

CHRIST'S UNIVERSAL KINGDOM AND HOW IT COMES

NO. 1535

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“Ask of Me and I shall give You the heathen for Your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”
Psalms 2:8, 9.

OBSERVE, dear Friends, the wonderful contrast between the violent excitement of the enemies of the Lord and the sublime serenity of God Himself. He is not disturbed though the heathen so furiously rage and their kings and mighty ones set themselves in battle array. He smiles at them—He has them in derision. You and I are often downcast and depressed and our forebodings are dark and dismal, but God sits in His eternal peacefulness and serenely overrules tumult and rebellion. The Lord reigns and His Throne is not moved, nor His rest broken whatever may be the noise and turmoil down below. Notice the sublimity of this Divine calm. While the heathen and their princes are plotting and planning how to break His bands asunder and cast His cords from them, He has already defeated their devices and He says to them, “Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion.” “You will not have My Son to reign over you, but nevertheless He reigns. While you have been raging I have crowned Him. Your imaginations are, indeed, vain, for I have forestalled you and established Him upon His Throne. Hear Him as He proclaims My decree and asserts His filial sovereignty.”

God is always beforehand with His adversaries—they find their scheming frustrated and their craft baffled even before they have begun to execute their plans! By God's decree the Ever-Blessed Son of the Highest is placed in power and exalted to His Throne. The rulers cannot snatch from His hand the scepter, nor dash from His head the crown—Jesus reigns and must reign till all enemies are put under His feet. God has set Him firmly upon Zion's sacred hill and raging nations cannot cast Him down! The very idea of their doing so excites the derision of Jehovah, He disturbs not His great soul because of their blustering. As if it were a banquet rather than a conflict, the Lord God, as Himself King, speaks to the King's Son, even to His Anointed on His right hand and having acknowledged His royal rank, confers upon Him the highest honors.

At great feasts many a monarch has been known to say to his favorite, “Ask what I shall give you and nothing shall be denied you this day.” Even thus does the great Father say to His glorious Son, the Prince of Peace, “Ask of Me and I will give You the heathen for Your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession.” He bids Him open His mouth wide and request a boundless dominion! He will give Him distant nations, yes, and the whole round earth to be His kingdom. There is an air of regal festivity and peaceful joy about all this which strangely contrasts with the uproar of the adversaries.

Brothers and Sisters, I wish we could enter, in some measure, into this sublime quiet. We may well be confident since God is so. If the Captain is assured of victory, it behooves the common soldier to be bravely hopeful. The battle is the Lord's and since He is the Lord God Omnipotent, fear about the issue of the conflict is foolish and wicked. All events are in His hands—His hands who can dash whole worlds to dust or create them when it pleases Him. What can stand against the almighty will? Who shall say unto Jehovah, “What are You doing?” In this eternal All-Sufficiency is our rest and we may, therefore, cease from anxiety! Stand still, my weary Brother, and see the salvation of God! Put not forth your timorous hands to stay the trembling ark, but know that Jehovah can protect His own!

Lay your Martha cares aside, my Sister—sit at your Savior's feet and listen to His voice! He will tell you that God still reigns and that His Anointed shall reign, also. Things are not as they seem—all is well when all looks ill. If the heavens are clouded, the sun is not put out! If the evening has darkened, even to midnight, yet the morning comes! To the moment shall it break, nor can all the powers of darkness hinder the dawning day! Jehovah's fixed decrees remain engraved as in eternal brass, nor can the craft of Hell efface a single line nor stay the execution of a single purpose! Despite

all opposition, the sacred purpose will blossom into the actual Providence and the Providence will ripen into salvation. God's plan will be carried out without failure in any point and there is no cause for alarm.

If we were more calm and restful we would do our work better, for do we not gather both wisdom and courage when we abide in quietness and confidence? The joy of the Lord is the strength of His saints. The assurance of faith, if we were filled with it, would make us go forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners." Alas, our short-sighted fretfulness, our anxious mistrust and our timorous suspicion cause us needless distress, weaken us for service and expose us to the assaults of our adversaries! Without the preparation of the Gospel of peace our feet are unshod and we are unfit for the heavenly pilgrimage.

