

THE WORKS OF CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL
AND THEIR EFFECT UPON RELIGION IN AMERICA

Following this facing sheet is a paper with the above title. It was prepared by one of our brethren, who is sound in the Truth and who prefers to remain anonymous. Our brother prepared this paper in recognition of the need to clarify the origins of the Truth movement, and to correct the Jehovah's Witnesses' erroneous claim to the Pastor as their founder with all that is implied of wrong doctrine and practices.

There are no date markings or item number on the paper itself, so it may be used to give out as a witness to the public.

THE WORKS OF CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL
AND THEIR EFFECT UPON RELIGION IN AMERICA

Religious thought and expression have taken many forms ever since there have been people upon the earth—a mixture of truth and error, a mixture of human and God-like ideas. Ideas of any magnitude must be able to stand the tests of time, attack, criticism, etc., if they are to last and have any permanent effect upon the course of their hearers. They must have Biblical authority and compatibility, or else the substance will be lost at the outset. “All Scripture divinely inspired is indeed profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness so that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”¹

The purpose of this paper is to explore in a limited way the works of Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916)—both in scope and content, the history of the man and his movement, and the effect they have had on the development and progress of religion in America. We shall attempt to show that these works and movement had a profound and lasting effect, not only upon Protestants but upon Roman Catholics, Jews, and even the secular world at times.

Whenever appropriate, we will endeavor to defend these works against unjust criticism, and to set aright present and past false claims as well as to clarify some currently erroneous concepts held and circulated. A detailed examination and comparison will not be possible in this limited consideration, but enough will be considered to establish our position.

The fact that Charles Taze Russell is given little, or no consideration by theologians and writers of American literature might not be so unusual had his prodigious works and influence not received international recognition via his many lectures, tours, and publications. Some encyclopedias do not even list this man’s name;² others give only a cursory entry.³ So often, when considered, he is erroneously reported to have been the founder of the modern Jehovah’s Witness denomination (sect).

George Swetnam, in his historical account of some people and events of Pittsburgh, states: “It is an amazing thing that no Pittsburgh history has ever so much as contained the name of Charles Taze Russell, since his influence has easily been the widest of any man who ever lived in the city, not even excepting Andrew Carnegie.”⁴

1 Wilson, Benjamin, The Emphatic Diaglott, 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

2 World Book, V. 16, p. 485.

3 Encyclopaedia Britannica, V. 19, p. 679.

4 Swetnam, Where Else But Pittsburgh, p. 110.

One problem with a study such as this is that most of what has been written in reference to Russell is difficult to obtain. For the most part, the information must be gained from word of mouth, his own works, publications now out of print, or from Jehovah's Witnesses publications (not infrequently modified—if not erroneous views). Therefore, the bibliography is limited. Current accounts or biographical entries in encyclopedias and reference works so often give as their only source one or more of the Jehovah's Witness publications.⁵ Nevertheless, the subject has been treated with as much candor and objectivity as is feasible, under the circumstances.

Shortly before we arrive at the period of time under consideration (mainly from 1870-1916) colonial America, especially Protestantism, had come through the throes of the "Second Great Awakening," with its "camp meetings" and Charles G. Finney's "new measures."⁶ The infant nation had extricated itself from England by the Revolutionary War less than a century before. Expansion to the western frontier was in full swing. Nearly every major denomination had established missionary societies by 1820, and by 1850 a combined total annual expenditure of about \$650,000 was going to the foreign missions from all denominations.⁷

In Europe, great changes were being made also. The French Revolution had ended with its effects, and soon after the turn of the century Napoleon had succeeded in becoming emperor with almost unlimited power. He greatly intruded into the religious realm by breaking the long established precedent of having the Pope in Rome to crown the emperor. In 1799 the intrepid Napoleon not only defied the anathemas of Pope Pius VI, but laid penalties upon him for violation of his (Napoleon's) orders.

The people's eyes were opened, as well as the eyes of the monarchs of Europe to the falsity of Papacy's claim to authority. The great revolution of public opinion at this time, regarding papal authority, may be seen in the fact that Napoleon, upon assuming the title and proclaiming himself Roman Emperor as a successor of Charlemagne, did not go to Rome to have the Pope crown him, as did Charlemagne and others, but commanded the Pope to come to France to attend his coronation. And even then the successful chair who more than once had impoverished and humbled the Papacy, would not consent to be crowned by the Pope (and thus to accept the imperial dignity with acknowledgment of papal authority), but merely had the Pope (Pius VII) present to sanction and acknowledge the ceremony and to bless the crown which Napoleon himself then took from the altar and put upon his own head.

