

LEST WE FORGET

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BIBLE STUDENT MOVEMENT AFTER PASTOR RUSSELL'S DEATH

The following resulted from an inquiry by one newly interested in the Truth about the history of the Bible Students and the Truth movement. This brief review attempts to relate experiences of Bible Students after Pastor Russell's death as factually as possible. It is purposely brief, but hopefully it includes historical events that help explain present conditions amongst Bible Students. Its viewpoint and comments reflect the writer's own experiences, readings and accounts told to him by older Bible Students. The writer began his consecrated life in 1948 at the age of 17 meeting with a Dawn class in Seattle, Washington, and remained there for over twenty years until changing conditions caused a division. Understandably, some would rather forget painful past experiences, but, hopefully, reflecting upon the past and its lessons will help some avoid repeating them in the future.

The death of Pastor Charles Taze Russell, October 31, 1916, marked a dramatic change in the course of the Bible Student movement.

PASTOR RUSSELL'S MINISTRY

During Pastor Russell's lifetime, he founded the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and other business entities to further the work of proclaiming "Present Truth" to the world, particularly, the Christian world.

Under his leadership, the Truth message was available to all in the United States, Europe and many other countries. In his day, he was the most prominent Christian personage in the world. His sermons were carried weekly in 2,000 of our nation's leading newspapers. Through public meetings, the Photo Drama of Creation, books, tracts and newspaper sermons, the Truth message was held up before the people and leaders of professed Christian nations, and it attracted sincere, truth-seeking Christians. The Photo Drama slide and movie presentation was particularly successful in defending the Bible against rapidly rising skepticism fueled by the evolution theory and other modern philosophies.

His basic message was simple and powerful: The Lord had returned as a powerful unseen spirit being to establish his kingdom in the Earth. Bible chronology and prophecy so indicated. The signs were present: phenomenal increase in knowledge, amazing increase in travel speed and usage, universal education and enlightenment, removal of the sweat of the brow curse through highly productive modern inventions, the beginnings of Israel's return to Palestine, and an impending "time of trouble" such as never was since there was a nation. The year 1914 was to bring a great change in Earth's affairs, a great time of trouble leading to the full establishment of Christ's Kingdom in the Earth. Eventually, Christ's Kingdom would replace the kingdoms of this world. Then all mankind, Adam and all of Adam's children, would experience the promised resurrection based upon Jesus' ransom sacrifice. The Kingdom would grant all an opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness to life eternal. It was a wonderful, Bible-based message of hope for all.

Pastor Russell's preaching, which exposed Christianity's old wrongs and false teachings, drew strong opposition and persecution from established, creed-based churches. They came together to defend themselves and their creeds from truths that were apparent to most thinking Christians.

War was preparing. In 1897, Pastor Russell wrote a book first titled, "The Day of Vengeance". In 1912 the author changed the title to, "The Battle of Armageddon." In it he cited page after page of facts detailing how Christian nations were preparing for the Great War ahead, while others proclaimed that war was never again possible among advanced, civilized Christian peoples.

Promptly, in 1914 the predicted war broke out with a fury never before seen in the annals of warfare. Increased knowledge and liberty had spawned wealth and leisure to levels unknown in the past, allowing vast national expenditures for new death dealing weapons and huge standing armies. One man became a killing machine the equal of a hundred men in previous wars. Pastor Russell documented this in advance, giving the so-called Christian nations time to consider and avert the catastrophe.

His warning message from the Lord fell upon deaf ears. Political and religious leaders alike promoted military service. Ministers and priests assured young men that if killed they would immediately go straight to Heaven. Jesus' teachings to love your neighbor and brother were abandoned. German Christians killed French Christians. English and American Christians hated and killed German Christians. The Christian nations and Christian churches lost all credibility to call themselves by the name of Christ, the great Prince of Peace.

During the war, many Bible Students, practicing their sincere Christian beliefs, refused to wear the uniform, carry a gun or otherwise participate in the military killing machines of Christendom. Governments and churches ridiculed, slandered and persecuted them. They were jailed, punished and some died rather than compromise their principles. The war years were difficult years for Bible Students in Europe and America.

AFTER PASTOR RUSSELL'S DEATH

When Pastor Russell died on October 31, 1916, the First World War in the history of mankind was in full progress. The war that was expected to last two or three months was now in its third year with no end in sight. The amazingly insightful predictions of Pastor Russell were painfully fulfilled in the angry, patriotic, senseless wounding and slaughter of millions of Christian youths in their prime of life. God's vengeance was executed upon the professedly Christian nations of Europe to avenge the spilled blood of the true church down through the Gospel Age. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom 12:19) Their blind anger brought it upon themselves.

At first, America declared itself neutral, maintaining its long-standing policy of not engaging in European wars. But, following German submarine attacks on American ships carrying goods and arms to Germany's enemies, on April 6, 1917 America entered the war on the side of Britain and France, despite the President's campaign promise to keep America out of war. The first United State's troops landed in France on June 26, 1917. Thus, unfortunately, American young men suffered the same fate as Europeans.

By 1916, the Bible Student movement had been shepherded by the wise and faithful leadership of Pastor Russell for 40 years. It had grown from few into many and its volume of publication had exploded. A mighty work was accomplished under his faithful stewardship.

With his death in October, a battle for leadership quickly followed. In Pastor Russell's will, he carefully provided for the continued publishing of the Truth message by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. He had selected what he considered to be humble brethren of good

character as corporation directors, editorial committee members and trustees of his voting stock. But his best efforts and intentions could not prevent what followed.

