



When Pastor Russell
Died

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DAWN BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 521167
Longwood, FL 32752-1167
1-800-234-3296
www.dawnbible.com



WHEN PASTOR RUSSELL DIED

ON OCTOBER 31, 1916, on a railroad train eastward bound through Texas, Pastor Charles Taze Russell, familiarly known to thousands of his brethren in Christ the world over as “Brother” Russell, passed away. The news of his death spread rapidly and, for a time, those who knew and loved him for his work’s sake could think and speak of little else as they met one another except that “Brother Russell is dead.” Somehow many of us felt that Brother Russell would remain with the church in the flesh as long as there was work to do this side the veil, and it was difficult to grasp the hard fact that now he was gone.

Pastor Russell began his ministry as a very young man. Raised a Presbyterian, he took to heart the teachings of that denomination, particularly the doctrine of eternal torture for all who die unconverted. So thoroughly did he believe this superstition that at times he went up and down the streets of his home city with chalk in hand, writing on the sidewalks special warnings to all sinners. Later he began to reason matters out for himself and concluded that a God of love would not torment unbelievers; but, believing (or supposing) that the torment theory was taught in the Bible, he began to doubt that it was inspired by God.

He then made a study of various heathen religions but without finding anything to satisfy his mind and heart.

Later, in the Lord's providence, he learned that much of the misunderstanding concerning future punishment for sin was due to mistranslations of the Hebrew word **sheol** and the Greek words **hades** and **Gehenna**. It was the improper translation of these words in certain scriptures which had made the Bible appear to teach that God would torment sinners forever. Now, Brother Russell learned that Paul's statement, "The wages of sin is death," is really true—that death, not torment, is the penalty for sin.

Then he began a study of the prophecies. Others joined him. They found that a mistranslation of the Greek word **parousia** had led to a misunderstanding of the subject of Christ's return; just as mistranslations of **sheol**, **hades**, and **Gehenna** had led to error regarding the penalty for sin. It was discovered that **parousia** means presence, and not "coming" and that, when used in the prophecies of the second advent, it refers to the time when Christ is present, not to when he will come. This proved to be the key which unlocked the prophecies of the second advent, and it was soon apparent from the light then enjoyed that the scriptural date 1874 marked the beginning of the second presence.

In the early seventies, Brother Russell and several others studied the Scriptures together for over two years. Telling of this experience later, he said the most outstanding truth of God's Word which came to light as a result of this long period of study was that the return of Christ is for the restoring of the human race to life and not to destroy the earth as commonly believed in church circles. In relating this he cited that wonderful statement by Peter recorded in Acts 3:19-21 concerning the "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

The Spirit of the Movement

It was this grand and ennobling truth of “restitution” for a sin-cursed and dying race that proved largely to be the inspiration of the “truth” movement which was inaugurated and fostered by Brother Russell. For the first time since the death of the apostles, this real essence of the Gospel was lifted free from the traditional rubbish under which it had been buried and was trumpeted throughout the earth.

Church leaders of all denominations were shocked that anyone would dare to preach what they considered to be a “second chance,” forgetting that the vast majority of humanity had died without having had any chance. So long had they been accustomed to circumscribing the grace of God and magnifying his vengeance that their narrowed vision of truth and their resultant shrunken hearts would not permit them to believe that God could possibly bestow his grace and blessing upon others besides themselves. As a result of putting the fires out in hell and portraying God as loving and ready and anxious to bestow his blessings upon those who had died in ignorant unbelief, Brother Russell became a hated object of attack and persecution by nearly all Christendom.

But that which called forth the cry of “Heresy!!” from his enemies warmed the hearts of those who responded to the original, and now revived, Gospel of love—the true Gospel of Christ. The word “restitution” was almost a magic one, opening up a new vista of hope and inspiration. Men and women of all denominations responded. Atheists, whose largeness of heart belied the creedal god of torment, rejoiced to find the true God of the Bible. Regardless of former beliefs or disbeliefs, those

who “came into the truth” were, by the sheer grandeur and beauty of the message, imbued with a determination to spread the good news far and wide.

“I love to tell the story, it did so much for me” is the way the “truth people” felt about it. And what a grand story it was! Truly did the poet say, “It satisfies my longings as nothing else would do,” Brother Russell himself once said, and very truthfully so, that if the Gospel of Christ as embodied in the Divine plan does not satisfy one’s longings, there must be something the matter with his longings.

The heavenly calling of the church became more understandable in the light of restitution blessings for the world. In fact, every phase of Divine truth radiated a new and better meaning when viewed in the light of restitution. We might almost say that without restitution the study of any part of the Bible merely leads up a blind alley and leaves the student without an answer to his questions. Restitution proved to be the common denominator of all the problems of Divine revelation. Without it there came endless controversies, contradictions, and chaos; with it there were found harmony and satisfaction and an incentive which could not be denied to tell the whole world these blessed tidings.

The hope of restitution for the world of mankind lifted the Gospel out of the realm of selfishness into the sphere of love. Those who “came into the truth” had no further use for that puny and selfish conception of Christianity embodied in the traditional prayer, “God bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more.” They knew now, and how they rejoiced in that knowledge, that God’s plan calls for the blessing of “all the families of the earth.”

For more than forty years this glorious Gospel of the grace of God was heralded forth by Brother Russell in every conceivable way. Increasing thousands labored with him and rejoiced with him. Together they scattered the message by printed page and from the platform, through the public press and the Photo Drama of Creation, and over the garden fence. Those who rejoiced in the restored Gospel of Christ were often referred to as “Russellites,” and sometimes “Millennial Dawnists,” but it made little difference what the world called them, for they knew that “God had called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

The Promptings of Love

The blessed light of truth, made radiant by the hope of restitution blessings for all the families of the earth, revealed the love of God as nothing else could do; and it inspired love in the hearts of those who believed. Divine love is an unselfish principle that thinks of others and reaches out to bless them. It was inevitable, therefore, that the truth movement should be characterized by a fervency of the missionary spirit.

Brother Russell couldn't keep the truth to himself. He devoted his personal fortune to spreading the message and used up all his vitality of mind and body for the same purpose. He felt that he could never do enough. The creedal gods were so mean and contemptible that he could not be satisfied short of devoting his all in showing forth the praises of the good God of love whom he found revealed in the sacred Word. And all who came into the truth felt the same way about it.

It was not surprising, therefore, that forty years of missionary effort by a group who were thus inspired by the

love of God resulted in thousands accepting the message and becoming “truth people.” Nearly a hundred thousand subscribed to Brother Russell’s semimonthly magazine, *The Watch Tower*. Twelve hundred local groups of Bible Students elected him as their Pastor. Some of these groups numbered more than a thousand, many of them hundreds. The Brooklyn and London Tabernacle congregations were outstanding among these.

But now Brother Russell was dead! That he died while still active in the missionary field did not alter the fact that he no longer could be the pace-setter for the zealous workers who loved the truth they received through him and who wanted to lay down their lives to give it to others. He was dead, and the brethren were stunned. What now?

Tests Begin

For a time after Brother Russell passed beyond the veil, most of the brethren held strictly to the truth as it came from his pen; although from the start it became apparent that matters of minor importance were engaging the attention of those who were taking a leading part in continuing the work. Early in his ministry, Brother Russell surveyed the general framework of the truth and concluded that, in order to treat all of its phases in the detail needed to clarify the message and to separate the truth from the superstitions of the Dark Ages, a set of seven books would be needed. In the seventh he expected to deal primarily with the Book of Revelation.

He died without writing the seventh book which he had contemplated. This left the way open for speculative minds to go to work, and they did. In a remarkably short time a “Seventh Volume” was published with the claim that it was the posthumous work of Brother Russell. It

created a stir among the brethren, resulting in divisions in many places. It was not truly the posthumous work of Brother Russell, and in some ways it was contrary to both the letter and the spirit of his teachings.