The Napoleonic era was wild and barbaric—reminiscent of scenes under Papal persecution just prior to the Protestant Reformation. John Lord, when writing in

⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, V. 12, p. 997

⁶ Hudson, Winthrops, Religion in America, pp., 73, 135,

⁷ Hudson, op. cit., pp. 147, 157

reference to this period of time stated: “How flagrant those evils. Who can deny them? The papal despotism, and the frauds on which it was based; above all, the grinding spiritual despotism... keeping the human mind in bondage...—these evils prevailed everywhere...”⁸

Awful as those scenes were of anarchy and violence during these events of the French Revolution, these were but the legitimate fruit, the reactionary effect, of the awakening of a long oppressed people to a realization of their shame and degradation. It was the reaping of a whirlwind by the civil and religious powers, which in the name of God and truth had been blinding and binding (for their own aggrandizement) people for whom Christ died. Thus Napoleon’s work, together with the French Revolution, broke the spell of religious superstition, humbled the pride of self-exalted religious lords awakened the world to a fuller sense of the powers of manhood and broke the Papal dominion, and influence at least for a time.

1799 clearly marks the beginning of a new era of liberty of thought, and the realization of individual rights and privileges. As a single illustration, notice the rise of the various Bible Societies throughout Europe and America—called “a pestilence” by Pope Pius VII in a Papal bull issued in 1816 against these Bible Societies—though Rome could not hinder them. These societies were formed quickly after 1800, with the American Bible Society coming into existence in 1817. Bibles by the millions were distributed—some sold at low cost, others given to the poor.

The revolution and independence of the American colonies—the successful establishment of a prosperous Republic, a government by the people and for the people, without the interference of either royalty or priest-craft—had set a new lesson before the now awaking people, who for so many centuries had slumbered in ignorance of their God-given rights, supposing that God had appointed the church to the supreme rulership of earth, and that they were bound to obey those kings and emperors sanctioned by the church, no matter how unjust their demands, because she had declared them to be appointed by God, through her. To a long down-trodden and priest-ridden people, America became a source of wonderment and hope. Truly it was “Liberty enlightening the world.”

True, the various denomination were forced to adjust to many changes in the new world, but most of these changes were in force and practice, not major doctrinal alterations. With few exceptions the traditional doctrines—the trinity, immortality of the soul, eternal torment for the unsaved dead, earth (world) burned up, “saving of souls,” etc.,—remained intact. Most of them not far removed from the Papal forefathers of the Middle Ages,⁹ and

⁸ Lord, John, Beacon Lights Of History, p. 218

⁹ Lord, op. cit., pp. 218, 223, 226, 228, 232.

perpetuating the unscriptural practice of distinct separation between clergy and laity—a hierarchy.¹⁰

C. T. Russell wrote in 1891,¹¹ “Though the religious reformation movement throughout Europe had severely shaken Papacy’s influence, yet the reformed churches had so closely imitated her policy of statecraft, affiliation with earthly empires, and claims of clerical authority over the people (that the ‘clergy’ constitute a special and divinely appointed rulership in the World), that the first effect of that reformation [religious reformation] became greatly modified, and left the people and the civil rulers largely under superstitious awe and subserviency to everything called church authority. The reform divided among several sects much of the superstitious and unwholesome veneration formerly concentrated upon Papacy alone.”

It can be seen from the foregoing sketch of some selected historical events that peoples of the earth—as well as in America—were being primed for acceptance of ideas of freedom and liberty, not only on political and social subjects, but also on religious subjects. Against this background America was born.

At Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (then called Allegheny) on Feb. 16, 1852, there was born what proved to be a man of God, destined to challenge these prevalent erroneous practices and doctrines, so long held by the Papacy, and the by Protestants alike. This man, Charles Taze Russell, known the world over as Pastor Russell, author, lecturer, minister and defender of the Gospel, and a consecrated man of God, proved to be a force for true Christianity in America and the world. He was the son of Joseph L. and Eliza Birney Russell, both of Scotch-Irish lineage.¹² He was educated in the common schools and under private tutors.

His parents were Reformed Presbyterians, members of that sturdy sect which refused to acknowledge any government except that of God, and who kept up their fight against George III in England, and later in the youthful United States of America until well after 1830, refusing to pay taxes or take part in military service.¹³ Young Russell’s mother died when he was only eight years old. He spent most of his time with his father in his general store on Federal Street (in Allegheny), except when he was able to be in school. He was always interested in religion, writing Bible verses on the sidewalks with chalk when still a youth. Reared under the influence of Christian parents, at an early age (less than 15) he became interested in theology, uniting himself with the Congregational Church, (because no Re-formed Presbyterian organization was located within reach), and became active in local mission work.

