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Divine Purpose In Calling the Church. "A Peculiar People"—"Not Many Rich"—"Not Many Learned"—"Not Many Noble"—"Chiefly the Poor of This World"—"Rich In Faith"—Heart Condition the Basis of Selection. Cutting, Polishing, Mounting the Jewels—God's Workmanship to Be Manifested—Lessons to Angels and Men.



PASTOR RUSSELL

April 19.—Pastor Russell's discourse today was based on the text: "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."—Isalah 62:3.

The Pastor introduced his discourse with the statement that the call of the Gospel Age is separate and apart from the salvation provided for the world in the next Age. During the Gospel Age God has been gathering out of the world a class which He declares shall be a royal diadem—not on His head, as if an added glory, but in His hand, representative of power. By manifesting what He has done with the Church, Jehovah will show forth His own praises, in that He will reveal features of His character never before exhibited.

The permission of sin, the Pastor maintained, has given opportunity for God to develop His great Plan for the eradication of evil. The Almighty could easily have prevented Satan from bringing sin into the Universe; but He foresaw the glorious results which He will eventually accomplish through the permission of evil. Therefore He did not interfere when Satan tempted our first parents, but permitted all mankind to be born in an imperfect and sinful condition.

Then the Pastor showed how Adam's disobedience brought death into the world. He next explained how Jesus' death guarantees the cancellation of Adam's penalty, and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom for the recovery of the race from sin and death. To assist the Redeemer in the great work of human uplift, he asserted, God purposed to select from amongst mankind a Church class. So a call went forth for those who would separate themselves from the world, take up their cross and follow Jesus.

"Zealous of Good Works." For nearly nineteen centuries, the Pastor declared, God has been gathering this people from various nations. As the Apostle tells us, these are "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." These good works, the speaker claimed, are not the building of hospitals, asylums, schools, etc., but the same kind of good works in which our Lord engaged at His First Advent. The Scriptures assert that Jesus "went about doing good." In line with this is the Apostle's injunction, "Do good unto all men, especially to the Household of Faith."

Pastor Russell then pointed out the qualifications which constitute the basis of selection. God desires those whose hearts are right. Here the speaker digressed a little to explain that this does not mean that the non-elect are to be thrown to devils and roasted to all eternity. God is not premeditating evil against even those who are His enemies through wicked works, but is merely calling a class to assist the Redeemer in recovering mankind from sin and death conditions.

According to the Scriptures, the Pastor declared, God is not now choosing many rich, learned and noble, to constitute the Church class. The rich have plenty to satisfy their hearts, and therefore do not feel their need. The intellectual rather look down upon the average of humanity as not knowing any better than to believe the story of man's fall and other Bible stories. He deplored the fact that the world in what they think is wisdom ignore God's Word, in which His Plan for man's recovery from degradation, sin and death is closely connected with the fall of man and the redemption effected by Jesus' death on Calvary. Whoever omits this part of the Bible loses the connecting link, and cannot perceive God's Plan of salvation.

The Bible says that not many noble are called. The speaker showed that the noble-minded know that they are morally above the average, and therefore have a self-satisfied feeling which prevents their realizing their need of a Savior.

"Ye Are His Workmanship." The Pastor next discussed the class whom God has accepted and forgiven through Jesus' blood. As the transforming work of the Holy Spirit goes on in their hearts, they become noble characters. Nobility of heart is what God desires—loyalty to Him, to righteousness, to truth, to the brethren.

The speaker likened the Lord's work in this class to that of the lapidary. As a diamond properly cut will radiate the glories of the sunshine, so God's jewels, when cut and polished, will show forth His praises. In the First Resurrection these jewels will be mounted in the gold of the Divine nature and placed in God's diadem.

BROOKLYN TABERNACLE BIBLE STUDY

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP.
Luke 14:25-35—April 19.

"Whoever will save his life shall lose it; whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it."—Matthew 16:25.