It was made a test of fellowship in many ecclesias; it was one of the first major issues to arise which diverted attention from that glorious and all-important theme of the true Gospel. The “Seventh Volume” itself did not deny the doctrine of restitution, nor any of the other doctrines of the truth, but the attention which was focused upon its speculations tended to take the eyes and hearts of the brethren away from that main theme which had satisfied their longings as nothing else had done. It marked the beginning of an era among the brethren in which the trend was to relegate first things to the background and to focus the attention of the consecrated upon side issues of speculative and nonessential theories.

The story of the “Seventh Volume” would not be complete should we fail to mention that, in a remarkably short time after it was published, it was virtually rejected by the publishers. It is well nigh impossible to believe, yet true, that whereas when this book was first published those who did not accept it were condemned and disfellowshipped, within a few years those who did accept it were disfellowshipped.

The repudiation of the “Seventh Volume” by its publishers was quite in keeping with a general development which became manifest about 1924. At that time there began a departure from the truth, as the brethren had learned and proved it under the leadership of Brother Russell. As it was claimed that the “Seventh Volume” was written by Brother Russell, it was but natural that

it should be discarded. Eventually, all Brother Russell's writings, including the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, passed out of print.

The departures from pure truth were slight at first. Many did not discern them; and many of those who did consoled themselves with the thought that this trend would not continue. However, as each item of truth was set aside by The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and an erroneous substitute put in its place, some withdrew their support from the general effort. This went on year after year, with more and more of the "old-timers" leaving the original organization as its teachings departed further and further from what they were when Brother Russell died.

The claim was made that the brethren were progressing in the light, a light which was to shine more and more unto the perfect day! But was this claim true? Let us see. As we have noted, the great theme which made the truth so marvelous and so far in advance of anything taught by churchianity, was that of restitution—the glorious Gospel which was spoken by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began. The practical, everyday meaning of this was that those who believed and rejoiced in it, could exercise hope for those who did not accept it in this life.

New Light—Old Darkness

When that terrible pall of darkness settled down over Christianity following the death of the apostles, one of its densest aspects was the humanly conceived limit which was placed upon the grace of God, a limit which said that salvation is restricted to those who believe before they

gasp their last breath of this fitful and condemned life. And even worse than this was the sectarian construction which was put upon that word “believe.” To the Catholics it meant to believe the teachings of the Catholic Church. To the various Protestant groups it meant the acceptance of their particular interpretation of truth and how to practice it. To all and sundry it meant, “Come with us, and do it before you die, or you will be forever lost”—or at least suffer for hundreds of years in a terrible purgatory of torment, as the Catholic Church teaches.

This concept of the Gospel replaced love with fear as an incentive to believe and obey, and for this there is no Scriptural authorization. There isn’t a hint anywhere in the Bible that the opportunity to obtain salvation through Christ is limited to this present life. How we rejoiced in the largeness of the truth: that it enabled us to look with sympathy upon those who could not see as we do and to rejoice that when the time of their visitation comes, they would have a more favorable opportunity to believe than is now possible when Satan is abroad to deceive and blind the minds of those who believe not. Yes, we were proud of the truth! With Paul we could say, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.”—Rom. 1:16

But what happened? Well, to start with, for example, through the “channel” there came a new interpretation of the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. And the new interpretation was wrong. There’s no question about that. But more important than the erroneous interpretation itself was the fact that it was a step into darkness because it began to take away that glorious hope of blessing for all the families of the earth. It hinted strongly that most of the ministers of denominational churches were going into the “second death.”

As we first learned the truth, the “second death” was merely one of its doctrines, a necessary one, to be sure, but somehow we did not think too much about it. We knew that all incorrigible sinners would go into the second death, but it hadn’t occurred to us that those who are unable to see the truth as a result of our stammering, bungling way of explaining it to them, and because there are a hundred other voices calling from other directions were incorrigible sinners.

So this comparatively obscure doctrine of the second death suddenly came to the fore, and as the new flashes of alleged light increased (?) in brilliance the brethren were told of more and more who were going into the second death. Among the classes for which there was no hope at all was the one made up of those who did not accept the “new” light from what was claimed to be the Lord’s exclusive channel of Divine truth. To leave this “channel,” therefore, was looked upon as the blackest of all sins which a mere mortal could commit. Those who did so were considered a part of the “man of sin,” the “son of perdition,” and certain to be punished with the second death.

Darkness for Light

As we have said, according to these teachings, ever increasing numbers seemed to be in line for the second death. This popular trend of so-called increasing light continued until it was discovered that so many were going into the second death that there wouldn’t be enough people left of those who have lived and died to fill the earth. So, the next flash of “light” revealed that those who accept these teachings, and work hard to promulgate them, will live through the “time of trouble,” get married, and raise large families—very large,

indeed—and thus through them will the earth be filled.

The Scriptures, of course, do not teach any such absurd notion as this, but because so many people had been consigned to the second death something had to be done about it, and the advancement of this fantastic theory of “filling the earth” seemed like a logical thing to do. Like every other false doctrine, it was “proved” by the use of remote Scripture texts improperly associated and woven into a pattern of belief which was naught else than a “cunningly devised fable.”

This substitute for restitution was about the final step backward into the fundamental viewpoint of all nominal churchianity. That blessed theme of God’s mercy and grace, that melody of love which had as its chorus the blessing of all the families of the earth, was scarcely heard in her any more at all. As in Babylon, fear took the place of love and became the driving power of all their activities; and fear was implemented with the threat of the second death to all who dared question the new “light.”

With this “advancement” accomplished, the teachings of the Watch Tower relative to hope beyond the grave were in principle no different from those of all Christendom except in one respect; that is, the use of the “second death” as a whip to keep the workers in line instead of eternal torture. Their teachings, of course differed from those of the churches in a hundred ways so far as details were concerned. So do all the churches differ from one another; but the final result of their teachings is the same; namely, believe us now, or be lost. It is into this gross darkness that many who once rejoiced in the truth gradually were led. The theme song of restitution for the condemned race no longer stirred their hearts.

Many Wonderful Works

The “zeal of God’s house” engendered by love, remained with thousands of the Bible Students following the death of Brother Russell. But the scene gradually changed and the inspiration of the movement was transformed. Instead of love and the sheer joy of telling the world about a God of love, “great works” of one kind or another kept the brethren whipped up to a frenzy of misguided zeal and self-sacrificing devotion to a false cause. An intermingling of fear and hate was the backdrop for these scenes of activity—fear of the second death if not faithful, and hate for those who did not accept the message, particularly for Roman Catholics.

Yes, many “great works” were attempted: the “Elisha work”; “calling out the prisoners” from Babylon; “building the temple wall;” gathering the “Jonadabs;” casting up the “highway of holiness;” offering “the waters of the river of life” to the people; etc. It was truly remarkable how quickly each one of these gigantic tasks was undertaken and then forgotten, while the campaigners went on to the next item in hand.

The “new light” slogan found an effective place in the general furor of excitement. The “channel” advocates moved on unabashed from one viewpoint to another, totally disregarding, and at times, it would seem, almost glorying in their ability to contradict today what they had taught yesterday. In 1923, an article was published by these brethren urging the friends to adhere to the teachings of Brother Russell, warning that those who sought to lead the brethren away from these teachings were wolves in

sheep's clothing. Not long after, they taught that those who did **not** depart from Brother Russell's teachings, but insisted upon adhering to them, were of the "evil servant" class and certain of going into the second death if they did not repent.

When the "Elisha" work was at its height, it was announced that those engaging in it were blessed with a "double portion of the Spirit;" but in 1927 it was announced that the church no longer possessed the Holy Spirit at all.

In 1921 restitution blessings were said to be for all men; in 1934 this was denied; and in 1939 "elective elders" were derided for continuing to believe in restitution for the world.

