

PASTOR RUSSELL'S TESTIMONY

(The item below is the Pastor Russell's testimony given at Patros, Greece, at end of the Missionary Investigating Committee's Tour of the World. 1912 Convention Report, page 105.)

Pastor Russell: The prevailing sentiment in my mind in connection with this trip from the start has been one of great gratitude to the Lord and an increasing appreciation of my obligation to Him and His goodness toward me. And this thought has been intensified as I came in contact with the actualities of life throughout Japan, China, India, Egypt, and I have said to myself over and over again, Verily my lines have fallen to me in pleasant places. The Lord was very gracious to me that I was born of Christian parentage, under such favorable conditions, and I said over and over to myself, What manner of person ought I to be in return, and how much greater responsibilities have I than these poor creatures who have had such disadvantages and lack of opportunity. And yet, all my journey, I have not seen anything worse than I have anticipated seeing. From my study of these lands I had formed quite accurate conceptions of just what they were. They are not any worse, but in some respects I was very pleased that I found some things better—chiefly that there were some saints in those lands, and it cheered my heart that there were true characters there.

I have also greatly appreciated the fellowship that I have had with the members of the committee. I have not formed any different opinion of any than I had at the beginning. I thought much of you at first and I have had my convictions intensified, but they are the same as at the beginning, only they have been proven. It has been sometimes under trying conditions and circumstances, but I am glad these demonstrated great love and loyalty to the Lord and His Word. I love you, if possible, more than ever.

The whole experience has been a wonderful and convincing lesson respecting the things we have already believed and taught. We believe things still more deeply, if possible, and shall in the future present them, if possible, more concisely—the necessity for the Kingdom, and that there is absolutely no human power in the world that could uplift humanity. The tendency in some respects would be downward, as we have seen. Some of these people have really been blest in that they have had a large amount of ignorance; if they had had more knowledge they would have been developed in sin. I can see the wisdom of the Almighty in permitting such ignorance. I can say that the bringing in of the light and Truth to these people in their unregenerated condition would not do them much good, but that the only thing that could really uplift them is Messiah's Kingdom—that heavenly power that will not only lift up physically and emancipate from slavery in mind and body, but also give the glory to God. The knowledge of that Kingdom will not prove an injury but a blessing. All this I behold before my mind more vividly than before.

Correspondingly, I rejoice that the matter is in better hands than ours, in the hands of the great Creator; and correspondingly I feel also to appreciate the fact that God not only assumes responsibility but that we can see He has a responsibility in respect to these creatures whom He created, that their interests are necessarily also a part of His concern; and while He was not under obligations to redeem them or to give them eternal life we can see very clearly that it would be just like Him to do something good for these who through the fall and ignorance and unfavorable conditions have come into life under disadvantageous conditions, and to give them an opportunity for recovery from the curse of disobedience.

So I am returning to the other parts of the world invigorated in mind, strengthened in faith, and in mind, not only along the lines mentioned, but also along the lines of God's providences with our committee during this considerable journey. It would appear that we could not possibly have asked for or expected such wonderful openings or opportunities as we have had. It would appear also that the Lord must have arranged these very affairs. Amongst others, our experiences of yesterday in the Greek Church, by power and arrangements entirely outside of our hands, we had such a favorable reception at Corinth, and an opportunity to present the Truth in some measure to intelligent and earnest people for three hours. We were able to mention many features of the Divine Plan and interest was created to such an extent that many expressed themselves as pleased and also stated their intention to start afresh to study these matters. While this is fresh in our minds in Greece, yet it is in full harmony with our experiences in the Hawaiian Islands, Japan, China, the Philippines, etc.

Another thing surprised me, and this is the surprising thing in my whole journey, that those to whom I expected to be able to do some good I was quite unable to reach at all, namely, the missionaries. In the start of the journey the missionaries were very largely before my mind's eye. I said to myself, I believe it would be a part of the divine will that all these missionaries should have a witness respecting the committee, and I believe we could use this means to bring many of them to the meetings, and they would all receive a great blessing—being honest people they would be profited. I have been disappointed respecting the missionaries. We not only got very few of the English and American visitors to our meetings, but additionally those who did come seemed rather indifferent. They were unready to hear the Word of God—they were indifferent to do it. My surprise was correspondingly very great. Nevertheless, we had good meetings but they were more with the oriental people, with those whom we thought would have no interest in the matter.

We had feared these would be so degraded that they would not have a hearing ear. I have been astonished to see how many of the Chinese have keen ears for the Truth—much more than the whites. The same way in Japan, in India, and everywhere; it seems to have

been the specially interested of the common native people—different from what I have anticipated. So I have been disappointed in those who have had the largest measure of divine favor in birth and education—unfavorably disappointed. Also disappointed, but favorably, in respect to those who have had little advantage, and all this seems to my mind to teach a great lesson, namely, that apparently the message of the Kingdom and of God's grace has already accomplished a considerable proportion of its work and that what may be expected henceforth will probably be in the nature of gleanings and these might be expected as much from some of the oriental natives as from others. The prospect in India seems to be very favorable in many ways, especially in the Travencore district. Also the prospect in China seems to be good, and I cannot say but that in Japan it is favorable also.

On the whole, the conclusion of my testimony is, that I am very appreciative of the Divine favor bestowed on us, and feel very grateful to God for the privilege enjoyed, and I am returning with a heart not only grateful, but full of thanksgiving and strengthened by the various experiences of this journey.