Groveling here below among the troubles of the hour, the majority of Christians are a timorous people and act like the tribe of Reuben in the day of Barak's battle, to whom Deborah cried, "Why abide you among the sheep-folds, to hear the bleating of the flocks?" O you who lie among the pots and do servile work in abject fear, arise to a braver spirit! Up to the everlasting hills and breathe a purer air—gird yourselves with the belt of confidence in God and you shall be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!" May God grant that the subject of this morning may help us out of the depressing influences which surround us and raise us into fellowship with the calm in which Jehovah sits smiling and out of which He says, "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion."

Our text suggests to us this morning, first, that the kingdoms of the earth and the earth itself are Christ's inheritance—"I shall give You the heathen for Your inheritance." Leave out those little words which the translators have inserted, for they but feebly help the sense. "I will give the heathen, Your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth, Your possession." When we have dwelt upon that we shall then notice that this is to be had for the asking—"Ask of Me and I shall give." Thirdly, we shall note that the power by which the dominion shall be gained is altogether of God—"I shall give." And fourthly, we shall remark that in order to complete the conquest of the world all existing and all future confederacies against the Lord and against His Christ shall be utterly destroyed—"You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

I. For our comfort let us notice the teaching of the text that THE LORD WILL GIVE TO CHRIST THE HEATHEN AS HIS INHERITANCE AND THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH AS HIS POSSESSION. This I take to refer to our Lord as Man. Already as God, the kingdom of the Divine Son rules over all. There never was a limit to the reign of Jesus as God, not even when He was hanging on the Cross—He was the everlasting Father even when He was "the Child born, the Son given." It is in His wondrous Nature as God-Man Mediator that these words may be understood, for so the Apostle Paul evidently interpreted them.

The mysterious sentence, "You are My Son; this day have I begotten You," may refer to the deep and secret Truth of God of the Eternal Filiation of our Lord, whatever that may be. But Paul quotes it in the 13th chapter of Acts as referring to His *Resurrection*. Here are His Words, "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He has raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second Psalm, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You." It is in *resurrection* power that Christ comes forth and God gives to Him dominion over the earth and all that is upon it.

Because He lives and was dead He has the keys of Hell and of death. By virtue of His humiliation He reigns. For the suffering of death He is crowned with Glory and honor. The heavenly host proclaim His worthiness to take the Book and open its seven seals, singing, "For You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood." He descended that He might ascend above all things and fill all things! He laid aside His Glory that He might be crowned with this new Glory and honor and might have all things put under His feet as the Son of Man. We speak, therefore, of Jesus Christ the Risen One, who once died, but has now risen from the tomb and quit this earth for the splendors of the New Jerusalem.

Our conviction is that this same Jesus is to reign over the whole world. I shall not enter into the question whether this will be accomplished *before* His Second Advent or will be the *result* of His glorious appearing. I should not like to assert that this consummation will be reached *before* His Advent, for that might seem to work against our duty to watch for His coming which may be at any moment. On the other hand, I would not venture to assert that the Gospel cannot be universally victorious *before* His coming, because I perceive that this opinion is a pillow for many an idle head and is ruinous to the hopeful spirit of missionary enterprise. It is enough for me that a wide dominion will be given to our Lord at

some time or other and that assuredly His kingdom shall embrace all the nations of mankind. The whole earth shall yet be filled with His Glory! The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head and clear the world of his slimy trail!

For the next few minutes you will be so good as to keep your Bibles open, for the appeal must be to God's own Word. I gather that the kingdom of Christ is to be so extensive as to comprehend all mankind, first, because, of the exceeding breadth of the prophecy of it which was made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3. That is an old Covenant promise which refers to Abraham as the father of the faithful and to his one great seed, even Jesus, the promised Messiah. Here are the far-reaching words—"In you shall all families of the earth be blessed." Assuredly they are not as yet all blessed in him to such an extent as to exhaust the Divine meaning. When God, in Covenant, promises a blessing it is no light thing and, therefore, I am sure that this grand Covenant blessing of the nations is something more than a name.

