

## BIOGRAPHY

CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL, known the world over as Pastor Russell, author, lecturer and minister of the Gospel, was born at Pittsburgh, Pa., February 16, 1852; died October 31, 1916. He was the son of Joseph L. and Eliza Birney Russell, both of Scotch-Irish lineage. He was educated in the common schools and under private tutors. Author of "OBJECT AND MANNER OF OUR LORD'S RETURN," "FOOD FOR THINKING CHRISTIANS," "TABERNACLE SHADOWS," "THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES," "THE TIME IS AT HAND," "THY KINGDOM COME," "THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON," "THE ATONEMENT," "THE NEW CREATION," "WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT HELL," "SPIRITISM," "OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS," "THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION," et cetera, et cetera.

He was married in 1879 to Maria Frances Ackley. No children blessed this union. Seventeen years later they disagreed about the management of his journal and a separation followed.

Reared under the influence of Christian parents, at an early age he became interested in theology, uniting himself with the Congregational Church, and became active in local mission work. The doctrine of eternal torment of all mankind except the few elect became so abhorrent to him that at the age of seventeen he was a skeptic. He said, "A God that would use His power to create human beings whom He foreknew and predestinated should be eternally tormented, could be neither wise, just nor loving; His standard would be lower than that of many men." He continued to believe, however, in the existence of God, but was not willing to accept the commonly understood teachings as God's revelation of Himself to man. He turned his attention to the investigation of heathen religions, only to find all of these unsatisfactory.

## HIS TEACHINGS

Naturally of a reverential mind, desiring to worship and serve the true God, he reasoned, "All the creeds of Christendom claim to be founded on the Bible, and these are conflicting. Is it possible that the Bible has been misrepresented? It may not teach the terrible doctrine of eternal torment." Turning again to the Bible he determined to make a careful, systematic study of it without reference to creeds of men. As a result the remainder of his life was wholly devoted to teaching the Bible, writing and publishing religious books and papers, lecturing and proclaiming the message of Messiah's Kingdom. He was the greatest religious teacher since St. Paul, and did more than any other man of modern times to establish the faith of the people in the Scriptures.

He was not the founder of a new religion, and never made such claim. He revived the great truths taught by Jesus and the Apostles, and turned the light of the twentieth century upon these. He made no claim of a special revelation from God, but held that it was God's due time for the Bible to be understood; and that, being fully consecrated to the Lord and to His service, he was permitted to understand it. Because he devoted himself to the development of the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Lord was fulfilled in him: "For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." – 2 Peter 1:5-8.

He clearly taught and proved his teachings by the citation of Scriptural authority – that man does not possess an immortal soul, that he is a soul and is mortal; that the wages of sin is death – not eternal torment; that death came upon man as the just penalty for the violation of God's Law; that death means the destruction of man; that God, in His goodness, has provided the great Ransom-price whereby man may be delivered from the bondage of Sin and Death; that God's beloved Son, Jesus, became a man and grew to manhood's

estate, was put to death as a man and raised again from the dead a spirit-being, possessing the Divine nature; that by His death and resurrection Christ Jesus provided and produced the Ransom-price for man's deliverance and restoration; that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man; that every man in God's due time must, therefore, have a fair trial for life, and to this end there shall be a resurrection of all the dead; that Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven and must come the second time; that the period of time elapsing between the First and the Second Coming of the Lord is devoted to the election of the members of the Body of Christ, taken from amongst men; that the requirements for election to that exalted position are, full faith in the shed blood of Jesus as the Ransom-price, a full consecration to do the Father's will, and a faithful continuance in obedience to the Father's will even unto death; that all who thus are consecrated and begotten of the Holy Spirit and are overcomers shall have part in the Chief Resurrection, and be exalted to positions in the Heavenly Kingdom of God and participate with Christ Jesus in His Millennial Reign for the blessing of all the families of the earth; that during the thousand-year reign of Christ all of the dead shall be awakened, and given a fair and impartial trial for life or death; that under said Reign the wilfully disobedient shall be everlastingly destroyed, while those obedient to the righteous rule of Christ shall be fully restored to human perfection of body, mind and character; that during this Millennial Reign the earth shall be brought to a state of Edenic [R5998 : page 357] Paradise and made fit as a place habitable for perfect man; that man, fully restored to perfection, will inhabit the beautiful earth in all the ages to come.

## **HIS WORK**

Seeing that God has 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. He never took a vacation; he worked until the day of his death.

