

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIN—OUR REAL VIEW

(From an article in the St. Paul Enterprise, April 4, 1916, answering an accusation quoted in the first sub heading.)

Pastor Russell's Teachings Grossly Misstated and the Truth Shown by Brother Silloway of Peoria in Actual Quotations.

The following falsehoods about Pastor Russell's teachings were published by E. L. Harvey of Waukesha, Wis., who claims to be "holy." Brother Silloway's compilation is appended thereto, as of apparent timeliness.

Millennial Dawn's Tomorrow

"The Millennial Dawn people have perhaps one of the brightest tomorrows of any of the modern latter-day false religionists. But, according to their teachings, though a man may make shipwreck of faith in this life, live in unspeakable wickedness and violation of laws, moral, spiritual, and physical, there is coming a time when the goodness of Jehovah will be so great that the apostate and even the devil himself can get converted; and when the fallen angels of darkness will have an opportunity to climb back into the choir of Heaven; and when all hands will join in and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. There is an attractiveness about the doctrine of Millennial Dawn that brings great peace to the most depraved harlot, the most atrocious yeggman, safecracker, the folks who are living with other men's wives, gambling on the board of trade, stealing fortunes on the stock exchange, betting on a horse race, flirting with other men's wives, and acting the devil generally; for in the glorious tomorrow of Millennial Dawn, God will let in everybody. All can have their good time in this world and a better time in the world to come."

Pastor Russell's Exposition of the Punishment of Sin

Editor St. Paul Enterprise:

The Scriptural interpretations of Pastor Russell have been criticized frequently on the ground that he practically ignores the law of retribution for sin in this life. Indeed, several months ago, a sister writing in the Enterprise brought this charge to our notice, as advanced by an evangelist in a public meeting. It is well for us, as loyal students of the Divine Plan, to be prepared to answer such charges, and to show that they have no foundation in fact.

Pastor Russell alone, of present-day expositors of the Scriptures, delineates the full meaning of the results of sin in the race of mankind at large and in the individual experience. In his logical, philosophical insight, he has clearly portrayed in his writings the terrible results of man's experience with sin; and while standing squarely upon the

fundamental truth that the wages of sin is death, he has incidentally plumbed the depths of the disaster into which our first parents plunged humanity by their disobedience.

The accompanying selections are taken from "Studies in the Scriptures," with emphasis placed upon the terms which indicate the measure of consequences that have attended the steps of mankind downward through the course of time. They are submitted with a view of refreshing the minds of Bible Students, by grouping our Pastor's comments in a way which manifests his full and logical grasp of the question.

Your fellow-servant in the Truth,
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The Punishment of Sin

Looking back to the time when life and Edenic happiness were forfeited by our first parents, we see them under the just penalty of sin, filled with sorrow, and without a ray of hope, except that drawn from the obscure statement that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 77.

God first made His creatures acquainted with good, surrounding them with it in Eden; and afterward, as a penalty for disobedience, He gave them a severe knowledge of evil. Expelled from Eden and deprived of fellowship with Himself, God let them experience sickness, pain and death, that they might thus forever know evil and the inexpediency and exceeding sinfulness of sin.—Studies in the Scripture, Vol. 1, page 120.

The moral sense, or judgment of right and wrong, and the liberty to use it, which Adam possessed, were important features of his likeness to God. The law of right and wrong was written in his natural constitution. It was a part of his nature, just as it is a part of the Divine nature. But let us not forget that this image or likeness of God, this originally law-inscribed nature of man, has lost much of its clear outline through the erasing, degrading influence of sin.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 120.

This liberty of choice, termed free moral agency, or free will, is a part of man's original endowment; and this, together with the full measure of his mental and moral faculties, constituted him an image of his Creator. Today, after six thousand years of degradation, so much of the original likeness has been erased by sin, that we are not free, being bound, to a greater or less extent, by sin and its entailments, so that sin is now more easy and therefore more agreeable to the fallen race than is righteousness.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, pages 120, 121.

The favor or blessing of God to His obedient children is life—continuous life—free from pain, sickness and every other element of decay and death. Adam was given this blessing in the full measure, but was warned that he would be deprived of this “gift” if he failed to render obedience to God: “In the day that thou eatest thereof, dying, thou shalt die.”—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, pages 127, 128.

The first great judgment (trial and sentence) was at the beginning, in Eden, when the whole human race, as represented in its head, Adam, stood on trial before God. The result of that trial was the verdict, Guilty, disobedient, unworthy of life; and the penalty inflicted was death—“Dying thou shalt die.” And so, “In Adam all die.”—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 140.

“The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all unrighteousness.” It may be seen in every funeral procession. Every tomb is a witness to it. It is felt in every ache and pain we experience—all of which are the results of the first trial and sentence—the righteous sentence of God, that we are unworthy of life and the blessings originally provided for man when obedient and in God’s likeness.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 140.

We do not wish to be understood as ignoring the present responsibility of the world, which every man has, according to the measure of light enjoyed, whether it be much or little, whether it be the light of nature or of revelation. “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,” and “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.”—(Prov. 15:3, Eccl. 12:14) The good and the evil deeds of the present time will receive a just recompense of reward, either now or hereafter.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 145.

