

“PRESENT TRUTH”

(Discourse below by A. C. Wise from 1911 Convention Report, Page 25.)

Dear friends, it gives me great pleasure to be here and to have this privilege of speaking to you. I have heard your testimonies and they are up to any that I have heard in any of the meetings or conventions of the past. I have come on this trip, on this convention tour, for the purpose of a spiritual uplifting to myself and was not anticipating taking any part in giving public addresses, but as it is Brother Russell's desire, I am before you.

I call your attention to a brief Scripture which is found in 2 Peter 1:12, “Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and be established in the present truth.”

The thought that I wish to especially refer to is *present truth*. We believe the truth in its unfolding has been progressive, but as we come down to the harvest and the close of the harvest of the Gospel Age, we believe it especially applies to the present time, and our present understanding of the holy Scriptures. You will read in 1 Peter 1:12, something that related to the prophecies, that the prophets wrote not for themselves, but they wrote for the gospel church; they were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the things that are today expounded to us, and were not understood by the prophets themselves. So, dear friends, we believe that the Gospel, and not only the Gospel but the prophecies have a special fulfillment and may be termed now the present truth, the closing exhortation or special instruction to the church. We believe that only through the Studies and the *Watch Tower* publications the truth, and the full truth, and the only truth, is going out to the world; that no other source is supplying the world with a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, with a knowledge of God's will and plan. The present truth we might elaborate very much, but you are all familiar with the Studies which embrace this wonderful plan and arrangement in relation to the world of mankind.

We go back to the creation. The world has been very much confused in respect to the creation of our world. It relates to the present truth and it has been very clearly shown to us the order and harmony of creation. The six periods of time, are called the six days of creation, and those of you who have read in the past have been confronted by scientists who state that the Bible and science contradict each other, that the Bible was not in harmony with science. But we have unfolded to us the wonderful revelation God has given to us in respect to the six days of creation, showing the order of creation and showing that each day represented seven thousand years, and that after the earth had cooled off sufficiently so life would exist on it, either animal or vegetable, then we have shown to us the order in which this creation had gone on for 42,000 years, and then from the creation of man, God's highest and most glorious creature on earth. All this is shown to us from the Scriptures and we find the Scriptures are harmonious in this present truth

from Genesis to Revelation. Thus we find that this time in which we are living is a period of seven thousand years, and we are here at the expiration of six thousand years of that time, and when the full number of years are completed will come the grand cycle of 49,000 years in which the world's recovery and restitution will have been accomplished. This is the only system of presentation or unfolding of God's Word that shows us clearly what took place in Eden—that our race are represented in one representative man, in one federal head, who was in the image of God and was pronounced very good; that he was capable of rendering perfect obedience to the divine law and to live in that Eden forever; but he violated God's law. Thus we find here the reason why disaster and all of the evils, and death, have come on our race. This unfolding of God's word has made it clear to us, and we thank God that our ears have been opened to hear the joyful sound. Dear friends, we learn that that man was placed in the beautiful garden of Eden, and he had a supplied life, and he could have lived on and on, but when he sinned he involved the race in death. Thus we might say the whole race were precipitated from the plane of perfection and life down to the plane of degradation and death. This is the only exposition of God's Word which we call present truth that shows us God's dealings with the race after the fall. We find that there is an orderly arrangement, a chronology—I know some people are very much concerned about the chronology, but the most conscientious, the most pious, the most careful students of the Scriptures, cannot discover a single break or link missing in the chronology. Thus we are today located upon the stream of time. Thank God we have thus a clear understanding of the divine purpose. It shows God's dealings with certain members of the human race, but we wish to come down to an understanding of this plan that God has given to us, a wonderful arrangement for the recovery of the race which has not been heretofore seen or understood. While the Lord has had a people, and they have been conscientious, and in many cases zealous, the understanding of God's plan in respect to the race was very imperfectly understood.

