

# WHY JESUS REFUSED TO PRAY

### ELECTION AND NON-ELECTION VIEWED FROM A NEW STANDPOINT

Pastor Russell on God's Times and Seasons



Fall River, Mass., Feb. 25. - Pastor Russell preached twice here today. He had fine audiences and excellent attention. We quote one of his instructive discourses from the text, "I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given me" (John xvii, 9). He said:-

When, years ago, I believed that a eternity of torture awaited all who do not accept God's "call" of the present time, I had great difficulty with this text. I asked, is it possible that our Redeemer was selectively unjust in his dealings with our race? Can it be true that the Heavenly Father merely calls and draws a predestinated few to himself and to everlasting bliss? Can it be true, as our catechisms recite, that God and Jesus "passed by" the great mass of mankind without drawing them, without calling them, without giving them the hearing ear, without opening the eyes of their understanding? Can it be that all these blind and deaf, unsought, undrawn, un-called and unprayed for by the Savior are going down to eternal torment? My heart answered, No! But my brain was confused by the errors, the misinterpretations of the Bible, which I had received.

set up His Kingdom in power and great glory; after He shall have bound Satan for a thousand years that he might deceive the people no more, the glorious Savior, Messiah, will cause a general enlightenment of mankind and a full opportunity for all, rich and poor, great and small, to rise up from dust and ashes and the grave to the full perfection of human nature.

The Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in his beams, blessing mankind, heal their diseases, mental, moral and physical, and causing the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth. No longer will any need to say to his neighbor or his brother, "Know thou the Lord, for all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest." And only the wilfully wicked and disobedient will be cut off from life in the Second Death—not torture; but, as St. Paul declares, "They shall be punished with everlasting destruction."

We see, then, that our Lord's reason for not praying for the world was that He knew the Father's Plan that the world was not to be dealt with during this Age, but during the next, the Kingdom Age. The Master prayed for His own, for the class which He has been selecting during the past nineteen hundred years. These are variously called "the elect," the "disciples," "His followers," "members of His Body," a "Royal Priesthood," the "Bride," "the Lamb's Wife," the "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom.

**Elect to Bless Non-elect.**  
Seeing, then, that there is a difference between God's provision for the world, to be dispensed in the next Age, and His provision for the Church to be given now, we ask, What is the difference between these? The answer is that the world's salvation is to be by human nature and an earthly Paradise world-wide; while the elect class is a special one called of God, chosen in Christ and faithful in adversity and, by the Lord's grace, is to have a heavenly nature, like unto that of the angels, but superior. There is a "heavenly calling," a "high calling." They are to be like their Lord and Redeemer and Head and Bridegroom, Jesus, in His glorified state, "far above angels and principalities and powers, and every name that is named."

Is this an arbitrary election? Does God arbitrarily draw and "call one above another? Yes, He thus selected the Jewish nation to be His peculiar nation—not, however, to the detriment or injury of other nations. He thus called Isaac instead of Ishmael, and Jacob instead of Esau to be the progenitors of His chosen nation Israel, whom He foreknew as a people and predestinated to a certain service. But this selection worked no injury to either Ishmael or Esau. Similarly during this Gospel Age God chooses from the world a certain class and grants them the hearing ear and the seeing eye, and He passes by others and gives them not this special favor. This, however, is not to be the disadvantage of the others—non-elect, unchosen, un-called.

**According to His Purpose.**  
St. Paul speaks of the Church as "called according to His purpose." He even tells us what the purpose is, namely, that in Ages to come He might show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His loving kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians ii, 7). Toward this specially called class God will to all eternity manifest special favor. But we are not to suppose that there is no reason for this selection and favor. There is a reason. It is because of certain intrinsic qualities or characteristics possessed by this class which God is now selecting. They will all be "saints." They will all love the Lord more than they love houses or lands, parents or children, self or any creature. They will all possess the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, this is God's particular predestination. St. Paul tells us that He foreknew that He would provide His only-begotten Son to be the Savior of mankind and the Head over the Church, and He foreknew that He would have a Church, a Royal Priesthood under the great High Priest, as members of His Body. God foreknew also the kind of a Message He would send forth and that it would be addressed only to a certain class possessed of a love for righteousness. These only would hear His call. These only would have the eyes of their understanding specially opened, because these alone would accept of His assurance and make a full consecration to His service. Such He would beget of His Holy Spirit, and such, in due time, would be born of the Spirit in the resurrection and enter into the fellowship and companionship and kingly joys of their Master.