10 Wilson, *op. cit.*, Matt. 23:8, 20, 26.

11 Russell, Charles Taze, *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 3, p. 51.

12 *Zion’s Watch Tower*, Vol. 37, Dec. 1, 1916.

13 Swetnam, *op. cit.*, p. 111

Those who knew the boy best said that he was very quick and alert, so much so that his father took him into partnership in the store when he was only 11, Charles himself writing up the articles of agreement. By the time he was 15, his father started sending him to Philadelphia as a buyer for their business.¹⁴

Like many another youth, Charles, although successful in business, was troubled in mind. He battled with himself over the doctrine of predestination, and was revolted by the idea of Hell (eternal torment). At the age of 15 his boyish zeal led him in an endeavor to restore a young infidel friend—to try to reconcile the doctrine of eternal torment of all mankind except the few elect (although the idea had become abhorrent to him)—cost him his faith in the Bible. At the age of 17 he had become a skeptic. Although he still retained his faith in God, his honest heart could not permit him to accept anything which would make God a devil or a monster. He said, “A God who would use His power to create human beings whom He foreknew and predestined should be eternally tormented, could be neither wise, just, nor loving; His standard would be lower than that of men.”¹⁵

During the next few years, while growing up into commercial life, he devoted much time to the investigation of Buddhism, Confucianism, and other Oriental religions, only to find all unworthy of credence. “Which is the true Gospel” became a living question in his inquiring mind, and although he was now well on his way in the business world—to fame and fortune (literally) his skepticism remained. It was a successful, but skeptical young businessman of 18 that stepped one day into a dingy little basement room near the Federal Street Store “to see if the handful who had met there had anything more sensible to offer than the creeds of the great churches.”¹⁶

Russell’s own account follows: “Brought up a Presbyterian, and indoctrinated from the Catechism, and being naturally of an inquiring mind, I fell a ready prey to the logic of infidelity as soon as I began to think for myself. But that which at first threatened to be the utter shipwreck of faith in God and the Bible, was, under God’s providence, overruled for good, and merely wrecked my confidence in human creeds and systems of misinterpretation of the Bible.

“Gradually I was led to see that though each of the creeds contained some elements of truth, they were, on the whole, misleading and contradictory of God’s Word. Among other theories, I stumbled upon Adventism. Seemingly by accident, one evening I dropped into a dusty, dingy hall, where I had heard religious services were held, to see if the handful who met there had anything more sensible to offer than the creeds of the great churches. There, for the first time, I heard something of the views of Second Adventists,

14 Swetnam, *op. cit.*, p. 112

15 Harte, Brete, *Overland Monthly*, p. 442.

16 Swetnam, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

the preacher being Mr. Jonas Wendell, long since deceased. Thus, I confess indebtedness to Adventists as well as to other denominations. Though his Scripture exposition was not entirely clear, and though it was far from what we now rejoice in, it was sufficient, under God, to re-establish my wavering faith in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and to show that the records of the apostles and prophets are indissolubly linked. What I heard sent me to my Bible to study with more zeal and care than ever before, and I shall ever thank the Lord for that leading; for though Adventism helped me to no single truth, it did help me greatly in the unlearning of errors, and thus prepared me for the Truth.”¹⁷

Turning, then, to the Bible, he determined to make a careful systematic study of it without reference to creeds of men. The result was such a full establishment in the Bible as God’s Word that the remainder of his life was wholly devoted to teaching and studying the Bible, writing and publishing religious books, papers, lecturing, and proclaiming the Message of Messiah’s Kingdom. As reported in the Overland Monthly, “He was the greatest religious teacher since St. Paul, and did more than any other man in modern times to establish the faith of the people in the Scriptures. His aim was to reach, if possible, every Truth-seeker—Catholic, Protestant, Jew and Free-thinker. He stood entirely free from all sectarian bonds, His work was wholly independent.”¹⁸

After his acquaintance with Mr. Wendell and his concerted study, Charles Taze Russell began to see that time has much to do with God’s plan. A few other truth-seekers and himself formed a Bible study class in Allegheny, and from 1870-1875 he grew in grace and knowledge and love of God and his Word. However, he was merely getting the general outline of “God’s Plan” as he so often referred to it. He, and those studying with him, progressed from crude, indefinite ideas of restitution to clearer understanding of the details.

The keen desire to associate with others who were seeing scriptural truths similar to himself caused him to join with an Adventist, George Barbour, in writing a little book The Three Worlds.¹⁹ Later, they were not able to completely agree on understandings from the Scriptures, and thus a parting of association followed.