Even the fundamental doctrine of the ransom was tampered with. For a time after Brother Russell's death it was still taught that Jesus died for all, including Adam; that as "all in Adam die," so "all in Christ shall be made alive." In 1939 it was "discovered" that Adam was not redeemed by Christ, hence will not be raised from the dead. And there was some cleverly false reasoning in connection with this change. It was said that the reason Adam was not redeemed by Christ was that he was a wilful sinner. Those who accepted this "new light" seemed to overlook the fact that if he had been a wilful sinner he would not have needed to be redeemed.

Samples of other and less important changes might be briefly noted: In 1930, Nebuchadnezzar represented Satan; in 1936, he represented God. In 1923, character development was a work of God; in 1927, a delusion of the devil. In 1924, true religion was of God; in 1937, all religion was a snare of the devil and a racket. In 1918,

the church was not under the new covenant; in 1934, the church was under the new covenant.

We might go on almost endlessly citing these contradictions, but no particular purpose would be accomplished by wearying the reader with more. To err is human, and no student and teacher of the Scriptures should be held up to ridicule simply because he discovers that he has made a mistake and wishes to correct it. But in this case no mistakes were acknowledged nor from their standpoint could they have been made. It was claimed that God was their teacher, and God couldn't make a mistake. One can't help wondering, though, what god it was; for, to say the least, he was a very changeable one; whereas of the true God it is written, "I am the Lord, I change not."—Mal. 3:6

But we should not lose sight of the main issue involved. The important consideration is not so much that this and that item of truth was changed, or that various types of work were attempted. The main thing is that in all this maze of interpretation and misinterpretation, of fanciful speculations and weird theories, of unauthorized and abortive campaigns of great works, and of fear engendered by threats of the second death, the melodious theme song of God's love, as it formerly resounded from his plan to bless all the families of the earth, was lost.

With this loss, thousands of the brethren the world over were left in much the same position as the Hebrews in Babylon, of whom it is written that they "wept when they remembered Zion." (Psalm 137:1) The truth was lost! The Watch Tower had taken the position of all other groups who hold out no hope to men unless they "flee to the organization" for safety and protection. These friends

are still earnest, sincere, and zealous. Would that all of us had the same degree of zeal; but the pure truth is no longer with them. They have some details of truth. They can define the soul; they believe in one God instead of three; they have a general knowledge that we are in the end of the age; but their central theme is not of God. They are laying down their lives bearing witness to a message which, according to their own viewpoint, is doing nothing for the masses who do not receive it except to make them liable to the second death. Thus has the sacred flame of truth—that inspiring truth of God’s love revealed by ransom and restitution—been extinguished in the minds of many.

Standing Fast

Having traced this main detour from that great teaching which was the very lifeblood of the truth movement under the leadership of Brother Russell, let us now go back again to the time of his death and note other developments. Not all Bible Students remained in one group. Far from it. Some ceased their cooperation almost immediately upon Brother Russell’s death. Others “left” in connection with the “Seventh Volume” incident; and through the years, for one reason or another, other brethren withdrew their support from the “Society.”

Among these many who did not choose to remain in the “channel,” various “movements” developed, each with a different viewpoint of the needs of the times. One had its inception in the northwestern part of the United States and Canada and, while it found adherents here and there, it never became organized outside of that limited area. Those who became associates of this movement were noble, earnest, and self-sacrificing Christians.

And they were good students of the Bible, too. They had learned the truth and could give a reason for their hope. They refused to compromise the truth and its application to their Christian lives. Their stand embodied also the refusal to buy war bonds and in other ways to cooperate with the war effort during the first World War.

The “Seventh Volume” also was involved in their conception of loyalty to principle and truth. These dear brethren accepted “The Finished Mystery” as the very book which Pastor Russell intended to write but didn’t. They believed that it was the posthumous work of Brother Russell. So, when those who published the Seventh Volume repudiated it, they stood fast in its support; and some of these brethren still do.

This movement, as a coordinated effort, was short-lived. The brethren tried to work together without having any work to do, and the inevitable result was disintegration. And why did they have no work to do? It was because they decided that the harvest work of the Gospel age had ended with the death of Brother Russell, hence that a public proclamation of the truth would no longer be pleasing to God.

This was an unfortunate viewpoint because it robbed the truth of much of its joy-inspiring power. With the missionary incentive banished by speculative interpretations, the brethren found outlet for their energies in picking doctrinal and other flaws with one another, with the result that divisions and subdivisions became the order of the day. They stood fast in the truth, all right; but, by holding it exclusively for themselves, they lost much of its spirit. The theme song of love, the voice of God, ceased to be a power inspiring them to lay down their lives that others might

have an opportunity to learn that God intends to bless all the families of the earth. They loved the truth, but forgot that God had called them into his marvelous light in order that they might show forth his praises by telling it to others. They forgot that their worthiness to share in the blessing of all the families of the earth during the next age depended upon their interest in all the families of the earth now.

With many of these, however, the zeal of God's house continued as a flame that could not be quenched. The fact that leaders said the work was done could not and did not quench that flame. It burned on, and today is again finding expression in the joyful work of telling the whole world these blessed tidings.

Watching and Waiting

There was still another general effort among the brethren, independent of the main group. A paper was published, and pilgrims were sent from class to class to comfort and encourage the brethren. Inasmuch as the date 1914 had come and gone, Brother Russell had died, and there seemed to be no facilities for publishing the truth, there was a general feeling among the brethren that there wasn't much in particular they could do except to strengthen that which remained.

True, **The Divine Plan of the Ages** was republished; small quantities of tracts were printed; but the missionary spirit among these dear brethren seemed at a low ebb. Certainly the brethren as a whole were not especially urged to be active in the promulgation of the truth. A general pastoral, or shepherding work, was deemed proper and essential; but it soon developed that a mere handful of brethren were doing this work for the friends generally,

who were largely in the position of laity waiting to be served.

One of the great features of the truth as taught by Brother Russell was that every consecrated child of God is a servant, anointed to preach the glad tidings. In one master stroke this precious doctrine did away with the separation of the church into clergy and laity. "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren," was emphasized and re-emphasized by Brother Russell. (Matt 23:8) And to make this viewpoint effective, Brother Russell was continually planning work for the brethren to do, urging that they all feel a responsibility toward the truth and its proclamation. The concluding chapter of **The Divine Plan of the Ages** is an example of this. A large portion of the **Daily Heavenly Manna** comments furnish us with another good example. Brother Russell was our Pastor, and a faithful one, not alone because he ministered to us, but also because he made it possible for all to participate in this ministry of the truth, and urged all to do so as ability and opportunity afforded.

We doubt if any of the brethren, immediately following his death, actually held a different view from this. But the peculiar combination of circumstances created an attitude of mind which caused it to be partially overlooked. Two or three years of comparative inactivity in this respect on the part of a group of brethren might not result in any serious spiritual decline. But time went on, and 1914 as a date in prophecy was farther and farther in the past. The church was still this side of the veil. These facts were dwelt upon, and reasons for them sought. A new chronology was found, setting 1933 as the full end of the Gentile Times. The importance of Brother Russell's ministry was minimized. Church writers were appealed

to for help. The modernistic viewpoint of the relative unimportance of doctrines was wrong, the comparatively small number of little classes throughout the country which formed the background of this movement began to disintegrate.

A high standard of righteousness for the saints was held up by these brethren. Indeed, they specialized along the lines of faith, prayer, and personal holiness. There was a slight tendency, as a matter of fact, to feel that Brother Russell had been somewhat negligent along this line. Thought and language of godly men of the past were introduced. But this specializing of the ministry did not hold the brethren together; nor did it provide them with the incentive to lay down their lives in the service of the truth. It was only a part of the truth, and not that part of the truth, either, which was the very life of the truth movement. Character development and devotionism are fundamental in the Christian life, but these were not the truths which called the Lord's people out of Babylon in this harvest time at the end of the age. All the churches enjoy the blessings of formalistic devotionism and an assumed character development, but only those enlightened with present truth enjoy that understanding of the plan of God which sets them on fire with zeal to proclaim the glad tidings.