It was at the close of the Great Teacher's ministry. Multitudes were following Him, going up to Jerusalem to the Passover, at which Jesus foreknew He would die as the antitypical Passover Lamb. Today's lesson gives us some of His teachings.

The terms of discipleship which Jesus set forth differ widely from those proclaimed by some who profess to be His mouthpieces. They sometimes declare that to arise and request the prayers of God's people is a sufficient sign of discipleship. Such as do so are counted converts.

To get them even to take this step requires the holding out of some inducement—greater business prosperity, an entrance into society or a better prospect of political preferment.

If we contrast these with Jesus' Cost of discipleship, words in this lesson, we shall perceive that the vast number of nominal-Christians have been, so to speak, inveigled into professing what they never intended to profess. Many have been entrapped into professing Christianity who never were Christians, according to the Master's conditions of discipleship, who never hearken to His Word, who are not consecrated to His will.

The Cost of Discipleship.

"If any man come to Me, and hate not father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." Surely there is no excuse for misunderstanding such plain conditions! The Master's general teaching was that the whole world is estranged from God and without right to everlasting life. But He came to die, that they might have opportunity to return to Divine favor. He did not say that only His followers would have an opportunity of future life. Those who so declare are adding to God's Word something out of harmony with its teachings.

The word hate is apparently used in contrast with love. To be Christ's disciple, then, means that we must so love the Lord and the principles for which He stands that love for others in comparison would be hatred. We are to be ready to sacrifice at the Lord's command every earthly hope, aim, object, and to lay down our lives willingly, gladly. Such a manifest devotion of this kind can be trusted with anything.

The fact that Jesus Himself was of this character, and placed the Father's will above all else, is an assurance that all His joint-heirs in the Kingdom will have the same spirit. The Kingdom will not be a selfish one, but the very reverse. The kings, princes and judges of that Kingdom will be not only irresistible in power, but unbrilliant. With them the Divine standard will be first, in the absolute sense.

Definition of Cross-Bearing.

Adding to the severity of the terms, Jesus declared, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." After we have taken our stand on the Lord's side, we must be proven. Only those who demonstrate their worthiness by their faithfulness will be finally accepted of the Lord. Cross-bearing must be a daily matter. Our crosses are those oppositions of the world, the flesh and the Devil, which cross the Divine will as laid down in the Lord's Word. The only proper sentiment is that which the Master expressed, saying, "Not My will, but Thine, be done."

As advice not to undertake discipleship without mature deliberation, Jesus gave a parable of a man who began a tower, but could not complete it, and thus made himself disreputable, foolish. Another illustration was that of going to war without proper preparation. All Christ's followers

Folly of the careless set out to build character, and to fight a good fight against Satan and sin. Therefore they must expect a hard battle, and must wage a good warfare.

"Salt is Good, But—"

Jesus used salt as a symbol representing loyalty to God, which all His followers must have and maintain. If salt lose its value for seasoning purposes, it is useless. So the Christian has a special purpose in the world—to be a preserving power, and to bring out the good qualities of others. If he fails to do so, he is of no particular service.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." All Jesus' followers are to heed these words. Whoever neglects them despises the One who gave them, and will surely fall of a blessing that might have been secured. We are not to measure the world by the standards with which we measure ourselves and all professing to be Jesus' followers. The world's highest standard is the Golden Rule. The Christian's highest standard is self-sacrifice in doing the Father's will.

She Wanted a Coffee Calculator. In a South side home there is a cockney cook with an unusual facility for the misuse of words. One morning this week she said to her mistress. "Ow much would one of those coffee calculators cost?" "Why," asked the mistress soberly, "are you percolating on getting one?"—Kansas City Star.

Just a Suggestion. Neighbor—"Every time you feed your dog, he brings the bones over and gnaws them on our premises. Isn't there some way to stop it?" Owner—"Suppose you feed him hereafter; then he'll probably bring them over and gnaw them on my premises."—Puck.

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