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CHAPTER XXIV.

Like Weary Ghosts in a Dead World.

McCan strove to struggle, but Smoke gripped him cruelly and searched him, drawing forth from under his arm-pit, where it had been thawed by the heat of his body, a strip of caribou meat. A quick exclamation from Labiskwee drew Smoke's attention. She had sprung to McCan's pack and was opening it. Instead of meat out poured moss, spruce needles, chips—all the light refuse that had taken the place of the meat and given the pack its due proportion minus its weight.

Again Labiskwee's hand went to her hip, and she flew at the culprit, only to



She Flew at the Culprit, Only to Be Caught in Smoke's Arms.

be caught in Smoke's arms, where she surrendered herself, sobbing with the futility of her rage.

"Oh, lover, it is not the food!" she panted. "It is you, your life, the dog! He is eating you, he is eating you!"

It was a morning stark still, clear blue above, with white sun dazzle on the snow. The way led up a long wide slope of crust. They moved like weary ghosts in a dead world.

"Something is going to happen," Labiskwee whispered. "Don't you feel it—here, there, everywhere? Everything is strange."

"I feel a chill that is not of cold," Smoke answered. "Nor is it of hunger."

"It is in your head, your heart," she agreed excitedly. "That is the way I feel it."

A quarter of an hour later they paused for breath.

"The air is getting thick and heavy," said Labiskwee. "It is hard to breathe."

"There be three suns," McCan muttered hoarsely, reeling as he clung to his staff for support.

They saw a mock sun on either side of the real sun.

"There are five," said Labiskwee, and as they looked new suns formed and flashed before their eyes.

"By heaven, the sky is filled with suns beyond all counting," McCan cried in fear.

Which was true, for, look where they would, half the circle of the sky dazzled and blazed with new suns forming.

McCan yelled sharply with surprise and pain. "I'm stung!" he cried out, then yelled again.

Then Labiskwee cried out, and Smoke felt a pricking stab on his cheek so cold that it burned like acid.

And then a shot rang out, strangely muffled. Down the slope went the young men, standing on their skis, and one after another they opened fire.

"Spread out!" Smoke commanded. "And climb for it! We're almost to the top. They're a quarter of a mile below, and that means a couple of miles the start of them on the down going on the other side."

"Thank the Lord," Smoke panted to Labiskwee, "all these suns spilt their aim."

"It shows my father's temper," she said. "They have orders to kill."

"How strange you talk!" Smoke said. "Your voice sounds far away."

"Cover your mouth," Labiskwee said suddenly. "And don't talk. I know what it is. Cover your mouth with your sleeve, thus, and do not

From the crest, looking back, they saw the young men stumbling and falling on the upward climb. "They will never get here," Labiskwee said. "It is the white death. I know it, though I have never seen it. I have heard the old men talk. Soon will come a mist unlike any mist or fog or frost smoke you ever saw. Few have seen it and lived."

McCan gasped and strangled. "Keep your mouth covered," Smoke commanded. McCan had sunk down, squatting, on his skis, his mouth and eyes covered by his arms.

"Come on, make a start," Smoke ordered.

"I can't move," McCan moaned.

"Let him be," Labiskwee muttered harshly.

But Smoke persisted, dragging the man to his feet and facing him down the long slope they must go. Then he started him with a shove, and McCan, bracing and steering with his staff, shot into the sheen of diamond dust and disappeared.

Smoke looked at Labiskwee, who smiled, though it was all she could do to keep from sinking down. He nodded for her to push off, but she came near to him, and, side by side, a dozen feet apart, they flew down through the stinging thickness of cold fire.

Brake as he would, Smoke's heavier body carried him past her, and he dashed on alone, a long way, at tremendous speed, that did not slacken till he came out on a level, crusted plateau. Here he braked till Labiskwee overtook him, and they went on, again side by side, with diminishing speed, which finally ceased. The lethargy had grown more pronounced. The widest effort of will could move them no more than at a snail's pace. They passed McCan, again crouched down on his skis, and Smoke roused him with his staff in passing.

"Now we must stop," Labiskwee whispered painfully, "or we will die. We must cover up—the old men said."

She did not delay to untie knots, but began cutting her pack lashings. Smoke cut his, and, with a last look at the fiery death mist and the mockery of suns, they covered themselves over with the sleeping furs and crouched in each other's arms. They felt a body stumble over them and fall, then heard feeble whimpering drowned in a violent coughing fit and knew it was McCan who huddled against them as he wrapped his robe about him.