I myself have tried to declare the truth as I understood it, but today I scarcely know what I had taught. I wonder at myself, spending years as it were, talking to people, and I cannot today discover scarcely what I ever taught them that was in harmony with God's Word. Then you might inquire, "Why is it that if God gave us a Bible over 1800 years ago, there has been this diversity of opinion, this confusion among God's people?" Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." The food for the household was thus corrupted, and I have sat down with others and gone over the list of the Scripture teachings and doctrines and we cannot discover that one of the Scripture doctrines of today are held by any of the nominal teachers, in harmony with the holy Scriptures. You go over the list of teachings of our Lord and the apostles from beginning to end, and there is not one of them that is held in harmony or in its purity as was given by our Lord and the Apostles. It is a wonderful thought that this woman had put the leaven, which is a symbol of corruption, in the meal, and it continued to work until the whole system was corrupted by this introduction of error into truth.

Thus we rejoice that we have come to a knowledge of the present truth. That has been the burden of your testimony—and I am glad and rejoice. We take up the doctrine or teaching of restitution, and many of you, no doubt, or the most of you, are young people, and have been members of the nominal systems. Did you ever hear of restitution? I was astonished myself about twenty-five years ago when I read, “Food for Thinking Christians,” and read that text in the third chapter of Acts in relation to the restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. I asked myself, “Why have I read this over and over again and never acquired the significance of restitution?” The most wonderful message to the human race, this restitution, is what is today rejoicing our hearts. But there is another feature of God’s plan that none of us comprehended, and that was the high calling of the church. Our thought was that all those who would confess the Lord Jesus would go to heaven when they died, and if they were not saints they went down to a condition of agony for ever and ever. We could scarcely credit the fact today that any human being could comprehend or would even suggest such a penalty as eternal torment, and yet last Sunday after meeting, after our dear Pastor had declared the truth so forcibly and so clearly, there stood a woman on the sidewalk and said, “There is a hell, there is a hell.” Her eyes were not opened and she could not see, or else she was willfully blind.

What would eternal torment signify? I remember reading in the *Watch Tower* about twenty-five years ago, about a man who was raised near our place; I knew him by reputation; he was a very distinguished doctor of divinity, and he gave an expression that appeared in the *Watch Tower* twenty-five years ago, and I will simply call your attention to it. He got to see from a study of the Hebrew and the Greek that the word “hell” had no such significance as his congregation or denomination gave it, or as his theology gave it, and this is what he said, at Jamestown, New York, where the convention was held last year: “If you could put a tube down through Lake Chautauqua so long that it would take a drop of water a million years to pass through that tube, and one drop after another in the onward cycles of eternity would pass through, until the lake would be dry, and then turn the oceans through that tube, and still eternity would be going on, and then turn the planets into oceans and put them through, and yet eternity would be going on.” And this is what he declared; “Before I will continue to preach, after having read the Hebrew and the Greek and see that it is not in the Holy Scriptures from which the English is translated—before I will teach such a doctrine as that, or continue to preach, it, let my right hand forget her cunning and my tongue rot in my mouth.” We might use the expression of Pastor Russell, who said if it be in God’s Word that only the saints are saved, then it should be declared weekly, daily, and hourly; and if it is not there, then the foul stain on God’s holy name should be removed. Thus we find present truth has liberated God’s people and made them free. Jesus said, “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” We are no longer troubled by that terrible teaching that has so largely prevailed. I used to read literature on that line as published by the various publishing

houses, and theological works, but I am glad today and rejoice that I have been liberated from that terrible teaching and that I see now that it is out of harmony with the expression of the Apostle John that God is love.

Thus, dear friends, we have the present truth, and I could give you some testimonies in regard to the present truth. I remember going into a poor woman's home—she had to labor and toil—and her daughter was in the door, and she says, “We have those books.” I said, “Have you the third one?” “No,” she says; and the woman came to the door and gave me an order for the third volume, and then when I came to deliver it, she said, “Come in.” I went in and I found her Bible all underscored and the margin of the studies marked. All through those two volumes she had every margin marked. Said I, “Sister, how did you ever get time to accomplish all of that in your Bible and in those Dawns?”