Though I doubt not that the whole earth is, to some extent, the better because of the coming of Christ and His peace-making death and the spread of His pure faith, yet I cannot believe that multitudes who live and die in the thick darkness of ignorance and idolatry are really blessed in Christ in such a sense as to make it a Covenant blessing. How much are Tartary, China and Tibet blessed by the Gospel? There must yet be something better for all the families of the earth than anything they have up to now received. All the families of the earth shall yet know that the promised Seed has lived and died for them and some of every kindred and tongue shall find salvation in Him.

Jacob, too, when He spoke concerning the Shiloh in Genesis 49:10, said, "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." By *the people* is not meant the seed of Israel, but the nations, or the Gentiles. So the Septuagint and the Syrian understand it and so, indeed, it is. Jesus, our great Shiloh, sets up the standard and His chosen rally around in ever growing numbers till the dispersed of Babel shall find in Him a new center and a pure language shall be given to them in Him. The words mean not, "gathering," only, but a willing *obedience*, the fruit of faith and the expression of piety. To this is parallel the word of Paul in Romans 15:12—"And again, Isaiah says, There shall be a root of Jesse and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust."

It is evident, then, that the *nations* shall come to trust in the Messiah and thus shall they find life eternal. Moses, too, in Deuteronomy 32:21, to which passage Paul, in Romans, so especially refers, speaks of the heathen nations when he says, "I will move them to jealousy with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." Truly this is fulfilled in these days when the Gospel line has gone out throughout all the earth and its words unto the ends of the earth—and this, our own foolish nation, this once barbarous people which seemed shut out from God, worshipping idols with all the cruel rites of the Druids, has been brought into Covenant with God and made to rejoice in Him!

Degraded heathens in all lands have become Believers and so shall all nations be brought believingly to Jesus' feet, that Israel may be angered and provoked to jealousy until her time shall come when she shall look on Him whom she has pierced and shall mourn for Him and turn to Him with full purpose of heart. When we reach the Psalms, we come into the clear light of prophecy concerning the kingdom of our blessed Master. Our text stands first and is sufficient in itself—the heathen are to be His inheritance and the utmost bounds of the world are to be His possession!

Turn to that famous passion Psalm, the twenty-second. Its pathos with regard to the griefs of the Crucified One is deep and touching. You see Him hanging on the tree, a laughingstock to scoffers, with His tongue cleaving to His jaws and His heart melting like wax in the midst of His bowels—and yet before the Psalm closes the plaintive gives place to the triumphant and the dying One cries—"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the Governor among the nations. All they that are fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him: and none can keep alive His own soul."

On the Cross this prospect cheered our dying Master's heart, that the kingdoms should be the Lord's and that all the kindreds of the nations should come and worship before Him! Let it cheer us, also. Do you think that the crucified Lord will be disappointed of the end for which He died? Will you venture to assert that a single drop of His blood was shed for nothing? Rest assured that He shall see of the travail of His soul, till even His great loving heart shall be content! God has said it, "I will divide Him a portion with the great and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He has poured out His soul unto death." And you can be calmly confident that the Word of the Lord will stand!

Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 66:4 and there you come upon another word of comfort—"All the earth shall worship You and shall sing unto You; they shall sing to Your name." This sentence is not merely the passionate hope of an enthu-

siastic worshipper, but a voice inspired of the Holy Spirit plainly declaring that all peoples shall adore their Maker with hearty praise and joyful song! How glowing is the language of Psalm 72. Can we expect too great things for our King when we remember the gracious words beginning at the 8th verse—“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him.”

Read on at verse 17—“His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.” These terms include the most barbarous tribes that exist and they specially mention nations which boast that they were never conquered, such as the untamed rovers of the wilderness who centuries ago laughed at the Roman power. The legions which subdued all other peoples could not conquer the sons of Ishmael! Fleet of foot as a rabbit and swift as a young roe, they fled over the desert sands out of reach of the pursuer. Yet *these* shall bow before our Lord and joyfully pay Him homage! He will sway His scepter where scepter was never acknowledged before! He shall set up a throne where all other authority has been laughed to scorn!