Their own lung strangling began, and they were racked and torn by a dry cough, spasmodic and uncontrollable. Smoke noted his temperature rising in a fever, and Labiskwee suffered similarly.

Hour after hour the coughing spells increased in frequency and violence, and not till late afternoon was the worst reached. After that the men came slowly, and between spells they dozed in exhaustion.

Smoke awoke with lips touching his lips. He lay partly in Labiskwee's arms, his head pillowed on her breast. Her voice was cheerful and usual. The muffled sound of it had vanished.

"It is day," she said, lifting the edge of the robes a trifle. "See, oh, my lover, it is day! We have lived through, and we no longer cough. Let us look at the world, though I could stay here thus forever and always."

"I do not hear McCan," Smoke said. "And what has become of the young men that they have not found us?"

He threw back the robes and saw a normal and solitary sun in the sky. A gentle breeze was blowing, crisp with frost and hinting of warmer days to come. All the world was natural again. McCan lay on his back, his unwashed face, swarthy from camp smoke, frozen hard as marble. The sight did not affect Labiskwee.

"Look!" she cried. "A snowbird! It is a good sign."

There was no evidence of the young men. Either they had died on the other side of the divide or had turned back.

There was so little food that they dared not eat a tithe of what they needed, and in the days that followed, wandering through the lone mountain land, the sharp sting of life grew blunted, and the wandering merged half into a dream. Smoke would become abruptly conscious to find himself staring at the never ending hated snow peaks, his senseless babble still ringing in his ears. And the next he would know, after seeming centuries, was that again he was roused to the sound of his own manderings. Labiskwee, too, was light headed most of the time.

Came a day when it turned cold and a thick snow, that was not snow, but frost crystals of the size of grains of sand, began to fall. For three days and nights it continued to fall. It was impossible to travel until it crusted under the spring sun, so they lay in their furs and rested and ate less because they rested. So small was the ration they permitted that it gave no appeasement to the hunger pang that was

much of the stomach, but more of the brain. And Labiskwee, delirious, maddened by the taste of her tiny portion, sobbing and mumbling, fell upon the next day's portion and crammed it into her mouth.

Then it was given to Smoke to see a wonderful thing. The food between her teeth roused her to consciousness. She spat it out and with a great anger struck herself with her clenched fist on the offending mouth.

It was given to Smoke to see many wonderful things in the days yet to come. After the long snowfall came on a great wind that drove the dry and tiny frost particles as sand is driven in a sandstorm. All through the night the sand frost drove by, and in the full light of a clear and wind-blown day Smoke looked with swimming eyes and reeling brain upon what he took to be the vision of a dream. All about towered great peaks, and from the tip of every peak, swaying, undulating, flaring out broadly against the azure sky, streamed gigantic snow banners, miles in length, milky and nebulous, ever waving lights and shadows and flashing silver from the sun.

Labiskwee sat up among the furs. "I dream, Labiskwee," he said. "Look. Do you, too, dream within my dream?"

"It is no dream," she replied. "This have the old men told me. And after this will blow the warm winds, and we shall live and win west."

Smoke shot a snowbird, and they divided it. Once, in a valley where willows budded standing in the snow, he shot a snowshoe rabbit. Another time he got a lemming weasel.

"It is summer in the lower valleys," said Labiskwee. "Soon will it be summer here."

The days lengthened, and the snow began to sink. Each day the crust thawed, each night it froze again, and they were afoot early and late, being compelled to camp and rest during the midday hours of thaw when the crust could not bear their weight. When Smoke grew snow blind Labiskwee towed him on a thong tied to her waist. And when she was so blinded she was towed by a thong to his waist. And, starving, in a deeper dream, they struggled on through an awakening land bare of any life save their own.

The time came when the last food was gone. The high peaks receded, the divides became lower, and the way opened promisingly to the west. But their reserves of strength were gone, and, without food, the time quickly followed when they lay down at night and in the morning did not arise. Smoke weakly gained his feet, collapsed and on hands and knees crawled about the building of a fire. But, try as she would, Labiskwee sank back each time in an extremity of weakness. And Smoke sank down beside her, a wan sneer on his face for the automatism that had made him struggle for an unneeded fire. There was nothing to cook, and the day was warm.

(To Be Continued.)