Now, when the great fundamental doctrines of the Divine plan are spoken of as the mere milk of the Word, and the brethren are taught to believe that they should have progressed beyond the discussion of them in their meetings, and that proclaiming them to the world is of very incidental importance, it is not difficult to understand what happened, and why. With the true doctrines rarely discussed, false doctrines began to creep in among the

brethren. Church conceptions concerning the second coming of Christ were taken up by some, and by these the second presence of Christ was denied. The church's share in the better sacrifices of this age—the second phase of the sin-offering—began to be questioned. Eventually it became difficult to find an ecclesia which was not more or less divided in sentiment concerning many of the really vital and important features of the truth.

This condition of things did not develop overnight, nor were all the brethren involved in it. The development was gradual and subtle. The circumstances arising out of the disappointment of 1914, and the death of Brother Russell, created just the attitude of mind that made it possible. In recounting the facts here, it is not with the thought of placing the blame, nor to ridicule, nor to discourage, but to diagnose an unhealthy condition with the hope of discovering what is needed as a remedy to restore spiritual health.

And as we view this particular situation the thing which speaks the loudest to us is something which is not in the picture at all. It is conspicuous by its absence. Whether holding to the truth, or trifling with error; whether possessing a faith which can remove mountains, or beginning to doubt; whether coming oft to the throne of grace, or depending upon our own strength to overcome; if we have lost sight of the fundamental fact that as Christians we are called to be the “light of the world,” the “ambassadors for Christ” to hold forth the Word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, we have missed the point of it all.—Matt 5:14; II Cor. 5:20; Phil. 2:15

Satan is the prince of darkness, and one of his chief interests is to prevent the light of truth from reaching the

people. He is not limited to one method of doing this. As we have seen, some of the brethren were zealous to work for the Lord. Come what may, they were determined to continue active in the service of God, even though Brother Russell had died. Not being able to quench their zeal, Satan found it possible to pollute the stream of truth as it went forth. Having accomplished this, he is not concerned how active they may now be.

With other brethren another method was necessary. With them it was impossible to substitute error for truth. Discovering this, Satan's next move—and it succeeded for a time—was to convince these dear ones that God would not be pleased for them to continue publishing the truth. Their great sense of loyalty to truth made them adhere to this alleged truth with such tenacity that they ceased all witness work over a period of years. Again Satan scored!

Special Servants

Once more we go back to the time of Brother Russell's death to pick up another thread of Bible Student's history. The death of such a faithful and widely used servant of God—"that faithful and wise servant"—as Brother Russell was bound to leave an empty place in the hearts of the brethren. With many, the blessedness of the truth itself filled this void, and they were able to sing from the heart:

Send out thy light and truth, O Lord;

Let THEM our leaders be

But not all were able thus to differentiate between a leader and the truth which he brought to them, so when the leader was gone they sought another. And we are not surprised to find that there was no dearth of those who were willing and anxious to accommodate. The evidence

of the Scriptures is that when God really chooses a servant for a special work he inspires him with a vision or understanding of the work to be done, and he is more concerned with that work than with proving that God has especially chosen him.

It was so with Brother Russell. It was difficult to get the Pastor to admit that he thought the Lord had specially chosen him. He knew that God had revealed the truth to him, and it was such a glorious message that he couldn't stop short of devoting all that he had toward its proclamation. And God, by his providences, provided Brother Russell with the ability, the opportunity, and all the other circumstances which made it possible for him to be "that servant" in this end of the age. The best that the remainder of us can do is to continue heralding forth the truth which God gave to us through him.

But when Brother Russell died there were those who thought God had appointed them to be special servants in the church, and that they were therefore the successors to Brother Russell. Have any of the individuals who have claimed the status of special servant in the church to succeed Brother Russell carried on with the work of Brother Russell? NO, not one! One and all of these have promptly set forth some new set of teachings. Not all have denied what Brother Russell taught. Some, indeed, have ridden into the confidence of the brethren on the platform of loyalty to Brother Russell, even going so far as to claim that they are the only ones who are loyal to the teachings of Brother Russell.

But again there is a conspicuous absence of that spirit and viewpoint of Brother Russell pertaining to our use of the truth, our privilege of being the light of the world.

To an extent, some of these have encouraged a public ministry, but have circumscribed it with vain philosophy concerning the place to be occupied in God's plan by those who become interested. Almost without exception these special leaders arbitrarily taught that the door to the high calling was closed about the time they claimed to have been appointed of the Lord to their exclusive position in the church.

So amidst the uncertainties of speculation; weird interpretations; self-assertive claims; and the attempt to divide the Lord's people into groups of the spiritual and less spiritual, the heavenly class and the earthly class, the "great company" and the "little flock;" God's theme song of love—the restitution blessing of all the families of the earth—was again relegated to the background, and that feature of the real work of God, as Brother Russell conceived it and promoted it and for which he died, was neglected.

We have been speaking particularly in this connection of attempts at exclusive leadership among the brethren which resulted in some measure of cooperation in the sense that each secured a few followers. While on this phase of the narrative, it might not be amiss to mention other manifestations of this same complex which have accomplished next to nothing. We mention this in order to clarify a very erroneous viewpoint held by many of the brethren, and promoted by a few, namely, the alleged tremendous number of "divisions" there are among the Bible Students.

This viewpoint of what some refer to as the "fifty-seven varieties" of brethren has come about by the fact that individual brethren here and there throughout the world develop a pet theory of doctrine or of the interpretation

of prophecy, go to a local printer and have it printed, and then send it out over their names to all the brethren whose addresses they possess or can acquire. Sometimes these messages are mailed under the name of "Associated Bible Students," sometimes as representing an ecclesia. But usually merely from an individual.

Many brethren when receiving literature of this kind erroneously conclude that each new circular letter and each new pamphlet or book represents another division among the brethren. This is not so! We know of one instance where the name "Associated Bible Students" is used on literature, yet it is but a lone individual who sends out the mimeographed sheets which carry his speculations on prophecy.

This is an important fact to remember. One of Satan's tactics is to frighten and discourage us. He would like to have us believe that all the Bible Students are divided; that no two of them believe alike; that there are indeed "fifty-seven varieties," that most of them are going out of the truth; and that we alone are remaining faithful to the Lord. If he can induce us to believe this, it will be easy for us to conclude that there is nothing more that can be done in the service of God; and concluding this, we won't do any more.

What about these who publish their new theories of truth? Shall we condemn them to the second death? No! Shall we say they have no right to do it? No! Shall we spend time reading everything that is sent to us? That is for each individual Christian to decide for himself. The thing we should all discern is the relative importance of these unproved and highly speculative theories as compared with the great fundamental truths of the Divine plan. Do

they help us to understand our God better, to love him more, and to show forth his praises more faithfully? If the glorious truth of the Divine plan continues to satisfy our longings as nothing else can do, well, nothing else can do it, that's all, so we won't be wasting time filling our minds with that which dissatisfies rather than satisfies.

Divisions

How many divisions are there among the Bible Students? That is a difficult question to answer, for not all interpret the term division as meaning exactly the same thing. Let us think of it from the standpoint of ecclesias and the viewpoints of ecclesias. When we do this, we do not find so many divisions as some might expect. In city after city throughout America, as well as other parts of the world, there are but the two groups—those who are with the original organization and those who are not.

In a few places there are small ecclesias who follow their favorite leader; but only a very small minority of the brethren is involved. At a national convention of one such group there were but thirty-five in attendance. In a very few localities we find a small group of brethren who meet by themselves because of differing views on the covenants and related subjects. But here again the number involved is very small. Here and there today, even as was the case in the time of Brother Russell, we find two classes in a city, both groups believing essentially the same things, but divided because of conflicting personalities.