Seeing the Scriptures teaching God’s plan so clearly, in 1877 Charles T. Russell did a strange thing—a very strange thing for a young man of 26 with no formal theological education. He invited all the ministers of Pittsburgh and Allegheny to a meeting, explaining his beliefs, and urged them to unite with him on that basis of faith. The fact that they accepted his invitation shows what a high standing young Russell had in the community, yet it is not surprising that after hearing what he had to say, they politely

¹⁷ Zion’s Watch Tower, July 15, 1906, p. 230.

¹⁸ Harte, op. cit., p. 443.

¹⁹ Zion’s Watch Tower, op. cit., July 15, 1906, p. 230.

declined his invitation. It would have been amazing if most of them had done anything else.²⁰

Rebuffed by the ministers of his home town, Mr. Russell soon determined it to be the Lord’s will that he start a journal by himself wherein he could lift high the standard of the cross and the doctrine of the ransom sacrifice of Christ, which he had come to see as the “hub”, or foundation, of all the “Plan”. This he did in July, 1879, when the first number of *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence* made its appearance, continuing until his death in 1916, when others took over its publication. The journal was published monthly in five languages, (from 1893 on, semimonthly) containing mostly discourses on selected subjects and items of interest to those pursuing serious Bible study with a circulation of 45,000. (English speaking) The following statement of purpose was issued in the first volume, page 1: “To him that hath an ear to hear what the spirit saith unto the churches, ZION’S WATCH TOWER hopes to give assistance and encouragement. It is in bondage to no man, no party and to no creed but the Bible; yet in the bonds of love and sympathy to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity. It aims to represent the chaste virgins, the prospective ‘Bride of Christ,’ and with them acknowledges only one master and head—Christ Jesus.”

It was the first paper ever to make announcement of the invisible presence of our Lord and to submit the clear, Scriptural proof of same. ZION’S WATCH TOWER was devoted exclusively to religious purposes, and never carried any advertisements beyond the mere announcement of its publications. It has always been supplied to the poor free of charge, the expense being met by a voluntary fund contributed for that purpose.

Aside from the regular periodical, Pastor Russell authored many other books and booklets, along with numerous tracts and leaflets. We will not enumerate those many miscellaneous works, but will list the major works, showing # of pages, their original dates of publications and their circulation (when known) in 1916

FOOD FOR THINKING CHRISTIANS		1881	1,450,000
TABERNACLE SHADOWS		131 1881	1,000,000
DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES	358	1886	4,817,000
THE TIME IS AT HAND		371 1889	1,657,000
THY KINGDOM COME		384 1890	1,578,000
BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON		660 1897	465,000
THE ATONEMENT BETWEEN GOD AND MAN		498 1899	445,000
THE NEW CREATION		738 1904	423,000
WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT HELL		88 1900	3,000,000
WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT SPIRITUALISM?	119	1897	?? (“wide”)

²⁰ Swetnam., *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113,

THE BIBLE VERSUS THE EVOLUTION THEORY	47	1898	?? (“wide”)
THE OBJECT AND MANNER OF OUR LORD’S RETURN (“phenomenal”)	64	1877	??
THE PHOTO DRAMA OF CREATION (The Scenario for) (400 illustrations)	192	1914	?? (“wide”)

Pastor Russell’s publications were translated into 35 different languages, and distributed throughout the world. His weekly sermons were handled by a newspaper syndicate. More than 2,000 newspapers, with a combined circulation of 15,000,000 readers, at one time published his discourses. All told, more than 4,000 newspapers published his sermons. Each year he wrote nearly all the copy for the Bible Students Monthly—annual distribution, 50,000,000 copies.²¹

He made frequent trips abroad. In 1892 he made a trip to Europe and the Holy Land, taking in various countries and lecturing in the interests of the great work. In 1910 he again visited Palestine.

Earlier (in September, 1910) a Jewish mass meeting committee, composed of Jewish leaders, invited Pastor Russell to address a New York Hippodrome rally on the topic “Zionism in Prophecy.” Upon his return from Europe in October (of 1910) he was given a great ovation at the Hippodrome by many thousands of Jews. His discourse on that occasion was published by Hebrew papers throughout America and Europe. The New York Hippodrome was the largest indoor playhouse in the world until it closed in 1928. It could seat 5,200 persons at one time.²² The UNITED ISRAEL BULLETIN reports: “It was a unique event at the Hippodrome which was jammed to the doors. Pastor Russell started out by saying that prophecy is proving itself through the Jewish people by whom ‘the blessing will extend itself to every nation, people, kindred and tongue in full accord with the Divine promise and oath made to Abraham more than thirty centuries ago.’”²³

The newspaper, THE NEW YORK AMERICAN (October 9, 1910) reported that many Jews were skeptical of this meeting saying, “Pastor Russell is going to try to convert the Jews to Christianity.” “He wants to proselytize us.” The paper goes on to report that they had questions and criticisms for him. Reserved at first, the audience gradually “warmed up” to their speaker. As he brought his discourse to an end, the paper continues, the choir began to sing the Jewish anthem, “Our Hope.” The Hebrew audience could hardly believe their ears. At first, the thousands cheered and clapped with such ardor that the music was drowned out. Soon they were joining in with the second verse. An unusual sight, indeed, to see thousands of Hebrews enthusiastically applauding a Gentile preacher.