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PASTOR RUSSELL

Atlanta, Ga., March 21.—Of Pastor Russell's two discourses here today we report the one on Matthew 16:18, 19. "Upon this rock will I build My Church; and the gates of Hell (Hades, the grave) shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

For some unaccountable reason numerous Catholics have gotten the thought that I am their foe, just as Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Baptists, etc., have gotten the impression that I am their foe. I am a foe to no human being, and especially to no Christian. I believe more fully than do Methodists in Free Grace—that ultimately God's grace will reach every human being. I believe more emphatically than do most Presbyterians that the Church is an esoteric class, and is the world to be God's elect. I believe with Baptists that only the Elect, the immersed, will constitute the Kingdom of God, although I deny their claim that baptism in water is the real immersion. I hold, with the Apostle, that it is baptism into Christ's death. Similarly I hold to the great Catholic doctrine that there is only one true Church, founded by the Lord Jesus Christ through His Apostles, nearly nineteen centuries ago.

Explains How They Deny Their Catholicity. I am aware that several churches claim to be Catholic—the Anglican Catholic, the Syrian Catholic, the Greek Catholic, and the Roman Catholic. Each claims to be the true Church and reprobrates the others as heretical. But I take the still broader, catholic ground. I hold that the word catholic means general; and that any limitation, such as Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, etc., to that extent denies their catholicity. Perhaps, therefore, I am really saying that I am more catholic than any of these brethren.

I must prove my point or be misunderstood. I hold, and few, if any, will dispute it, that the one catholic or universal or general Church of Christ is the one mentioned in the Bible—the Church of the First-born, written in Heaven." If this be admitted, my next proposition is that the Lord in Heaven records as members of His true Church all the saintly—whether Roman Catholic, Anglican Catholic, Greek Catholic, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.—and none others.

Have we not here the one Church, the Catholic Church, the universal, the only Church which the Bible recognizes? In the past we have been too narrow and have supposed that God was as narrow as ourselves. It was on this account that in the past Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists and Methodists persecuted and were persecuted, because each thought itself the true Church. Are we not all getting broader conceptions of our God and of His Church? Do we not see that a part of our mistake was in calling the outward organization the Church of Christ, instead of remembering that the Lord alone writes the names of the Church, that He alone reads the hearts, that He alone is the Judge, and that He alone has the right to blot out the names of those who become reprobates?

Rectifying Past Errors. St. Paul wrote against the spirit of sectarianism, already manifest in his day—some saying, "I am of Paul"; others, "I am of Peter"; etc. The Apostle asks, "Is Christ divided?" (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). So today, if with Him, he would ask, Why Romanists, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, etc.? Is not the name of Christ enough? Is not the name of Christ enough? He explains that these different names of old signified a sectarian spirit, the spirit of division, that failed to recognize the true Head of the Church. His true members, and His true members, the trouble is the same today. The entire foundation of divided Christianity would disappear and all the true Church of Christ—all real saints—would be speedily manifest, if true catholicity could be acknowledged.

The one great obstacle to unity is the erroneous doctrine respecting the eternal torture of all non-members of the Church. We must open our eyes wider and see that many of our theories were not taught by Jesus and the Apostles. We must see that the Church is a comparatively small company of saintly footstep followers of Jesus, irrespective of sectarian lines; that the Bible teaches not that these are to look over the battlements of Heaven to all eternity and see all others in torment, but that they are to demonstrate their loyalty unto death

and in due time be associated with Messiah in His great Millennial Kingdom, which will bring knowledge and opportunity to all the families of the earth—the living and the dead.

The Twelve Foundation Stones. St. Paul declared that the saints of God, the true catholic Church, "are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone" (Ephesians 2:20). The Twelve Apostles are here referred to in their double office—Apostles especially commissioned by the Lord as His representatives, and Prophets, mouthpieces, for the proclamation of the Message to the Church, Jesus, referring to these same foundation stones, pictures the Church of Glory as the New Jerusalem, and its twelve foundations as twelve precious stones, in which are the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb—no more, no less—St. Paul being God's choicer to take the place of Judas, the betrayer.

To think of St. Peter as the only foundation for the Church would be to deny Christ's teaching and St. Peter's own statement—that the entire Church is symbolically represented as living stones built together by the Lord through the Holy Spirit. (1 Peter 2:4-6). It was a costly mistake when our forefathers, overlooking this well-established point of Scripture, thought of the bishops of the Church as Apostolic Bishops, and took their decisions in councils assembled as the voice of God to and through the Church. The voice of God to and through the Church came only through "the twelve Apostles of the Lamb." All others so claiming are denounced by Jesus Himself as pseudo-Apostles—false Apostles.—Rev. 2:2.