These conditions, of course, are lamentable; but God's harvest work in the earth has not failed, as some would have us believe. It is a tribute to the power of the truth, and

to the depth of consecration on the part of God's people, that after so many years of severe trial, through confusion and disappointment, thousands of Bible Students are still aglow with zeal for the Lord and for that blessed meat in due season—the truth which was served to the household of faith by “that servant.”

Revival

One could suppose, when noting what occurred among Bible Students when Pastor Russell died, that despite the vast scope of the harvest conducted under his supervision, made possible by the marvelous spirit of zeal and self-sacrifice which consumed him and the brethren generally during that period, it had failed of lasting results. But this would be an incorrect viewpoint. Time is an important element in God's arrangements. What we see today may not be true of tomorrow. God changes not, but in developing and testing his people he permits them to pass through varying experiences in order that their faith might be tested and their determination to serve him faithfully crystallized.

The years following Brother Russell's death have been a period of special testing. It has been a fiery furnace for all the Lord's people, and we should be careful not to misjudge any of the brethren upon the basis of their temporary reactions to the flames. The great test upon all has been their loyalty to God and to the truth and its spirit, apart from human leadership. Brother Russell was not only “that servant” of God, but he was a noble, good man whom we all loved and upon whom we leaned. But God wants us to lean upon him, and to be faithful **individually** in doing his work. Through the truth he called us out of churchianity—Babylon—and through these years he has

been putting us through the fiery furnace of trial in order that all the cords of bondage might be burned away to set us free entirely from human leadership, that we may be bound only to our Lord and one another by the cords of love and devotion to the doing of his will.

With the exception of those who have departed from the truth to the extent of denying its great fundamentals, all the brethren during these years of trial have remained “in the truth.” They have been proud to be called “truth people.” But in the hearts of most of them has been a realization that something was lacking in their Christian experience, that something else died with Brother Russell. No substitute program could take the place of this loss, and they would not be satisfied until the real thing was restored.

Yes, they knew what it was! They had learned the lesson well that being a Christian was more than merely the acceptance of God’s grace for our personal salvation and satisfaction. The same lesson was learned by the disciples at the very beginning of the age. Even before Jesus died he “sent out” the twelve into the ministry, and later he sent out the seventy. When the women found the empty tomb, the symbol that he was no longer dead, they were bidden to “go tell” the news to others. When Jesus met with his disciples shortly before he returned to heaven, he told them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, and then they were to go into all the world and preach the Gospel.

If we could imagine those who went early to the tomb simply being told that Jesus had been raised from the dead and then instructed to go home and say or do nothing about it; or if we could think of Peter and the other disciples

receiving similar instructions; or if Jesus had told his disciples to continue tarrying at Jerusalem until they had lived out their natural span of life and died in inactivity; then we could at the same time imagine somewhat the feelings of many of the Lord's people during these years of trial since Brother Russell died. With the exception of the effort which led brethren into activity to preach other than truth in its purity, the friends generally had been left to suppose that the height of Christian experience, the end of all that the truth should mean to them, is to "tarry" until they were called "home" to be with Jesus in the kingdom.

But the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost. It reached the Lord's people at this end of the age through the medium of present truth. The death of a great leader might, and did, result in consternation among the brethren, but it did not drive the Holy Spirit from their hearts—at least, not from the hearts of all. It remained! The spirit of truth and of love continued to burn, and to thousands of the brethren the world over, it continued to say throughout all the uncertain years, "Go and tell," "Go ye into all the world." They became "weary with forbearing," they perhaps were inclined to "tarry" for a while, but realized that continued inactivity was vitiating their spiritual lives.

This was the individual experience of brethren in all groups. While there was intense activity in some quarters, the truth was being changed and many who loved the truth found themselves sitting on the sidelines, unable to cooperate. Individuals in other groups were being prompted by the Holy Spirit in their hearts to realize that something should be done that wasn't being done. It was not a concerted, organized demand, but the spontaneous revival in the hearts of individuals of that

spirit of love toward others which characterized the truth movement during the lifetime of Brother Russell.

About this time brethren began to leave the original organization in larger numbers than previously. In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a sufficient number left at one time to form an ecclesia. Soon thereafter (in October 1929), this ecclesia arranged to hold a convention; and, interestingly, this convention was held in the old Bible House Chapel where Brother Russell had carried on the ministry of the truth for so long a time.

The following October another convention was held in the same place. The desire of the brethren concerning the ministry of the truth began to make itself felt at this second convention. A business meeting was called, much against the wishes of a minority, who, sad to report, wanted the brethren to continue “tarrying,” forgetting that the Spirit had been given nineteen centuries ago! At this meeting a committee was appointed to investigate the possibilities of what could be done to assist the brethren in giving a wider witness for the truth and to build one another up in the most holy faith.

The following winter, brethren in the New York district expressed their desire to “go and tell” the truth to others. This was done through the Brooklyn Ecclesia, a class that had been formed in 1918 and which had remained loyal to the truth throughout all the years which followed. Realizing that the radio, a new means of disseminating knowledge which had come into being since Brother Russell died, was available for use, a radio committee was formed comprised of the thirteen elders of the ecclesia, and programs were prepared and broadcast over one of New York’s most powerful stations.

The effect upon the friends was electrifying. Brethren sitting on the sidelines heard the programs and rejoiced. Many of these began to cooperate. By reason of opposition to the effort on the part of some and in the Lord's providence, we believe, the matter was brought to the attention of brethren throughout the entire country, and even in Great Britain and Australia. Those still holding to the truth rejoiced.

The radio work as of that time (1932) proved to be too expensive to be continued; although in addition to the New York broadcasts, a few transcribed programs were made and these were used on a limited number of stations elsewhere in the country. Evidently, in the Lord's providence, its principal purpose was to serve as a signal to the brethren that the time had come to cease tarrying, that there was something for willing hands to do.

This radio effort called for the publication of suitable literature to follow up the interest, and while the radio work itself did not at that time continue, there could be no question about the desire of brethren the country over that the publication of literature be maintained. This was done. The weekly "Radio Echo," designed to follow up the programs, was enlarged and made a monthly magazine. It was called **The Dawn** in keeping with the original **Millennial Dawn** literature, and because of a deep conviction that we are living in the dawn of the Millennium. The Dawn did not assume leadership of the friends, but sought merely to render assistance where and when invited by individual brethren and ecclesias. The Dawn insists that God's voice in the church is heard through the local ecclesias.

As the years went on, and as the Lord pointed the way, **Tabernacle Shadows**, the **Daily Heavenly Manna**, **Hymns of Millennial Dawn**, and **Studies in the Scriptures**, were republished. Booklets and tracts were published and widely distributed. New interest in the truth developed, and there was a general awakening among the Lord's people as their hearts responded to the theme which had lain nearly dormant so long. Once more they rejoiced in that concept of the truth embodied in the Master's command, "Go and tell."

Love for the brethren increased, and they desired more and more to be together. Local and general conventions began to be the order of the day. On occasions The Dawn was used to announce as many as twenty-five such conventions in a single issue. This gathering together of the friends has further stirred them up in the old-time enthusiasm for the truth and its service. "This is just as it was in Brother's Russell's time," was the remark made over and over again by thousands of the brethren as they met one another at these various conventions. And they were right!

In 1940, through the urging of a number of the brethren, it was decided to try the radio work again. Those who had the matter in hand were frankly skeptical of the ability of the friends to carry on such an effort. But a start was made, and to the surprise and joy of all the brethren, practically all of the United States and Canada was being reached weekly with the kingdom message of truth. Brethren in Australia had also taken up the radio work. Newfoundland, too, was being served in this way, as was Great Britain and other parts of Europe and Asia.