21 Harte, *op. cit.*, p. 445-6.

22 *World Book, op. cit.*, Vol. 9, p. 227.

23 Horowitz, *United Israel Bulletin*, March, 1971.

The following will serve to further show his international reputation and influence.

Whenever he spoke it was usually in the largest auditorium and to record audiences. He made annual and semi-annual tours to Great Britain, Canada and Europe. At various public addresses at Royal Albert Hall, London's largest auditorium, it was not uncommon to have audiences numbering up to 6,000 at one time. In the fall of 1911 he was the chairman of a committee of 7 who made a journey around the world and specially examined the conditions of the missionary work in Japan, Korea, China, Syria and India. He was back in New York in 1912, again in the Hippodrome, this time to give the report of his committee.

He organized and conducted a Lecture Bureau which constantly employed 70 Bible lecturers, who traveled and delivered lectures on the Scriptures. He organized and managed an auxiliary lecture bureau of 700 men who gave a portion of their time to lecturing on Bible teachings.²⁴

Swetnam reports²⁵ that, "Pastor Russell traveled constantly, covering more than a million miles, delivering more than 30,000 sermons and lectures and talks, writing books totaling over 50,000 pages, which have reached a circulation of more than 20,000,000 copies." "... his influence has easily been the widest of any man who ever lived in the city, (Pittsburgh) not even excepting Andrew Carnegie." (p. 110) "Although his teaching has been highly controversial, it has had wide effect." (p. 116)

Brete Harte states, "We have heard but one Protestant response, and that, properly enough, from the pen of the best and most widely known Protestant minister in the world—Pastor Russell of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, New York."²⁶

The Continent, a publication whose editor often opposed Pastor Russell, once published the following significant statement concerning him: "His writing are said to have a greater newspaper circulation every week than those of any other living man; a greater, doubtless, than the combined circulation of the writings of all the priests and preachers in North America, greater even than the work of Arthur Brisbane, Norman Hapgood, George Horace Lorimer, Dr. Frank Crane, Frederick Haskins, and a dozen other of the best known editors and syndicate writers put together."²⁷

In November of 1913, Governor Glyn of New York State asked Pastor Russell to represent New York State at the 7th International Purity conference in Minneapolis. This he did, and was voted to speak at the Shubert Theater on November 9.

24 Zion's Watch Tower, October, 1916.

25 Swetnam, op. cit., p. 115.

26 Harte, op. cit., p. 121.

27 Ibid, p. 447.

In late 1908, the editor of the Overland Monthly requested Pastor Russell to write a series of articles on “The Divine Purpose” which appeared at first in February, 1909. The response to this series—(both in letter and the press) was so great that his articles on a variety of Biblical subjects, continued to appear until his death in 1916. The periodical reports in 1909 that Studies in the Scriptures, by Charles Taze Russell, is one of the world’s three most circulated works. It gives world circulation figures of the five most published works as: 1st. The Bible, 2nd. The Chinese Almanac, 3rd. Studies in the Scriptures, 4th. Don Quixote, and 5th Uncle Tom’s Cabin. It adds, “In American literature Mr. Russell stands first.”²⁸

Pastor Russell’s interest in the Great Pyramid in Egypt caused him to devote a chapter to it and its relation to God’s Plan in volume three of his Studies in the Scriptures.²⁹ He traveled to the Holy Land in 1892 to verify his information respecting this “Wonder of the Ancient World.” A Mr. William M. Wright sent a copy of Pastor Russell’s treatise to Prof. C. Piazzzi Smyth, F.R.S.E., F.R.A.S., Ex-Astronomer Royal for Scotland for his criticism since he was generally accorded a greater knowledge of the Great Pyramid’s construction and measurements than any other man in the world. Prof. Smyth offered no criticism of any consequences, making a correction in one of the measurements of 1 inch, but was enthusiastic regarding Pastor Russell’s writing upon the subject.³⁰

The late Dr. John Edgar, F.F.P.S.G., of Glasgow, Scotland, with his brother Morton, in 1909, visited Gizeh to critically test Pastor Russell’s deductions. Their verdict, after a most elaborate investigation, was a thorough endorsement of the Pastor’s interpretation of the Great Pyramid, the greatest of world’s wonders. In Edgar’s own book on the Great Pyramid, he corroborates Pastor Russell’s Bible chronology, and time measurements.³¹

The LONDON GRAPHIC (April 8, 1911) describes Pastor Russell thusly: “The advent of Pastor Russell brings to this city and country a man of international reputation, who is known almost as well in Great Britain as he is in America.” “... who is reputed to be the most popular preacher in America...”