God's true saints of all denominations should ignore all human creeds and return to the Bible and its declaration of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," (Ephesians 4:5, 6). Are we more loyal to human organizations than to God, His Truth, His Church—all saints and one people, imbued with one spirit, the world around—the catholic Church?

Power in Heaven and in Earth. As St. Peter was only one of the twelve foundation stones of the Church, so, likewise, he was only one of the Twelve to whom the Lord declared, "Whosoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matthew 18:18)—the same statement, exactly that on another occasion He made to St. Peter only. But He gave the keys to St. Peter alone.

Would it seem reasonable that Jesus should tell the twelve Apostles that He would do anything that they bade Him do—taking to Heaven whom they pleased and excluding whom they chose? Would it be wise or safe to entrust to poor humanity such dictatorial powers respecting the eternal interest of even one individual? Assuredly not! When we remember that these Apostles declared that they were men of like passions with others, that St. Peter himself dissented on one occasion and on another denied his Master, we are the more convinced that Jesus did not mean that God would abdicate His authority and wisdom in favor of any twelve men.

What, then, does the passage mean? We answer, It implies that the Lord would so overrule the utterances and writings of His twelve Apostles as to make them safe guides for His Church. To these Apostles would be given through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost wisdom enabling them to understand which things of the Jewish Law were binding upon the Church and which not binding. Their decision would be absolutely right, and the entire Church might have confidence that what the Apostles bound or loosed on earth was equally bound or loosed in Heaven. As an illustration of this binding and loosing, see Acts 15:28, 29.

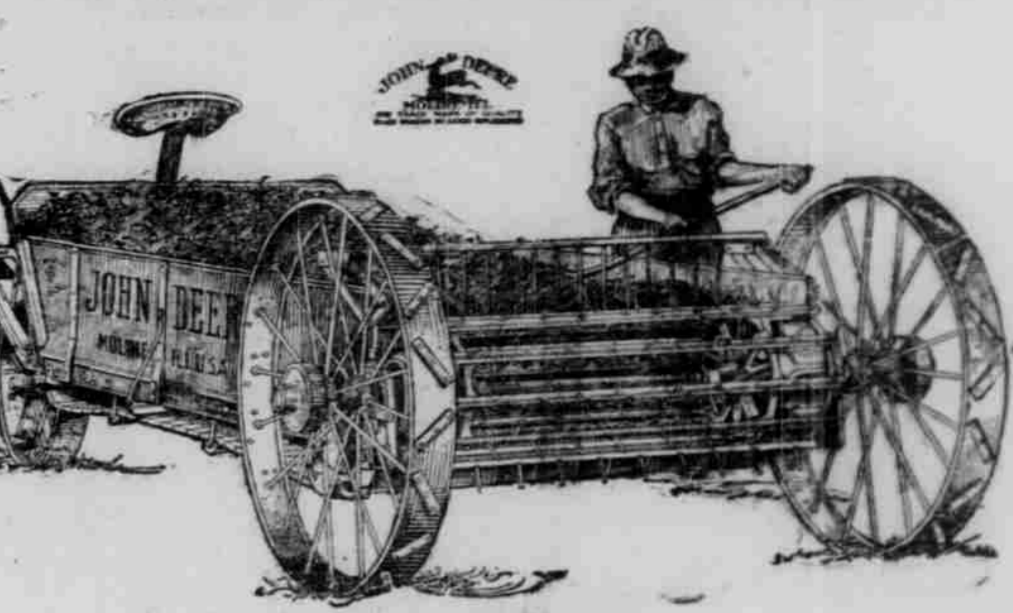
To get back into proper relationship with each other and rid of all sectarian systems, God's people must recognize that only the words of the New Testament Apostles and Prophets are authoritative, properly representing the Divine mind. Other things men have bound and loosed on earth, without recognition in Heaven. The things necessary to the Church are found only in the Bible, as St. Paul declares.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

The Church Upon the Rock. "Other Foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). In the Divine arrangement Jesus Christ is the Foundation, the Rock, upon which is built the entire superstructure of His Church—the one Catholic, world-wide Church. On this Rock, Christ Jesus, as St. Peter declares, all the Church is being built as a Temple of God. (1 Peter 2:4-6). The New Jerusalem, the Church in glory, had twelve foundation stones, built upon the one Foundation Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. It would manifestly be erroneous, therefore, to suppose that our Lord abdicated His own place in the Church in favor of St. Peter, much as He loved him.