Results

It is not to be expected that all, even of the Lord's people, could be pleased with the same thing. Some are still critical and ask what is being accomplished by such a wide witness of the truth. Even those who are rejoicing in the general revival of activity in proclaiming the message are also interested to know the results of their efforts. Results, however, should not enter into the matter of doing what the Lord has asked us to do. It would not have been in keeping with the spirit of the occasion for the women at the tomb to have replied to Jesus that even if they did tell the disciples of his resurrection, Thomas would not believe. The instructions were, "Go . . . and tell."

And so it is with us today. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to know that there have been results. Probably one of the greatest results was among the brethren themselves. Initially the radio and other witness work reached many of the consecrated who had long been separated from their brethren. They heard or read the message, and recognized it as the old-time truth which they loved so long, and almost lost: and their hearts rejoiced. Through handling the great fundamentals of the Divine plan for the benefit of those who are not in the truth, the appreciation of the real value and beauty of the truth became revitalized. This helped to promote the spirit of unity among the brethren—not a unity on nonessentials, nor around human leadership, but a unity of the Spirit—the Spirit of the truth.

The revived witness work also resulted in new interest! There were not thousands coming into the truth, but some did and continue to today. Larger numbers are rejoicing in a partial knowledge of it, while millions are receiving a witness. In the very thought of this the brethren as a whole

rejoiced. They felt that the truth was again much more to them than merely a better religion than that possessed by their neighbors. They felt then and continue to feel that they have a part in a work which the Lord approves, because it is the same kind of work which he outlines in his Word and was carried on so faithfully by Pastor Russell.

The Incentive

It is well, at this point, we inquire concerning the incentive which, within a period of a few years, brought about the cooperative activities which we have just described. Did the Dawn come into being as a medium for the dissemination of the new light? Were the friends stirred to action because something had been found and was being proclaimed through The Dawn? No!

The Lord's consecrated people throughout the world are, as a whole, well satisfied with the truth as it was brought to them through the ministry of Brother Russell. The brethren directly responsible for what appears in the Dawn are well satisfied with the truth. They have no new doctrines to proclaim, and no new formula for Christian living. They see no need for instructions along doctrinal or devotional lines which are contrary to those which we have in the **Studies in the Scriptures**.

No, the revival of activity was not due to the proclamation of a new Divine plan. Certainly it was not induced through fear of the second death; nor was it, even in the remotest sense, a rallying around a new-found leader, or leaders. Rather, it came about as a result of the operation of the Spirit of God in the hearts of his people as a whole, just as it was the Spirit of God in Brother Russell's heart that impelled him to sell his business and

devote himself to the publishing of the glorious jubilee message of truth. And it is the same Spirit which actuated the “truth people” generally throughout the happy years when Brother Russell was with us.

The Work—What Is It?

What phase of God’s work is it that is now being done? Probably the reason this question looms large in importance to many brethren is because the harvest work was supposed to end in 1914, or 1918. Logically, if the harvest work did end in either of those years, the dissemination of the truth now must represent another kind of work.

As far as the definite teachings of the Scriptures are concerned, there are just three main lines of work which are accomplished during the Gospel age through the proclamation of the truth. These are the sowing of seed, the harvest, and a general witness to the world. In the general witness work there is involved the call to repentance. Of this Paul says, “God . . . now commandeth all men every where to repent.” (Acts 17:30) This call has gone out through the church, and continues to do so. In connection with the sowing as well as the reaping there is the building up and nourishing of those who come to the Lord. The entire commission of the church is outlined in Isaiah 61:1-3, where it is shown to include a ministry designed to reach and nourish Christians, as well as to give a message to the mourning ones of the world; and finally to “proclaim . . . the day of vengeance of our God.”

Proclaiming the day of vengeance comes under the hand of general witness work, being merely an up-to-date application of the truth message to present world conditions, an explanation of the meaning of the “time of trouble.”

God's people are not commissioned to pronounce vengeance upon the world. We are not to smite the people. They are being smitten by the great time of trouble and are mourning because of it. Our privilege is to explain the cause of their mourning and thus to comfort them.

No New Work

There seems to be no need for supposing that now God must be doing a different kind of work. Certainly the general witness work is still appropriate—"This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24:14) The end has not yet fully come, so why shouldn't we continue to preach? What the result of this witness may be is in the Lord's hands. Our responsibility is to keep the message pure, and to send it forth far and wide as opportunity and ability permit.

As long as some are still embracing the truth and making a consecration to the Lord, it means that the harvest work is not yet complete. We may call it a gleanings if we wish, but it is harvest work, nonetheless. It is to be expected that the number actually and actively embracing the truth and entering the narrow way will decrease with the passing years. At the same time, it is logical to suppose that some new consecrations will be made and that these will be accepted by the Lord during the closing years of the age. Why?

As all know, the Lord's people had been going through an era of severe trial occasioned by the death of Brother Russell. Trials and testings imply the failure of some. This means that some have fallen by the wayside and are to be replaced by others. After so many years of such testing, is it surprising that some are coming into

the truth to take the places of the unfaithful? We think it would be surprising if such were not the case. If no one were coming into the truth today, it would be a very good reason to question whether our understanding of events at the close of the age might not be wrong. What we see actually occurring in this respect is, therefore, corroborative testimony of the truth concerning the harvest.

What, then, is the present mission of the church? It is to proclaim the truth, to let our light shine. The church is still the light of the world—the only light the world has! It is not for us to hide our light under a bushel simply because we may not exactly know what will result from our letting it shine. It is God who gives “the increase,” and we may also say in keeping with this thought, that it is God who decides what the nature of that increase shall be. (I Cor. 3:6) It is for us to be faithful to the commission which he has given us, to yield to that sacred impulse of the Spirit which bids us to go and “teach all nations.” (Matt. 28:19) Let us not “grieve” the Spirit by quenching the desire to let our light shine.

One of the discouraging thoughts sometimes injected into the minds of the brethren is that any witness work which the Lord now approves is done by the “great company;” hence, if we are participating in such work it proves that we are of the great company class. How utterly false! In the great economy of God one purpose of committing the work of witnessing to the church was to give its members an opportunity of proving their loyalty to him in the face of trial and opposition. To take the work away from these while they still need it and before they have proved their faithfulness unto death would be out of harmony with the whole plan of God as it pertains to his people.

It is an honor to bear witness to the truth, to be ambassadors for Christ in a wicked world, and God has not taken this honor away from the “little flock” and given it to the great company. God does not favor the less faithful in any such manner. Of this we may be sure. If and when the time ever comes that the great company as a class is used to give a witness for the truth, it will be after the church class is beyond the veil.

The Truth

We are now a good many years beyond 1914. A second World War has come and gone and the world wonders if there will be a third. The “great time of trouble” is nearing its climactic stage, but the life-giving blessings of the kingdom are still future. How do these facts affect our understanding of the truth? Did the Gentile Times end in 1914? Is Christ present? Are we really at the end of the age? Will this generation witness the full establishment of the kingdom, as we have been taught to believe?

“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,” wrote Solomon and to some extent the seeming tarrying of truth’s vision has contributed to a measure of uncertainty among some of the brethren as to just what it signifies and what bearing it has upon our activity in the service of God. The advice of the prophet in this connection would seem to answer this problem. He wrote, “Though it [the vision] tarry, wait for it; . . . it will not tarry.” (Hab. 2:3) The vision of truth has not actually tarried. It has seemed to tarry because of our failure to realize the length of time to be bridged by the events which bring both the Gospel age and the present evil world to an end.

As Brother Russell understood the prophecies and explained them, the time of trouble was to come in “spasms” like birth pangs. He suggested that there would be three major spasms of trouble before the full overthrow of this present evil world was accomplished and the kingdom established. World War I which began at the close of the Gentile Times was the first major spasm of the “time of trouble.” It was the introduction to a period of distress and shaking of the nations, which, followed by the second military spasm of trouble—by the world quite universally styled a “revolutionary war”—has left practically every government on earth changed in one degree or another from what it was in 1914. As for Europe—which is primarily the geographical setting of the prophecies—practically all the pre-1914 governments are now out of the picture entirely. The existence of the few remaining lesser ones is hanging by a thread.