And finally, the CHRISTIAN GLOBE (May 5, 1910) of London, states, “Since the days of Henry Ward Beecher and Dr. Talmage, no preacher has occupied so prominent a position in the United States as Pastor Russell of Brooklyn Tabernacle holds today.”

In the face of the foregoing evidence (and there is more), again the question, why has this man been forgotten by all but a few, and who did (and do) the clergy oppose him so

28 Harte, op. cit., p. 450.

29 Russell, pp. 311-12 (Vol. 3)

30 Ibid

31 Edgar, Dr, John, The Great Pyramid Passages and Chambers, p, 13,

bitterly? Why, when infidels would go to hear Pastor Russell and return rejoicing that the religious leaders of the time would say, “Don’t go to hear that man Russell; he preaches dangerous doctrines”? That the criticism was sharp, and in some cases slanderous and abusive, there can be no doubt. A man by the name of Rev. J. J. Ross, in 1914, became so vociferous in his attacks in the press, and vocally, that nothing short of a libel suit would quiet him.

A few examples of expressions from the clergy are, “That Russell is taking all our best members.” “I cannot open my morning paper without Pastor Russell’s face staring at me,” (angrily) “I would sooner have joined in stoning him out of town.” This latter expression was in response to a question asked of a local minister if he had heard Pastor Russell give his discourse in Morgantown, W. Va., that day (in 1907). By contrast, the large audience gave close attention to his 2-hour long discourse that day. It seemed that many would grasp at anything to discredit the man or/and his works. “He made close friends and bitter enemies and was constantly falsely accused by voice and through the press of all sorts of crimes and folly. When asked why he never denied most of these accusations, he once replied that if you stop to kick at every dog that barks at you you’ll never get very far.”

Pastor Russell felt it was his teachings that evoked the wrath of his counterparts—the clergy. Writing in his journal in September, 1914 (p.287) he said, “What is the secret of the opposition and slander being raised up against me and against all who, like me, are Bible Students? It is malice, hatred, envy, and strife, on the part of those who are still hugging the nonsense of the Dark Ages and neglecting Bible study. They see their influence is waning. But they have not awakened to the true situation. Losing faith in the Bible, in the preachers and in the creeds, the people are drifting towards atheism. That is the real difficulty.”

And in October, 1916 (p. 308), “We have Bible Study Classes in all parts of the earth. This leads some of the ministers to consider our work a menace—just as the Episcopalians once thought the Presbyterians and the Methodists a menace, as the Jews thought the early Christians a menace to their institutions, etc.”

Seeing that God had such a wonderful plan for the blessing of mankind, Pastor Russell gave all of his power and energy to making known these great truths to the world. That these teachings (truths) were in direct conflict with the established traditional doctrines, there can be no doubt. The following is a brief examination of ten such teachings, the Pastor made a summary in January, 1912 in response to some opposition and misunderstanding.

“To those who oppose our teaching are given to misrepresenting it. They do not wish to speak untruthfully, but desire to hinder our work, which they fail to recognize as the

Lord's Work. It is difficult to answer the arguments of our opponents in a few words, when they misunderstand our presentations of more than 3,000 pages. If they cannot understand a detailed account, we have no hope of making a brief one satisfactory to them. However, we give here a synopsis:—”

“I. We affirm the *humanity* of *Jesus* and the *deity* of *Christ*.

“II. We acknowledge that the personality of the holy Spirit is the Father and the Son; that the holy Spirit proceeds from both, and in turn from all who are begotten by it.

“III. We affirm the resurrection of Christ—that he was *put to death* in the *flesh*, but *quicken*ed in the *Spirit*. We deny that he was raised in the flesh, and challenge any statement to that effect as being *unscriptural*.

“IV. We affirm, with the Scripture, that God alone possessed *immortality*, ‘dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.’ We affirm that this divine quality has already been granted to the Lord Jesus and is to be the portion of the elect bride, the ‘body of Christ.’ As for mankind, we affirm the divine provision for these and for angels to be *everlasting life* for the *obedient*. This, by many, is misnamed *immortality*. We follow the Scriptures *strictly*.