You will not be wearied if I ask you to look at Psalm 86:9. There you will find it written, “All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord; and shall glorify Your name.” It is not to be mere outside worship that shall be paid, for the nations are to *glorify* His name which is a high form of praise! All nations are to glorify the Lord and this they have not done as yet. We expected to find and we are not disappointed in our expectation, that Isaiah would be sure to speak concerning these things. I would rather you heard the Word of God by far than *my* word and, therefore, we will keep to our reading.

It will bring you encouragement and cheer your heart to know what Prophets said in the olden times when only Israel had the light. They did not think the light would be confined to the one peculiar people, but they expected that light would break on all the nations which sat in darkness and they, also, would seek the Lord. Turn to Isaiah and read. See what he says in his second chapter. “It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths for out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

I can but give samples. The passages abound all through Isaiah in which there is the intimation of the general spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom. Turn to Isaiah 49:6, 7—“It is a light thing that You should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give You for a light to the Gentiles, that You may be My salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and His Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors, to a Servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful and the Holy One of Israel and He shall choose You.” And now, verse 12—“Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.” And verse 18—“Lift up your eyes round about and behold: all these gather themselves together and come to you.”

Nor is Isaiah alone in such prophecies as these. I cannot detain you by reading what Ezekiel says concerning the ever deepening waters which shall carry life to all lands and I will only mention one word of Jeremiah, because it so peculiarly proves that the homage paid by heathen nations to our Lord will be that of their hearts—and that the reign of Christ, whatever else it may be, will certainly be a *spiritual* reign. Jeremiah 3:17—“They shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.” Christ will work a *heart-change* when He shall win the nations to allegiance and this shall lead to a manifest change of life—“neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.”

Daniel, that John of the Old Testament, of course saw more clearly than any, the coming kingdom of the Anointed One. Listen what he says beginning in 7:18—“But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. Until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was given to the saints of the Most

High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole Heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." Can anything be more positive than this last word?

Look how the idols are to be destroyed according to the Prophet Zephaniah (2:11)—"The Lord will be terrible unto them: for He will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship Him, everyone from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." Zechariah says, to the same effect, (9:10)—"He shall speak peace unto the heathen and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Lest I should weary you, I dare not quote any more. To me it is evident beyond all contradiction that according to the whole run of Scripture the kingdom of Christ is to extend over all parts of the earth and over all races and conditions of men and, therefore, I charge you never despair for the grand old cause!

An infidel notion is abroad that these different religions have sprung up at different times as developments of the religious instinct and that they may all profitably exist side by side with ours. It is admitted that the religion of Christ is excellent and that it deserves a large following, but still other religions have their advantages and must not be despised—as if to say that something better than the Gospel of Christ may yet be discovered. This is the current talk in certain circles and we would at once express our horror at it! Jesus is not to share a divided Throne! Cast with abhorrence from your souls every such blasphemous thought! Jesus must reign till all enemies are put under His feet and to Him all *rivals* are enemies!

If Jesus is King, He is the only Potentate. Christians are enlisted under a banner which does not allow another standard side by side with it! They serve a Prince who will not share dominion with others—who will not submit that even a province shall be torn away from His government! He shall reign forever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! Like a burst of thunder let all hearts that love Him say, Amen!

II. It appears from our text that THIS UNIVERSAL DOMINION IS TO BE ASKED FOR. Thus says the Father to His glorious Son, "Ask of Me and I will give You." Beloved, Jesus fails not to ask. We do not doubt that He responds to the Father's invitation and asks for His inheritance. This is the way in which the Psalm before us touches upon the priestly character of Christ as combined with His kingly office. He always lives to intercede and a part of His daily intercession is to ask that the heathen may be His inheritance.

Now, Beloved, this is a lesson to us. We belong to Christ. We are members of that body of which He is the mystical Head and it is ours to act with Him in His lifework—as He asks, we are to ask with Him. As Jesus suffers in His people, so He pleads in them. Let us cry day and night unto God for the coming of the kingdom of our Lord! Let the Throne of the Highest be surrounded by our perpetual prayers! Let us urge for the Lord Jesus His suit in the courts above, that the heathen may be His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth His possession. We are so truly one with Him that His sympathies and hopes are ours! His Glory is our glory! His victory our victory and, therefore, our supplications should naturally and spontaneously arise for Him every day of our lives.