As we all know, the second military spasm of trouble closed with the birth of atomic energy, geared to instruments of destruction so effective that the fear now is that a third world war will result in the utter destruction of the race. This is a forcible reminder of Jesus’ words to the effect that unless these days be shortened, there would be no flesh saved. As we have said, some of the details of this time of trouble are different from those anticipated, and the time required is longer than once expected, but the final result is being accomplished exactly as the prophecies portray and as Brother Russell explained. Even “Jacob’s trouble” upon the Jews is most certainly in the offing and conditions precedent thereto developing.

All of this means that the Gentile Times ended in 1914. The kings to whom that lease of power applied

have had their day, and most of them are now removed from the scene, with other forms of government taking their places, while the shaking process continues.

Yes, Brother Russell brought us unerringly to the year 1914. Chronology, as he saw it, went little beyond that date. In 1914 and thereafter was fulfilled our Lord's statement to his disciples concerning the signs of his second presence "when ye SEE these things begin to come to pass, lift up your head, for your deliverance draweth nigh." Brother Russell brought us to the day of sight of "these things" proving the second presence. His mission was accomplished.

As mentioned foregoing, the details of these developments are not in all cases such as many at one time thought they would be, but there is no mistaking the fundamental meaning of the prophecies. The Scriptures explicitly declare that the destruction of the old world was to come in spasms, of which "Jacob's trouble" is to be the last. The prophecies show that this final spasm of trouble will terminate with a manifestation of kingdom authority and power. We see this shape of things developing, and have seen it since 1914, so there is no occasion for doubting the verity of present truth, no necessity for a new chronology nor a new interpretation of the time prophecies. Our King is marching on, and in that glorious fact let us rejoice!

The fact of Christ's second presence is more discernible today than at any time since 1874. The "sure Word of prophecy" reveals it in past and current world events, and in the manner in which Divine providence is overshadowing the affairs of the church. Throughout all the upsetting experiences of two world wars, the hopes and plans of churchianity, as well as their creedal doctrines, have

proved utterly futile. Leaders of churchianity have no answer for those who inquire what it is all about. Meanwhile, these very experiences have proved the reality of the truth, and today that truth is the only explanation that can actually satisfy disappointed and mourning hearts.

More than ever today, the truth is the only thing that has stood the test of these chaotic and distressing years which have brought the world to ruin. More than ever the kingdom of Christ is the only solution for the world's woes. More than ever it is appropriate that we tell the whole world these blessed tidings. More than ever those who love the truth, and to whom it is truly a satisfying portion, will not be able to keep it to themselves. More than ever there is joy in making known the glad tidings. More than ever we need to be active in the service of the truth in order that it be kept alive and radiant in our own hearts.

A Balanced Program

In our attempt to analyze the meaning of developments among Bible Students since Brother Russell died, we have shown the loss of joy and unity which resulted from a neglect to think of the truth from the standpoint of the responsibility it has placed upon us to be faithful ambassadors for Christ. This has not been with the thought of suggesting that other phases of the Christian life should be ignored. Far from it! As we see the matter, it was largely the service of the truth that had been neglected, and for this reason we have focused attention upon this point.

The service of the truth was neglected from two standpoints. In some circles, while there has been much service, it has not been a service of the uncorrupted truth,

but a service of error. Among other brethren, until recent years, while the truth has been generally adhered to, there has been little or no activity in proclaiming it. In both cases spiritual injury resulted to the Lord's people.

By organized and individual effort, devotionalism and character development have been stressed. We rejoice in this, and it would be tragic indeed to neglect these phases of the Christian life. But in our narrative of events we have endeavored to call special attention to what had been overlooked; rejoicing, of course, in that which had been continued. Recognizing the healthy spiritual growth of the Lord's people during the years Brother Russell was with us, it should be apparent that a returning to that same balanced program would result in a similarly healthy and joyous condition among us.

Specifically, then, what was that program? We believe the best example of it is the balanced spiritual diet presented to us in **Studies in the Scriptures**. In these God-given keys to the Bible we have the doctrine of the Divine plan stated and explained and restated. We have error demolished. We have prophecies examined and explained, including time prophecies. We have the devotional life of the Christian encouraged, and the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts made understandable. Besides all of this, **Studies in the Scriptures** exhort us over and over again to be zealous in the service of the truth, and particularly as we enter the "time of trouble."

A balanced program for a Christian, then, is not alone a study of the doctrinal features of the Divine plan; it is not exclusively meditation and prayer; it is not all works; it is not merely a study of the prophecies. It is all of these together, cooperating harmoniously under the inspiration

of the Holy Spirit of love. By all of these a Christian maintains his clear vision of truth and is kept close to the Lord.

Is it not important, as we come nearer and nearer to the kingdom, to seek this way of the Lord; these green pastures of Divine blessings in which the early harvest church rejoiced, and so many are still rejoicing? Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "Call to remembrance the former days." (Heb. 10:32) Is it not fitting that we do this now; and not only recall those happy days in the truth and its service when Brother Russell was with us but to adopt the same program that blessed us back then? Certainly the rich joys of those days await all who return to the things which produced such exhilaration!

Yes, thousands of brethren today are enjoying the same richness of Christian experience in the truth as they did in the "good old days" of the past; not because they have found new truth, but because they are adhering to the pure truth which they have learned and proved. Their joy is not the result of finding a new way to live the Christian life, but because they are living the Christian life as taught by Jesus, the apostles, and Brother Russell. Why should we not all have this same joy?

The Spirit of Unity

A story is told of a minister who visited Brother Russell to inquire concerning his teachings and his methods of carrying on the work. When he was told that Bible Students have no church roll and no artificial arrangements of any kind to bind them together, the minister asked, "How then do you keep your people together?" Brother Russell wisely replied, "Brother, our trouble is not to hold the brethren together, but to get them apart," referring, of

course, to the habitual custom of the friends to linger long after meetings for fellowship.

Christian liberty is a priceless possession, and is to be safeguarded by all the consecrated, but it does not mean license to do as we please, so that when there is disagreement some separate drawing disciples after themselves. Since Brother Russell died, some, apparently, have adopted this false conception of Christian liberty, and thereby have justified themselves in attempting to form little groups of their own. Whenever and wherever this has occurred it has been a trial to the friends, even though those who have been unwittingly induced temporarily to follow such leadership have been small in number.

In **Studies in the Scriptures**, Vol. VI p. 241, Brother Russell expresses the thought concerning churchianity that, in his opinion, there were not enough denominations; that Babylon should continue to divide until each individual church member stood alone, being united only to Christ. He says that then there would be true unity among them. This has been seized upon by some as a justification for advocating division among the brethren.

This false theory is that now it is time for separation, not for gathering. The gathering was done during Brother Russell's time, it is argued, but now we should pull apart and become individualists. This erroneous theory is carried so far in the minds of some that when they see an ecclesia increasing in numbers as a result of public proclamation of the truth, or because friends once divided are coming together as they should, the charge is made that such an ecclesia has become a part of Babylon.

Those who have received the truth in its proper spirit have already renounced all human leadership and headship; they have already discarded all denominational ties; they have already disavowed their allegiance to all earthly authority, and have been united with the Lord alone. It was to this happy and blessed state of freedom in Christ that Brother Russell was calling all the consecrated in the churches.

But we should not overlook the remainder of his suggestion, namely, that those who thus become free will be united in Christ, in a genuine unity of the Spirit. Indeed, those who are wholly free in Christ will be together in blessed fellowship and cooperation. If Christ is truly our Head, it means that we are members of his body; and if we are members of his body we will not want to draw away from that body—we will want to be with our fellow-members to share their joys and their trials, to share their privileges of ambassadorship, and to share the persecution that may come upon them because of their faithfulness in proclaiming the truth.