She says, “Every day after I got those books I went into my room upstairs and read for one hour, and as I came across those precious truths I had to lay down the book and shout for joy.” Her mind was made free from the terrible error that had prevailed. But I give you the sequel now. After she had those books and rejoiced in them for six months, her pastor came over to see her one day, and she said, “Dear brother, I have two of the most precious volumes; I know you will be pleased to see them and read them.” She picked them up. “Tut, tut, put them away and take your Bible.” She said, “Have you ever read those books?” He said, “No, I would not care to read them.”

There he deprived that poor sister of the comfort he ought to have given her. But she said, “Since I got this volume I am going through the others again.” But think of the opposition that comes from the teachers in sheep's clothing.

When I first entered the service to circulate these precious lessons of truth, I met a poor man who had held every official position in the church and he was highly rated as an intelligent Christian man. I talked in his home and the next Tuesday he sent in his resignation as an elder and requested to be dismissed from the congregation, and it was not an hour until the pastor came, and he began to cry, and said, “Brother, we have been trying to help you along in your business.” The brother said, “If it was in regard to earthly things I would recognize it as an advantage, but I am not walking after the flesh, but I am walking after the Spirit.” And then he forsook the error and clung to the truth, and last year I met him and he said, “Brother Wise, I believe I will be an overcomer.” He stood firm for the truth. Now here in this Scripture it declares we should be established, which is an important thought in connection with the truth. I have heard your testimonies this morning; you have had trials and we all have trials. “They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” How our hearts have been pained, how we have felt sad and sorrowful for some for whom we have had the greatest esteem, but who have not been established. They have thus let go of the anchor and have gone away from the truth. Who could think of such a turning away from God's truth! Dear friends, I find as

was suggested by someone in the congregation this afternoon, that this is the very best way to continue to be established, to study and read each day those volumes of truth and stir your mind and heart with those precious things. You cannot live without food, you cannot go on in this way without nourishment. I was pleased with the remark of our dear brother yesterday in respect to looking at the genuine. We know that we have the truth. We need not go around and ask some one, "Are you sure?" We might as well go out at noon day and inquire, "Is the sun shining?" as to deny this fact that we have the Lord's Word clearly expounded, showing us from beginning to end God's gracious plan of salvation.

I have referred to restitution. Restitution implies something has been lost. If present truth didn't embrace restitution, there would be scarcely anything for us—restitution of all things spoken of by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. We do not profess to be those who are running for restitution, but we rejoice that the time is coming when the millions of mankind shall be brought forth that were lost through the disobedience of the first man, that they are going to have an opportunity to gain life, that they are going to have one favorable full and complete opportunity to gain everlasting life. The first man lost not only for himself, but all the race, and what did he lose? In the first place he lost his communion and fellowship with God; second, he lost his beautiful Eden home; and last of all, he lost his life. Restitution implies that that which was lost is going to be recovered, to all the willing and the obedient. If I should go down the street and lose that Bible, restitution means that that Bible shall be restored to me—and not anything else. It took us a long time to see that, and I have often wondered why it was that the millions of heathen would go down, and, according to theology, they would be lost, but here comes a flood of light on our minds—restitution of mankind. Then this present truth shows us that there will be a kingdom. The Bible shows a kingdom, and subjects of the Kingdom, and I will venture to say that there is not a person here in the congregation that regularly attends the nominal systems that has ever heard a sermon on the kingdom. If there be a kingdom, there must be subjects. And who will be the subjects of this kingdom? I would ask them, "Who are you going to reign over?" If you suffer with Christ you will also reign with him. "Oh, we will reign over each other." Ah, but every one of the church is going to be glorified—and crowned and reign, and who will be the subjects of this reign? A kingdom without subjects would be an absurdity. Then the Scriptures show us the time of this reign, and its extent, and showing that it will be a thousand years. I met a minister one day, and he said, "There is not any such thing in the Bible as the millennium." Now the Bible says the church lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. What for? During that period of a thousand years we are told Satan shall be bound and cast into prison so he will not deceive the nations any more for a thousand years. What is that in the Bible for? If Satan, who has been the adversary of mankind, and has thus brought all this confusion and error upon mankind, is bound for a thousand years, what is the purpose?