“V. We hold that the entire race lost life with Father Adam, as a result in Eden; and that Christ died to secure a *second* chance for Adam and an *individual* chance for all of his race, who lost their first chance in Adam when he sinned. ‘As all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive.’ (1 Cor. 15:21, 22) A few of us, comparatively, having eyes of faith and ears of understanding, *have had* this *second* chance [as it were] in the *present life*. Adam and the great mass of his posterity must get their second chance after being awakened from the tomb [really their first chance]. But NOBODY IS TO GET A THIRD CHANCE!

“VI. We believe that the *soul* was condemned to *death*. ‘The soul that sinneth it shall die.’ We believe that this death would have been eternal everlasting destruction, had it not been for God’s mercy in and through our Lord’s redemptive work. By reason of his death our souls do not die in this full sense of the word, but are Scripturally said to ‘fall asleep,’ ‘asleep in Jesus.’ The awakening will be in the resurrection morning; and the interim will be a period of unconsciousness, beautifully symbolized by a restful sleep.

“VII. We believe in the ‘hell’ of the Bible, *sheol*. This, the only word used for *hell* for 4,000 years, is translated more than one-half the time *grave* in our Common Version, and should be thus translated. ‘*Hades*,’ in the New Testament, is its equivalent. ‘*Gehenna fire*,’ of the New Testament, is a symbolical picture declared to signify the second death.

“VIII. We believe that God is able to destroy ‘both soul and body’ in *Gehenna*—the second death. We consider it much more *sane* to believe thus, as it is *more Scriptural*, than to believe that in creating man God *did a work* which He could not *undo*; much more reasonable also than to believe He prefers to have the incorrigible *suffer eternally*, when their sufferings could do neither themselves nor others any good.

“IX. We believe that, like the Father and the holy angels, our Lord is a *spirit being*. We are *convinced* that ‘flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.’ We do not

believe that our Lord has a flesh and blood body, a ‘little lower than the angels,’ and has thus been out of harmony with his heavenly environment for nearly 2,000 years. We believe the Apostle’s statement, ‘Now the Lord is that *Spirit*.’ This is the Jesus who will ‘so come, *in like manner*,’ quietly and unknown to the world, as he went away. We do not affirm, dogmatically, that he came in 1874, but we say that to us it is the evident teaching of the Scriptures. Our Lord warned us *not to expect him in the flesh*; that men might say ‘Lo, here’ or ‘Lo, there.’ The Harvest work in the universal Church Nominal, the Laodicean period of the Church, well corroborates our expectations of what His work will be as outlined in His parables, etc.”³²

Further, in Volume 1 of his Studies in the Scriptures (p. 348), Pastor Russell comments in reference to Bible study: “... no question which you can raise need go without a sufficient answer... And be it known that no other system of theology even claims, or has ever attempted to harmonize in itself *every* statement of the Bible, yet nothing short of this can we claim for these views. This harmony not only with the Bible, but with the divine character and with sanctified common sense, must have arrested the attention of the conscientious reader already, and filled him with awe, as well as with hope and confidence. It is marvelous indeed, yet just what we should expect of the TRUTH, and of God’s infinitely wise and beneficent plan.”

He never claimed divine inspiration for his knowledge of the Scriptures, but he did claim being helped to an understanding of God’s plan. In the “Preface” to his book, Tabernacle Shadows, he writes: “The understanding of the subjects herein set forth would seem to have been heaven directed, ‘taught of God,’ at a time when the light was absolutely necessary to the full and clear presentation of the Plan of the Ages. And those who have been blessed by the helps furnished in this little book, ... may all esteem that they are also ‘taught of God;’ for be it noted that the author has sought to prove every point and every application by the Word of the Lord, and has taught nothing of himself; ...” He was interested that anyone willing should gain as much from the Scriptures as he.

It is amazing that during the 42 years of Pastor Russell’s Christian work he never directly or indirectly solicited money. No collection was ever taken at any meeting addressed by him or by any of his associates. He had faith that the Lord would supply sufficient money to carry on his work; that the work was the Lord’s, and not man’s. The fact that voluntary contributions were liberally made by many persons throughout the world proved his conclusions were correct.

He never took a vacation; he worked until the day of his death. He had hardly a sick day in his adult life. He devoted his private fortune entirely to the cause to which he gave his life. He received \$11.00 per month for his personal expenses. He died, leaving no estate whatsoever.