Our union with Him has given us a kingdom, the same kingdom as that which He claims. He Himself has said it, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." As surely as He sets His Son upon His holy hill of Zion, so surely will the Lord bring us all there! Our prayers, therefore, should daily rise together with the pleading of the great Intercessor, Himself. O Lord, Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory! Let Your will be done in earth as it is in Heaven! This prayer is one which is commanded by God Himself. About its fitness we can, therefore, have no doubt. Your Savior taught you to say, "Your kingdom come." In this text we find it prescribed as a prayer to the Well-Beloved—"Ask of Me"—and, therefore, it is certainly a proper prayer for us and we may use it without question.

We are highly honored in being permitted to present such a petition—to be allowed to pray for myself is mercy, to be permitted to pray for my fellow man is favor—but to be allowed to pray *for Jesus* is an honor! It is written, "Prayer also shall be made for Him continually," and thus there is a special honor put upon those who intercede. My Lord's prayer for me saves me, but when He bids me pray *for Him*, He dignifies me and I say with David, "Your gentleness has made me great." Whatever else we forget, never from our private intercessions let us omit the prayer that the heathen may come to glorify Christ! It is a joy to know that this prayer will be effectual to the fullest. It is no vain desire, no dream of a fevered brain—the infinite wisdom of God, Himself, suggests it, for He says, "Ask and I shall give You."

This union of precept and promise is found attached to every Covenant blessing, but here it is conspicuously and distinctly stated in so many words—"Ask and I shall give You." Concerning this thing,, the promise of God is definite! We may, therefore, pray with full assurance. Let us avail ourselves of this plain direction every hour of our lives. O Church of God, ask, on Christ's behalf, and the Lord God will give Him the kingdom! Heir of Heaven, ask on behalf of the Elder Brother, for the Elder Brother pleads in you and God will hear both you and Him and He will grant the united request! My heart is full of confidence when pleading upon this subject! What surer guarantee do we need than, "Ask and I shall give You"?

Let our prayer be wide and far-reaching. Let our desires embrace the *world*. Pray not only for your own country, though it needs it and God, alone, knows how much—but pray for the colonies, the continent and the far off lands. Ask that all heathens may become Christians! Plead that the whole round earth may be the Lord's—that the uttermost parts of the earth may resound with songs in His praise! On this earth His blood has fallen! The precious drops could not be gathered up again and so this globe remains blood-marked—the one star upon which the Son of God poured out His life! It must be the Lord's! The Sacrifice of Calvary has made it sacred to the Son of God! As our Government marks with the broad arrow those stores which belong to it, so did Christ, upon the tree, when the blood fell from His hands and feet and side, mark, as it were, with something more full of meaning than the broad arrow—this round earth on which He bled—and it must be forever and ever His by right of purchase and ransom!

It was made subject to vanity for a little season, but it is to be redeemed from it—and when it shall be purified and beautified in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, you will not know it, for it will come forth as "a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness." Its sister stars have long wondered at its silence, or its discord, but at the sight of its restoration to the choirs of holiness, they will sing in deep delight and chant a new song unto the Lord! With what admiration will they perceive, rising up from this once beclouded orb, a flame of unquenchable praise with pillars of perfumed smoke, the incense of eternal gratitude! Sweeter the offering of this once fallen world than that of any other sphere, for it has been redeemed and upon it have been seen marvels of free Grace and dying love such as no other world has known.

Oh, may this soon come to pass! May the prayer be heard and God be praised. But it can only be accomplished through His own appointed method, the asking of Christ, the pleading of the Church. Oh, awaken, Church, to ask! Awake from your unholy lethargy and cry day and night unto God! Cease not, but with anguish, like a woman in travail, cry aloud and spare not until He gives the risen Lord the heathen for His inheritance and makes His Throne higher than the kings of the earth!