Then we learn through the prophets that the time is coming when the knowledge of God shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep; that there will be no need of one saying then, “Know thou the Lord, for all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest of them.” Then God will write his law in every heart and engrave it in every mind and no one will be ignorant of the divine purpose. This wonderful kingdom is to be inaugurated; that is our hope; and you and I, if we are faithful unto death, are going to constitute the kingdom, going to be rulers. Christ has been given all power in heaven and in earth, and is going to reign, and we with him. If you had all power now you could make wonderful strides, but we know then that Christ will reign and he will dash the nations to pieces as a potter’s vessel, and rule them as with a rod of iron, and all mankind will come under the rule of Christ’s kingdom; but, thank God, there will be no devil to tempt, no evil to ensnare, and no giant corporations to oppress mankind, but there will be no poverty as there is today throughout the world, but everyone will have a full opportunity of gaining everlasting life.

Over in Pennsylvania where I live they call this a second chance, but we prefer to think that it is not a second chance. The whole race, the Apostle tells us was sentenced to death in Adam. The one class that is on trial now is the church who have thus consecrated their lives to the service of the Master, and have entered the race for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. There is one class on trial today. Thus, dear friends, we find in due time this kingdom will be inaugurated and the great work of restoring our race will ensue, when all of mankind that have gone down in death, will be restored. I attended a funeral not long since and one of the nominal preachers preached, and he took a very good subject. He read the narrative in the Bible of the restoring of Lazarus to life. He turned to the resurrection, and I thought perhaps he would preach the Scriptures, but the only thing which he seemed to get enthusiastic over was that death was a certainty—something that we all know is true. But not a word about the resurrection of the dead. You know the early apostles and disciples went everywhere preaching Jesus and the resurrection. But they have no place for that resurrection now, although that was the burden of the apostle’s teaching. I remember quoting this Scripture in the presence of a preacher, and I said that all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to a resurrection of judgment. He says, “Damnation.” Said I, “If you will take the revised version of the Scriptures, and the ablest scholars of the United States and Great Britain were engaged in the revising of the King James translation, and they rendered it judgment, and the word judgment signifies trial, from the Greek word *krisis*.” He said, “Well I will look that up.”

Thus, dear friends, we have a glorious Gospel. We have much to encourage us today. What wonderful messages of instruction are given us in the discourses and the sermons, and in the *Watch Tower*—wonderful privileges we enjoy. But there may be confronting us wonderful trials. Thus we want to be established in the present truth, we want to feel

that the storm may come upon us, and we will stand as Martin Luther stood when his friends tried to persuade him not to go down to the city of Worms on account of the danger that might result. And he said, "I will go down to the city of Worms, though there may be as many devils there as tiles on the house-roofs." And down he went. We want to have a determination of that kind. You will meet no doubt with severe trials in the near future. Over in our country they have started personal working, and one of our friends met one of the principal personal workers, and he said, "After we get this established, we will push you people off the earth." He said, "If you push us off the earth, you will have to push the Bible off with us, for we are the only people that take hold of the Bible." And that is true.

I am glad I have had the privilege to address you, and I shall always remember my coming here to Kansas City, and I have a very tender feeling for all of the Lord's children, and I am taking this tour at some sacrifice, but I trust it will be profitable, not only to everyone who may go on this trip, but to all who will have the blessed privilege of hearing Pastor Russell. God grant his blessing upon you. Amen.