It is of this special class that the Apostle declares, "Whom God did foreknow, these He also did predestinate to be conformed to the likeness (image) of His Son" (Romans viii, 29). That is to say, God's predestination was not only that He would have a Church, but, additionally, that the terms or conditions of fellowship in that Church should be that each one would become Christ-like. Surely this is a good predestination, with which no one could find fault. Whether we shall gain a place with the "elect" on the heavenly plane, or a place with the non-elect world in restitution to earthly nature, we cannot do otherwise than recognize the justice of God in so deciding, that none but the saintly copies of their Lord, could be members of the elect Church and joint-heirs with Him in His Kingdom.

"True and righteous are Thy ways, Lord God Almighty!" "Who shall not come and worship before Thee, when Thy righteous acts are made manifest?" Truly it is written of this great King of glory, Head and Mem-

bers, Bridegroom and Bride, "Unto Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God."

"Ask of Me and I Will Give."

Although our Lord did not pray for the world, He will yet pray for them, and His prayer will be answered. The promise reads, "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the heathen for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession" (Psalm ii, 8). Jesus did not make this request on the night of His crucifixion because it was not the Father's time to answer that prayer. Appropriately He waited, and while gathering the "elect" from every nation, people, kindred and tongue, the Scriptures declare that He is seated at the Father's right hand of glory expecting or waiting for the time to come when the Kingdom under the whole heavens shall be delivered to Him by the Father. This will be done at the end of this Gospel Age, when the salutary Body of Christ shall have been completed. Then "He shall take unto himself His great power and reign."

A great time of trouble will follow. The plowshare of sorrow will make ready the hearts of mankind for the great blessings which Messiah will then be ready to bestow, because that will be the due time. St. Paul tells us that Messiah's reign will be a victorious one: "He must reign until He shall have put all enemies under His feet (in full subjection); the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Then, after a thousand years, after having accomplished the purpose of the Father in the uplifting of all the willing and obedient of mankind to earthly perfection the great Prophet, Priest, Mediator and King of Glory will at the end of the thousand years' reign deliver up the Kingdom even to God the Father, that God may be all in all (I Corinthians xv, 28).

While Satan will be bound at the beginning of Messiah's reign and every form of unrighteousness will be rooted out, nevertheless the raising of mankind up out of sin and degradation to perfection will be a gradual work. As the regenerating influences operate in mankind, they will become more and more alive, less and less dead—until at the end of the Messianic reign Adamic death will be no more; it shall have been fully destroyed by the raising of mankind completely out of it; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death—Adamic death.

The Second Death will never be destroyed, but will be everlasting. It is not an enemy to God and His righteousness, but a valuable servant to destroy everything wilfully and intelligently out of accord with the Divine Government—righteousness.

**I Pray For Them.**

All who are seeking to walk in the footsteps of Jesus; all who have taken up their cross to follow Him, may well rejoice in that feature of His prayer which says, I pray for those whom Thou hast given Me that they may all be one, as Thou, Father, and I are one, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me (John xvii, 20, 21). The oneness of God's people is not represented in the various sects and parties of the present time. It is represented in the fact that all the consecrated followers of the Redeemer are individually united to Him as the Head and united to each other as members of His Body. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." By and by, by the power of the First Resurrection, all these shall be perfected on the spirit plane and constitute the Kingdom for which we pray. "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." As a result of that Kingdom's coming the world will all be brought to the point of believing in Jesus and will all have the opportunity of obtaining through Him the gift of God, eternal life.

Our Lord's solicitude was not merely for the Apostles and earliest members of the Church whom the Father gave Him in the special sense, as His personal companions and helpers in the founding of the Church; he prayed on, saying, Neither pray I for these alone, but for all those also who shall believe on Me through their Word. The Master's words outlined to us the Divine Program. And Jesus himself began to declare the Gospel and brought life and immortality to light. He commissioned His twelve Apostles, St. Paul taking the place of Judas, to speak in His Name and as His special mouthpieces. Whatever they would declare to be binding on earth would be binding in the sight of God in Heaven. Whatever they would loose and declare to be non-essential on earth, we may know would be so by Divine decree (Matthew xvi, 19).

In a word, Jesus, the Apostles and the Prophets alone are to be considered the special guides and standard-bearers for the Church. We are to believe on Him through their word and not through the word of counsels or synods or presbyteries. Each individual of the Church has his personal responsibility. This is in harmony with our Lord's declaration, "My sheep know My Voice and they follow Me; a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from a stranger." It behooves us today to hearken back to the words of Jesus as He personally uttered them and as He personally sent them to us through His chosen twelve.

Soon the Master's prayer for His disciples will have fulfillment. They will be one with Him beyond the veil, sharers of His glory and Kingdom. Then will come the time when the world will believe. The knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth and all the blinding and stumbling influences of the present will be at an end. The Savior will not need to pray for the world then, but instead will exercise His power on their behalf, overthrowing evil and uplifting every good principle and all who love righteousness and destroying those who would corrupt the earth.

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