What, then, did Jesus mean when He called St. Peter a stone, spoke of building His Church upon "this rock," and declared that the gates of Hell (Hades, the grave) would not prevail against it? We reply, Jesus went down into the prison-house of death, Sheol, Hades, the tomb; but on the third day the gates of Sheol, Hades, were opened, and He came forth. These gates will not prevail against the Church, as they did not prevail against her Lord. This is an assurance of the resurrection of the dead.

To understand St. Peter's connection with the Rock Foundation of the Church, we should read the preceding context. The disciples had told Jesus the common talk respecting Himself,

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G. P. EASTWOOD

He then asked them, "Who say ye that I am?" St. Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

This was the first public declaration of Jesus' Messiahship. Even the disciples had only now come to recognize their Teacher as the long-promised Messiah. Jesus answered, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father in Heaven. Thou art Peter (a stone, ready for the spiritual Temple, the first one to publicly acknowledge Jesus), and upon this rock (the Truth) I will build My Church."

In the Greek the word Peter signifies a stone of moderate size, while the word here rendered rock signifies a mass of stone—a foundation. Our Lord Jesus Christ evidently meant that St. Peter's statement was a recognition of Himself as the great Foundation of the Divine Plan—Messiah. Upon that foundation truth, that Jesus is Christ, the Church would be built; and St. Peter was the first living stone to build himself upon that foundation by believing and confessing Christ. St. Peter himself gives us the same thought—that he and all others of the Church are living stones, being built together as a holy Temple of God. This entire Gospel Age has been devoted to the building of these stones upon that great Foundation Rock, Christ Jesus. As soon as the great Temple of God shall be completed, this Gospel Age will end and the New Dispensation be inaugurated.

"The Keys of the Kingdom." To St. Peter our Lord said, "I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." What did He mean? We shall not suppose that any who hear my voice or are sufficiently intelligent to read this discourse in the newspapers are stupid enough to think Jesus meant that Heaven is locked up, and that nobody could get in except as St. Peter would open the door or gate. True, some have voiced such fantastic notions. But we refuse to believe that intelligent people could be in earnest in any such view.

What the Lord meant is very simple, very beautiful; and we see exactly how it was fulfilled. He indicated that St. Peter, the first to confess Him, was to have a special honor in connection with the inauguration of the Church on earth. By the expression, "Kingdom of Heaven," is meant the Church, a class being called out of the world to become with Christ the ruling power of the world during the Millennium, through the great resurrection "change." See 1 Corinthians 15:42, 54.

Jesus meant that St. Peter would be honored in being permitted to do an opening work in connection with the Church. The Bible shows us two different opening works and two different keys. The key is a symbol of power or authority or an initiative. St. Peter used his first key of privilege on the day of Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit came upon the early waiting Church, it was St. Peter that used this

key. Standing up with the eleven, he lifted up his voice, explained the situation and opened the door to the Church of Christ for the Jews, admonishing them of their opportunity to enter. He told of the merit of Christ's death and how He had risen and had ascended on High, and how forgiveness of sins was, therefore, preached in His name.—Acts 2:14-38.

The second key to the Kingdom of Heaven—the Church, the embryo Kingdom representing for glory—St. Peter used three and a half years later. Then the seventieth week of Divine favor prophesiedly appointed to the Jews expired, and the time came that "the Gentiles might be fellow-heirs with the Jews of the same Promise." The opening work was with the household of Cornelius, to whom St. Peter preached Christ. The Lord blessed the preaching and granted the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and his family. Thus the Gentile door into the Kingdom was thrown wide open.—Acts 10.

Repentance and Remission of Sins. "That repentance and remission of sins might be preached in His name to all people" (Luke 24:47). God never gave power to bishops, priests or ministers of any denomination to forgive sins. "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Nor did Jesus give authority to His Apostles to forgive sins. They might preach repentance and forgiveness, but only in His name.

Any child of God is Scripturally authorized to declare that Christ died for human sin, and has thus made arrangement by which all repentant sinners may be forgiven. It is an honor to be the bearer of such a Message from God to men; and every child of God is fully commissioned to tell the Divine Message to all who will hear.

In proportion as God's people throw away their sectarian spectacles they can read God's Message in the words of Jesus and the Apostles. Let us hold fast the precious Word which Jesus exhorted us to search and which is sufficient that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished. Let us remember that there is only one true Church, each member of which is a saint, related to God and the Lord Jesus Christ through faith, repentance and remission of sin and the begetting of the Holy Spirit; that it is the only Church that is catholic, universal; and that a member of the Body of Christ is a member of that Body anywhere. "Now are ye the Body of Christ, and members in particular."—1 Cor. 12:27.

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