Like other Christians he was looking for the Second Coming of Christ. Between 1872-6 he discovered that the Scriptures clearly teach that the Lord would not return in a body of flesh, but would return as a spirit being, invisible to human eyes, and that His second presence was due in the autumn of 1874. This led to the publishing of a booklet entitled, "The Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return," which had a phenomenal circulation.

Many students of the Bible throughout the United States and Canada responded to the information derived from that book, and his correspondence became voluminous. Realizing the necessity of keeping the Truth before the minds of those who had begun to investigate, in 1879 he began the publication of THE WATCH TOWER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE, and was its sole Editor to the time of his death. This journal is issued semi-monthly; it never publishes advertisements, but is devoted exclusively to religious topics. Among the English speaking people in the United States, Canada and Great Britain, its semi-monthly circulation is 45,000 copies. It is also published in German, French, Swedish, Dano-Norwegian and Polish, reaching a large number of subscribers in America and Europe.

He was President of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY from its organization in 1884 until his death. He was also President of the PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION, organized in 1909, and the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, incorporated in London, in 1913, both of the latter corporations being adjuncts to the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY. Through these religious corporations, as well as by word of mouth, he promulgated the Gospel of Messiah's Kingdom. He was the author of the following publications, issued between the years 1881 and 1914, each having phenomenal circulation, as given below:

FOOD FOR THINKING CHRISTIANS	1,450,000
TABERNACLE SHADOWS	1,000,000
DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES	4,817,000
THE TIME IS AT HAND	1,657,000
THY KINGDOM COME	1,578,000
BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON	464,000
THE ATONEMENT	445,000
THE NEW CREATION	423,000
WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT HELL	3,000,000

He was also the author of WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT SPIRITISM, OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS, et cetera, et cetera. He was the author of the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, which had been exhibited prior to his death to more than nine million persons. He wrote and published the SCENARIO of the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, which has had a very wide circulation. His publications were translated into thirty-five different languages. At the same time he was Pastor of more than 1,200 congregations of Bible Students, in different parts of the world. These he visited and taught as often as possible.

He organized and conducted a Lecture Bureau which constantly employed seventy Bible lecturers, who traveled and delivered lectures on the Scriptures. He organized and managed an auxiliary lecture bureau of seven hundred men who gave a portion of their time to lecturing on Bible teachings. Each year he wrote practically all of the copy for the BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY, the annual distribution of which amounted to approximately fifty million copies.

His weekly sermons were handled by a newspaper syndicate. More than 2,000 newspapers, with a combined circulation of fifteen

million readers, at one time published his discourses. All told, more than 4,000 newspapers published these sermons.

*The Continent*, a publication whose editor often opposed Pastor Russell, once published the following significant statement concerning him:

"His writings are said to have 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."

## **HARVEST WORK**

Pastor Russell adhered closely to the teachings of the Scriptures. He believed and taught that we are living in the time of the second presence of our Lord, and that His presence dates from 1874; that since that time we have been living in the "time of the end" – the "end of the Age," during which the Lord has been conducting His great Harvest work; that, in harmony with the Lord's own statement, this Harvest work is separating true Christians designated as "wheat," from merely professing Christians, designated as "tares," and gathering the true saints into the Kingdom of the Lord. It is here interesting to note that Jesus said, "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over His Household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing! Verily I say unto you that He shall make him ruler over all His goods." Thousands of the readers of Pastor Russell's writings believe that he filled the office of "that faithful and wise servant," and that his great work was giving to the Household of Faith meat in due season. His modesty and humility precluded him from openly claiming this title, but he admitted as much in private conversation.

For a more detailed account of his work, reference is made to THE WATCH TOWER of June 1st, 1916.

In 1910 Pastor Russell visited Palestine and Russia. He there orally delivered lectures to thousands of orthodox Jews on the regathering of Jews to Palestine. In 1911 he was one of a committee of seven who made a journey around the world and especially examined into the conditions of missionary work in Japan, China, Korea and India. On the same occasion he again visited the Jews in Palestine and Galatia, explaining to them that the prophecies teach that the Jews at an early date will again be established in Palestine. On his return to America he was given a great ovation at the New York City Hippodrome by thousands of Jews, his discourse on this occasion being published by Hebrew papers both in America and in Europe.

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 that his conclusions were correct.

He devoted his private fortune entirely to the cause to which he gave his life. He received the nominal sum of \$11.00 per month for his personal expenses. He died, leaving no estate whatsoever.

Thus closed the career of a most remarkable man. He was loved most by those who knew him best.

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