32 Zion’s Watch Tower, op. cit., January 15, 1912, pp. 28, 29

The most common misrepresentation of Pastor Russell and his works seems to be by the Jehovah's Witnesses (sect). They claim that he is their founder.³³ But it is interesting to note that almost all sources of information use the Jehovah's Witnesses as their source of information. Hudson does rightly say that Judge Rutherford substituted his own writings for those of Pastor Russell's, but he (Hudson) is often misleading.^{34 35} Additionally, several of the important doctrines taught by Pastor Russell are not taught by the Jehovah's Witnesses. The doctrine of the "ransom" and the future prospect for Adam is an important deviation from the Pastor's teachings. Their practice of an organizational hierarchy is in direct conflict with the Scriptures and with Pastor Russell's consistent teaching and practice. How can one organization claim someone as its pastor who does not follow his teachings nor study any of his writings? Finally, Pastor Russell died in 1916; the Witnesses came into being in 1931. Therefore, Pastor Russell could not have had anything to do with the founding of the modern movement. In fact, a man by the name of Judge Rutherford started the movement.³⁶

After Pastor Russell's death (in 1916) the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society began to rise as a hierarchy over the once independent congregations. Many refused to surrender their Christian liberty and here started the work of separation. As early as 1917 this exodus from the "new" Society began, and those who appreciated the wonderful harmony of the Bible as taught by Pastor Russell, are today known as Bible Students. They have continued to meet, as before, in local Bible study groups here and there, in various parts of the world, for the purpose of learning more about God's plan and will, that they might do that will. Thus, the name of Charles Taze Russell cannot be attached to the modern Jehovah Witness sect with any accuracy or truthfulness.

We have shown the life, stature and the works of a man undoubtedly used of God. His international attainments were recognized and felt. His movement was forceful and effective. The common people heard him willingly, anxiously, but the clergy felt threatened by him, not being able to disprove his teachings. His life was fully consecrated to the Lord and spent in His service. He is not remembered by most, because he preached unpopular truth and reproved popular error. But it seems obvious that he is a "giant" among those called of God to accomplish His purposes.

In any consideration of cause and effect dealing with human behavior, it is difficult to measure with any degree of accuracy the complete effect, ideas and concepts may have upon people at any one time. Often, if the stimulus is sharp or strong, the effect may continue for years, affecting several generations. John Lord, when writing in reference to

33 World Book, *op. cit.*, Vol. 11, p. 71.

34 Hudson, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

35 Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 12, p. 997.

36 Hudson, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

the Protestant Reformation, and particularly about Martin Luther, stated, "... the perpetuated ideas of the Reformation, which he [Luther] worked out in anguish and in study, and which we will not let die, but will cherish in our memories and our hearts, as among the most precious of the heirlooms of genius, susceptible of boundless application. And it is destined to grow brighter and richer, in spite of counter-reformation, Jesuitism, of Pagan Levites and Pagan lies, of boastful science and Epicurean pleasures, of material glories, of dissensions and sects and parties, as the might and majesty of ages coursing round the world regenerates institutions and nations, and proclaims the sovereignty of intelligence, the glory and the power of God."³⁷

And so it is with Charles Taze Russell. Many serious and consecrated Bible Students are still utilizing the collection of ideas, methods of study, and example of reverence for THE God set down by him three generations before them. His religious stands and ideas were heard with deep gratitude and joy by many, and conversely, was received with scorn and deep resentment by many more, especially the clergy and churchmen of his time. He shrugged off the attacks of his opposers because he believed that the time was due for these truths to be made known, and if he had not written them, God would have found some one else to do so.

Since Pastor Russell so often taught about God's plan for all mankind to reach its accomplishment during Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom, an excerpt from his Volume one (page 191-2) of Studies in the Scriptures—The Divine Plan of the Ages—is fitting:

"Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay—not even the fear of such things." "The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete. Revelation 21:4."

³⁷ Lord, *op. cit.*, Vol. 6, pp. 251-2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Edgar, John, The Great Pyramid Passages and Chambers, Glasgow: Bone & Hulley; 1924.
2. Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1961.
3. Harte, Bret, The Overland Monthly (February, 1909—October, 1916) Reprinted.
4. Horowitz, David, Editor, United Israel Bulletin, New York: United Israel World Union, March 1971.
5. Lord, John, Beacon Lights of History, New York: James Clarke and Company, 1884.
6. Russell, Charles Taze, The Photo-Drama of Creation, Brooklyn: International Bible Students Association, 1914.
7. Russell, Charles Taze, Studies in the Scriptures, Brooklyn: International Bible Students Association, 1886.
8. Russell, Charles Taze, Tabernacle Shadows, New Jersey: Dawn Publishing Company, 1946. (Originally published in 1881)
9. Russell, Charles Taze, Zion's Watch Tower, Pittsburgh: Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society, 1879-1916.
10. Swetnam, George, Where Else But Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh: Davis & Waide, Inc., 1958.
11. Wilson, Benjamin, The Emphatic Diaglott, (a translation from the original Greek Text of the New Testament), New York, Fowler and Wells Co., 1864.
12. World Book Encyclopedia, Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1970.