It must be remembered that the fall has not injured all of Adam’s children alike. Some have come into the world so weak and depraved as to be easily blinded by the god of this world, Satan, and led captive by besetting and surrounding sin; and all are more or less under this influence, so that, even when they would do good, evil is present and more powerful through surroundings, etc., and the good which they would do is almost impossible, while the evil which they would not do is almost unavoidable.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 152.

Adam’s death was sure, though it was reached by nine hundred and thirty years of dying. Since he was himself dying, all his children were born in the same dying condition, and without right to life; and, like their parents, they all die after a more or less lingering process. It should be remembered, however, that it is not the pain and suffering in dying, but death—the extinction of life—in which the dying culminates, that is the penalty of sin.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, pages 153, 154.

There is a wonderful contrast between man as we now see him, degraded by sin, and the perfect man that God made in His image. Sin has gradually changed his features, as well as his character. Multiplied generations, by ignorance, licentiousness and general depravity, have so blurred and marred humanity that in the large majority of the race the likeness of God is almost obliterated. The moral and intellectual qualities are dwarfed; and the animal instincts, unduly developed, are no longer balanced by the higher. Man has lost physical strength to such an extent that, with all the aid of medical science, his average length of life is now about thirty years, whereas at first he survived nine hundred and thirty years under the same penalty.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 177.

Although a way of escape from the broad road to destruction has been brought to light through the Gospel, the great mass of mankind heeds not the good tidings, because depraved by sin and blinded by the adversary.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 206.

The glory and beauty of humanity are seen to be dependent on the continued supply of life, just as the beauty of the diamond is dependent on the continued supply of sunlight. When sin deprived humanity of the right to life, and the supply was withheld, immediately the jewel began to lose its brilliancy and beauty, and finally it is deprived of its last vestige in the tomb. His beauty consumes away like a moth. (Psalms 39:11)—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 209.

During the “present evil world,” man is permitted to try governing himself; but by reason of the fall, he is under the control of Satan, the “prince of this world,” against whose secret machinations and intrigues he has vainly striven in his efforts at self government during the long period from the flood to the present time.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 221.

Man’s disobedience to the Supreme Ruler forfeited not only his life, but also his rights and privileges as God’s representative ruler on earth. He was henceforth a rebel, dethroned and condemned to death.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 247.

Man’s inability to establish a perfect government is attributable to his own weaknesses in his fallen depraved condition. These weaknesses, which of themselves would thwart human efforts to produce a perfect government, have also been taken advantage of by Satan, who first tempted man to disloyalty to the Supreme Ruler. Satan has continually taken advantage of man’s weaknesses, made good to appear evil, and evil to appear good; and he has misrepresented God’s character and plans and blinded men to the truth. Thus working in the hearts of the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2), he has led them captive at his will and made himself what our Lord and the apostles call him—the prince or ruler of this world. (John 14:30; 12:31.)—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 250.

Under the imperfections and weaknesses resulting from his disloyalty to the King of kings, Adam soon grew weak and helpless. As a monarch he began to lose the power by which, at first, he commanded and held the obedience of the lower animals by the strength of his will. He lost control of himself also, so that when he would do good his weaknesses interfered and evil was present with him; and the good he even would do he did not do, and the evil which he would not he did.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 262.

Looking back, we can see without difficulty how the change from Godlike love and kindness to hard selfishness came about. The circumstances tending to promote selfishness were encountered as soon as man, through disobedience, lost the divine favor and was exiled from his Eden home, where his every want had been bountifully supplied. As our condemned parents went forth, and began the battle of life, seeking to prolong existence to its farthest limits, they were met at once with thorns and briars and thistles and sterile ground; and the contending with these produced weariness and the sweat of face which the Lord had declared. Gradually the mental and moral qualities began to dwarf from lack of exercise, while the lower qualities retained fuller scope from constant exercise. Sustenance became the principal aim and interest of life; and its cost in labor became the standard by which all other interests were estimated, and Mammon became master of men.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 310.

Though originally the only separating influence between God and man was the divine sentence, now, after six thousand years of falling, degradation and alienation from God through wicked works, and because of ignorance, superstition, and the wiles of the adversary, and because the divine character and plan have been misrepresented to men, we find the message of grace and forgiveness unheeded ... the majority of mankind are slow to believe the good tidings, and correspondingly slow to accept their conditions. Some have become so deluded by the sophistries of Satan, by which he has deceived all nations (Rev. 20:3), that they do not believe that there is a God; others believe in Him as a great and powerful adversary, without love and sympathy, ready to torment them to all eternity; others are confused by the Babel of conflicting reports that have reached them concerning the divine character, and know not what to believe; and, seeking to draw near unto God, are hindered by their fears and by their ignorance.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 5, page 18, 19.

The world of mankind, falling through Adam, have become servants of sin; some sin voluntarily for the pleasure of sin; some involuntarily, though “feeling after God,” and blinded and deceived by the adversary, and controlled by the spirit of error ... sold under sin, by our first parent, Adam, his family became “slaves of sin” “through frailty,” through the weakness of heredity. In this captive condition they have been blinded by the god (ruler) of the present evil world (condition) who puts evil before their minds as good, and darkness for light, and having thus perverted the vast majority, and made it easy to do

evil and difficult to do good, and having ranged all the advantages of the present time on the side of evil and made it impossible to attain these except by conforming to his unholy spirit, which is “the spirit of the world,” he has general control, first of the masses through ignorance, and secondly, of the more intelligent through pride, selfishness, etc.—
Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 5, pages 188, 189.