand at Lincoln on the dates mentioned and will do all in his power to make this one of the best sessions of the congress.

Merchants Organize.

Last Monday an organization was effected wherein the merchants of the town get together for mutual help and benefit. The object is to eventually get every town enlisted, and now thirty-three states are organized and working together. The merchants individually are powerless to secure any relief for wrongs in the way of legislation, as an organization they will be a power. The officers elected here were: M. D. Wickersham, president; W. D. Ambler, vice president; H. D. Reed, secretary; J. J. Meier, member of executive committee.—Weeping Water Republican.

Tom Will, one of Cass county's hustling young farmers, was in town today looking after some business and made the Journal a pleasant call. While here Mr. Will renewed for his own Journal for another year, and also that of his brother, Fred, at Hennessy, Oklahoma.



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