The Scriptures do not advocate that the Lord's people practice division. Jesus prayed for unity, not for separation; and Paul said, "Mark them which cause divisions." It is those who are not with Christ who "scatter abroad." Those who are doing a work which the Lord can approve are gatherers, not scatterers. It is still harvest time, and the work of harvest is a work of gathering—"Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."—Psalm 50:5

Basis for Unity

Those who are gathered to the Lord will also be gathered to one another in a sweet and holy

fellowship of the truth and its Spirit. To work to this end should be the objective of every consecrated child of God. But to be united only with the Lord calls for a recognition of and obedience to his will. It may call for a separation from worldly friends and even from professing Christians. It calls for great appreciation of God's truth, and a determination to defend and promote it with all that we have and are. But true Christian unity is worth all that it costs!

Bible Students use an expression, "All believers in the ransom, welcome." This should be adhered to both in letter and in spirit. But we should notice what this slogan does not say. It does not say, for example, that all believers in the ransom are welcome to come into our midst and promote their differences of opinion. It does not say that all believers in the ransom are invited to become our teachers. Envy, confusion, and chaos would quickly follow the adoption of such a broad platform.

It is true, very true, that all believers in the blood of Christ who profess full consecration to the Lord should be esteemed as our brethren in Christ. They should be welcomed into our fellowship. To impose any other test of fellowship is to go contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures.

The Apostle Paul addressed the Hebrews as "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," but he also told them that they were not qualified to be teachers. (Heb. 3:1; 5:12) It is essential to recognize the difference between fellowship and teaching. If the church is to be built up in the most holy faith, as they need to be in order to stand in this evil day of testing, it is important that those who are chosen as teachers and speakers are sound in the

truth. Aptness to teach—which is a scriptural qualification for eldership—is not merely the ability to use language; it also implies a clear understanding of the truth which is to be taught. One would not be “apt to teach” higher mathematics unless he understood higher mathematics.

What, then, is the standard of truth around which the brethren can joyfully rally today, and in keeping with which they can cooperate in a general ministry of the kingdom Gospel? It is the same as that which was accepted during the ministry of Brother Russell. That was the standard of present truth. It was the Divine plan of the ages; its dispensational features, including the presence of Christ; its covenants; its ransom and sin-offering features; and its demand for holiness of character.

We should not expect that beginners in the truth who attend our meetings will have progressed in knowledge sufficiently to discern the presence of Christ, or to see that the consecrated followers of Jesus share in the better sacrifices of this Gospel age, or to discern the difference between being servants of the new covenant and receiving restitution blessings under its provision. We should insist, however, that those whom we recognize as teachers be clear in their understanding of these precious truths and be positive in their defense.

Doubts and disbeliefs, exceptions to this and exceptions to that, are certainly an unhealthy spiritual background for the ministry of the truth among God’s people. It is not sectarianism, it is not bondage, it is not circumscribing Christian liberty, for any ecclesia or group of the Lord’s people to insist on the scriptural standard for its teachers. And it should not be beneath the dignity of any brother who aspires to be a teacher among the brethren to let

them know where he stands on these important issues of doctrine and practice. Teachers are the servants of the saints, not their overlords; and certainly the brethren have a right to question their servants as to their qualifications.

Let All Be Persuaded

In setting forth these thoughts on Christian unity our purpose is merely that of applying to our present and future outlook the lesson which now can be learned from the experiences of the Bible Students since Brother Russell died. If we once accepted the truth, and believed that Brother Russell was “that servant” of the Lord used in clarifying the truth in this end of the age, it should be apparent, we believe, that the principles which governed the ministry of the truth so richly blessed in his day should be adhered to now if we desire those same rich blessings.

But whether these principles are to be adopted is a question for individuals and ecclesias to decide for themselves. Thousands already have made the decision and are being blessed. Many, in fact, never departed from these principles. Others did and have returned. We urge all who love the Lord to put the truth in its proper place in their hearts, associate themselves with the truth people, and cooperate in the blessed privilege which is now ours of witnessing the truth to a distraught and suffering world.

Are you still halfheartedly “with the channel,” hoping against hope that it will return to the truth as you learned and proved it, and still love it? Are you one of the saints who has remained by yourself, because you did not know of other brethren, or because you

were afraid of again being bound in an organization? Are you one who has tried other pastures and found them dry and empty of nourishing spiritual food? Are you one who sincerely believed that more so-called “liberty” was the solution for present-day problems among the Bible Students, hence gave your support to those not sound in the truth? Are you one who has stood firm for the truth yet for one reason or another have neglected to witness it to others? Whatever your past viewpoint and experiences may have been, if you are not now enjoying the blessings of the truth and its service as the brethren did in the time of Brother Russell, may we suggest that you associate yourself with the brethren of your local ecclesia who are rejoicing in these blessings as of old because they are believing that truth and are cooperating in its promulgation.

Do you inquire, Who then will be our leader, or leaders? We reply, the Lord and the truth—let them our leaders be! For a general ministry of the truth it is essential that literature be provided and that the brethren have some means of contacting one another; but no human leadership is essential. One of the lessons we should have learned through the years since Brother Russell died is that human channels and human headships may destroy good fellowship and, generally speaking, hinder a widespread proclamation of the truth.

For both local and general service, there is room for all. To the extent of ability and opportunity, let all be diligent in serving as fully and widely as possible. Those who are filled with true zeal and love for the Lord, the truth, and the brethren, will want to serve together, harmoniously and efficiently. They will not want to work

at cross purposes, creating trials for themselves and others and confusion among the Lord's people. To the fully consecrated, the interests of the brethren as a whole will come before their own personal interests or position. May we all strive for this true viewpoint of love and service!

May the spirit of the truth as exemplified in God's plan of restitution—his purpose to bless all the families of the earth—enlarge our hearts so that our chief joy will be found in expressing a godlike interest in others, towards all who can be reached by our self-sacrificing efforts to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom. Doing this, we will discover that, aside from the loss of joy through the lack of Brother Russell's personal association, the blessings of the truth and its service, which once made Bible Students the happiest Christians in the world, will again be ours. May this, together with the honoring of the truth and the glory of God, and the making of our calling and election sure to a place with Jesus in the kingdom, be the great objective for which we will continue to strive, and in striving, lay down our lives in Divine service!

Dawn Bible Students Association

WHAT is the Dawn Bible Students Association? What are its policies? What is its work and how are its affairs managed? These are questions which arise in the minds of many of the brethren as they come in contact with the activities among the Lord's people in which this Association is privileged to cooperate. We are happy to answer these questions.

The Dawn Bible Students Association is incorporated under the laws of the state of New Jersey for the purpose of carrying on, in a businesslike and legal manner,

the work of publishing Studies in the Scriptures, The Dawn magazine, and other truth literature; and also to sponsor radio programs and to conduct other activities for promulgating the truth. Its membership, nearly all of whom are elders of ecclesias throughout the country, once each year elects a board of twelve trustees to whom is delegated the responsibility of the work. The trustees, in turn, elect the officers of the Association. To prevent the possibility of individual headships developing, the bylaws of the Association preclude any officer from holding the same office for more than two years in succession. The bylaws also make provision for visitors who wish to attend meetings of the trustees. There is no financial consideration attached, either to membership or to trusteeship in the Association.

The policy of the Dawn Bible Students Association is to provide what the brethren need in order to carry on a general ministry of the truth; but only as a supply depot, not as supervisors of the ecclesias. It is a strict policy of the Association to recognize the sovereign right of each local ecclesia, no matter how small, to conduct its own affairs in harmony with its own wishes. The Dawn Bible Students Association offers to cooperate with brethren of “present truth” everywhere who are desirous of building up one another spiritually, and publicly witnessing to the truth in its purity as set forth in Studies in the Scriptures.