III. Thirdly, THIS DOMINION IS TO BE GAINED BY THE POWER OF GOD. Notice the text, for it is very explicit—"Ask of Me and I shall give You." The power and Grace of God will be conspicuously seen in the subjugation of this world to Christ. Every heart shall know that it was worked by the power of God in answer to the prayer of Christ and His Church. I believe, Brothers and Sisters, that the length of time spent in the accomplishment of the Divine plan has, much of it, been occupied with getting rid of those many forms of human power which have intruded into the place of the Spirit. If you and I had been about in our Lord's day and could have had everything managed to our hand, we should have converted Caesar straight away by argument or by oratory. We should then have converted all his legions by every means within our reach. And, I guarantee you, with Caesar and his legions at our back we would have Christianized the world in no time, would we not?

Yes, but that is not God's way at all, nor the right and effectual way to set up a spiritual kingdom! Bribes and threats are, alike, unlawful. Eloquence and carnal reasoning are out of court. The power of Divine Love is the one weapon for this campaign. Long ago the Prophet wrote, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord." The fact is that such conversions as could be brought about by physical force, or by mere mental energy, or by the prestige of rank and pomp are not conversions at all! The kingdom of Christ is not a kingdom of this world, otherwise would His servants fight! It rests on a *spiritual* basis and is to be advanced by *spiritual* means. Yet Christ's servants gradually slipped down into the notion that His kingdom *was* of this world and could be upheld by *human* power.

A Roman emperor professed to be converted, using a deep policy to settle himself upon the throne. Then Christianity became the religion patronized by the State—it seemed that the world was Christianized, whereas, indeed, the Church was heathenized! Hence sprang the monster of a State Church, a conjunction ill-assorted and fraught with untold ills.

This incongruous thing is half human, half Divine! As a theory it fascinates, as a fact it betrays! It promises to advance the Truth of God and is, itself, a negation of it! Under its influences a system of religion was fashioned which, beyond all false religions and beyond even Atheism itself, is the greatest hindrance to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Under its influence dark ages lowered over the world. Men were not permitted to think. A Bible could scarcely be found and a preacher of the Gospel, if found, was put to death! That was the result of human power coming in with the sword in one hand and the Gospel in the other and developing its pride of ecclesiastical power into a triple crown, an Inquisition and an "infallible Pope"! This parasite, this canker, this incubus of the church will be removed by the Grace of God and by His Providence in due season. The kings of the earth who have loved this unchaste system will grow weary of it and destroy it.

Read Revelation 17:16 and see how terrible her end will be. The death of the system will come from those who gave it life—the powers of earth created the system and they will, in due time, destroy it! Frequently do we meet with the idea that the world is to be converted to Christ by the spread of civilization. Now civilization always follows the Gospel and is, in a great measure, the product of it, but many people put the cart before the horse and make civilization the first cause. According to their opinion, *trade* is to regenerate the nations! The *arts* are to ennoble them and *education* is to purify them. Peace Societies are formed, against which I have not a word to say, but much in their favor. Still, I believe the only efficient Peace Society is the Church of God and the best peace *teaching* is the love of God in Christ Jesus!

The Grace of God is the great instrument for lifting up the world from the depths of its ruin and covering it with happiness and holiness. Christ's Cross is the Pharos of this tempestuous sea, like the Eddystone lighthouse flinging its beams through the midnight of ignorance over the raging waters of human sin, preserving men from rock and shipwreck, piloting them into the port of peace! Tell it among the heathen—the Lord reigns from the Cross—and as you tell it *believe* that the power to make the peoples believe it is with God the Father and the power to bow them before Christ is in God the Holy Spirit. Saving energy lies not in learning, nor in wit, nor in eloquence, nor in anything except in the right arm of God who will be exalted among the heathen, for He has sworn that surely all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

The might of the Omnipotent One shall work out His purposes of Grace and as for us, we will use the simple processes of prayer and faith. "Ask of Me and I shall give You." Oh, that we could keep in perpetual motion the machinery of prayer! Pray, pray, pray and God will give, give, give—abundantly and supernaturally above all that we ask, or even think! He must do all things in the conquering work of the Lord Jesus. *We* cannot convert a single child, nor bring to Christ the humblest peasant, nor lead to peace the most hopeful youth! All must be done by the Spirit of God, alone, and if ever nations are to be born in a day and crowds are to come humbly to Jesus' feet, it is Yours, Eternal Spirit, YOURS to do it! God must give the dominion or the rebels will remain unsubdued!

IV. Thus the power of God works to bring about the kingdom of Christ and THIS INVOLVES THE BREAKING UP OF ALL THE CONFEDERACIES WHICH NOW EXIST OR EVER SHALL EXIST FOR THE HINDRANCE OF THE REDEEMER'S KINGDOM. Our text employs a figure which is very full of meaning. "He shall break them with a rod of iron." He breaks not the subject nations, nor the inherited heathen, but the *kings of the earth* who stood up and took counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed. Against *these* He will lift up His iron rod of stern justice and irresistible power!

Over His own inheritance He will sway a silver scepter of love. Over His own possession He shall reign with gentleness and Grace, but as for His adversaries, He will deal with them in severity and display His power in them. How shall they stand out against Him? They have formed their confederacy with great care and skill—as when men prepare clay and make it pliable for the potter's use, so have they made all things ready—they have set their design upon the wheel and caused it to revolve in their thoughts and with great skill they have fashioned it. Lo, there it stands—finished and fair to look upon! Yet at its very best it is nothing more than a potter's vessel. It may be of the purest clay and of such exquisite workmanship that it shall enchant every man of taste, but it is nothing more than an earthen vessel and, therefore, woe unto it when the rod of iron falls upon it.

Woe to *all* human societies and brotherhoods which are framed to resist the Lord! Mark the conflict and its end! It is brief enough. A stroke! Where is the hope of the Lord's adversary? Gone, gone, utterly gone! Only a few potsherds remain. Oh for such a smiting of the apostasy of Rome! Oh for one touch of the iron rod upon the imposture of Mohammed! Oh, for a blow at Buddhism and a back stroke at the superstition of Brahmanism and at all the idols of the heathen!

Woe unto the gods of the land of Sinim in that day! A single stroke shall set the potsherds flying. Why, then, should we fear, although they plot and plan? Although a solemn conclave of cardinals is held. Though the "Pope" fulminates his bulls. Though the Sultan ordain that every convert to Christianity shall be put to death. Though the scoffers still revile at Christianity and say that it spreads not as once it did, a speedy answer shall confound them, or if not speedy, yet the stroke shall be sure!

Our King waits a while. He has leisure. Haste belongs to weakness. His strength moves calmly. Only let Him be awakened and you shall see how quick are His paces! He redeemed the world in a few short hours upon the Cross and I guarantee you that when He gets that iron rod once to working, He will not need many days to ease Him of His adversaries and make a clean sweep of all that set themselves against Him! If you want to see how it will be done, read, I pray you, Daniel 2:31—"You, O king, saw and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before you; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay."

It was a strange conglomeration—all the metallic empires are set forth as combined in one image—which image is the embodied idea of monarchical power which has fascinated men even to this day. The Prophet goes on to say, "You saw still that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay and broke them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

And so it is to be—the vision is being each day fulfilled. The Gospel stone, which owes nothing to human strength or wisdom, is breaking the image and scattering all opposing powers. No system, society, confederacy, or cabinet can stand which is opposed to the Truth of God and righteousness. I, even I, that am but of yesterday and know nothing, have seen one of the mightiest of empires of modern times melt away all of a sudden as the frost of the morning in the heat of the sun. I have seen monarchs driven out of their tyrannies by the powers of a single man and a free nation born as in an hour. I have seen states which fought to hold the Negro in perpetual captivity subdued by those whom they despised, while the slave has been set free!

I have seen nations chastened under evil governments and revived when the yoke has been broken and they have returned to the way of righteousness and peace. He who lives longest shall see most of this. Evil is short-lived. Truth shall yet rise above all. The Lord says, overturn, overturn till He shall come whose right it is and God shall give it to Him. Woe unto those that stand against the Lord and His Anointed, for they shall not prosper. "Be wise now, therefore, O you kings: be instructed, you judges of the earth. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

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