The spirit at headquarters was about to change completely.

A NEW LEADER WITH A DIFFERENT SPIRIT

One of the board members, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, was a lawyer who was active in politics before coming into the Truth. Before Pastor Russell's death, the Pastor had dismissed Rutherford from Bethel and provided him funds for a new start in California. When Pastor Russell died, Rutherford was working as a floorwalker in a department store. Upon hearing of the Pastor's death, he telegraphed Bethel and told them to hold everything until he arrived. At the time of his death, Pastor Russell was in process of making several changes in the Bethel family, and evidently had not yet updated the members of the board of directors. Since he no longer wanted Rutherford at Bethel, it is doubtful that he wanted him on the board of directors in event of his death.

Rutherford was an extremely forceful, self-seeking character. By legal tricks and maneuvers, he was able to avoid the will's intent and directives to establish himself as President of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, contrary to the wishes of the majority of the Board of Directors. "Judge" Joseph Franklin Rutherford usurped total control of the Society and became an absolute dictator. While in legal practice, he had once served briefly as a temporary fill-in judge and thus retained the title of "judge" by which he was often referred to. He became the Watchtower's legal counsel in 1907; one year after he was baptized, and the same year Pastor Russell's will was drawn up (June 29, 1907). His first contact with the Truth was in 1894.

Rutherford apparently felt that he needed something to establish his position and show leadership capabilities. He was an accomplished public speaker, a skill honed in politics, but others were also. He decided to quickly publish a new book and rush it into print without consulting or receiving approval from the editorial committee as required by Pastor Russell's will. Two brothers, both from Scranton, Pennsylvania, had developed material for treatises on Ezekiel (George H. Fisher) and Revelation (Clayton J. Woodworth), while Brother Russell still lived. These were hastily completed and combined into one book published in the summer of 1917, the same year the United States entered the war in Europe (April 6, 1917). The Judge released the book on July 7, 1917, the same day he announced the replacement of four WTBS directors, named by Pastor Russell in his will, with directors of his own choosing. It was falsely proclaimed to be the posthumous work of Pastor Russell. The book was titled the "Finished Mystery" and presented as Pastor Russell's long expected "Seventh Volume." It was laced with quotations from Pastor Russell's writings, which supposedly supported the prophetic theories of the two authors.

One theory, held by the authors, was an expectation that the last members of the church class would die violent deaths at the hands of political and religious leaders in response to a brief but powerful Bible Student message critical of their sinful practices. Consequently, the "Finished Mystery" was written in this spirit and contained harsh condemnations of the government, the churches of America and their leaders. At the same time, Rutherford admonished all young Bible Students, subject to the draft, to oppose military service as conscientious objectors.

The government took swift action against what it considered sedition. In May 1918, federal arrest warrants were issued for Rutherford and 6 other top Society officers. In June 1918, all were sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for conspiracy, and sent off to a federal

penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia. This was what we might call today a country club prison. The prisoners were allowed the freedom of walking and talking together while playing tennis.

According to provisions in the WTBTTS charter and Pastor Russell's will, direction of the Society resided in its seven board members who were now in prison. Bethel workers left behind in Brooklyn without leadership pondered what to do with the now headless Society.

In August 1918, with its principal leaders in prison, the Society shut down the New York office, sold the Brooklyn Tabernacle, closed the Bethel home, and moved back to Pittsburgh.

In March 1919, after the war ended in November 1918, the imprisoned Society leaders were released from prison under \$10,000 bail. To escape his prison sentence, "Judge" Rutherford had made a deal with the government. So much for dying at the hands of the government and ending the church's earthly course in glorious martyrdom.

It was agreed that Bible Students should cut out certain offensive pages from the "Finished Mystery", the false "Seventh Volume", and that the Society would cease printing them. Some followed government orders and cut out pages 245 to 254 in chapter 16, titled "Ecclesiasticisms Seven Plagues", while others ignored the government edict. This chapter applied the "seven last plagues" of the book of Revelation to Pastor Russell's 6 Volumes of Studies in the Scriptures and Rutherford's new "Seventh Volume". The "Finished Mystery" was claimed to be the hail plague. Many Bible Students, fearful that all their Volumes would be confiscated, hid them in cellars and attics or buried them in the back yard. To this day, some old Volumes retain a musty smell from this treatment.

Young Bible Students were still in prison. Bible Students everywhere were suffering ignominy in the eyes of their neighbors, while Rutherford was making legal deals to escape prison time. Many Bible Students were incensed at the perfidy of the man who had wrestled control of the Society from the hands of its legally appointed administrators.

JUDGE'S ACTIONS CAUSE THOUSANDS TO DEPART

Bible Students left the Society by the thousands. It was no longer the organization they had known under Pastor Russell. They recognized the noble, holy, spirit of Christ in Pastor Russell, but the new head was an entirely different type of leader: a scheming, cunning man with a dictatorial spirit. The first book Rutherford published after Pastor Russell's death, "The Finished Mystery", was a very different kind of book than Pastor Russell's "Studies in the Scriptures." One doesn't find the spirit of Pastor Russell in the "The Finished Mystery," nor does one find the spirit of the "Finished Mystery" in Pastor Russell's writings. Some perceived the difference, and some did not.

Among the dissenters who departed, the burning question became, "What do we do now"? This question has not gone away.

Bible Students expected the Gospel Age to end about 1914 and the earthly kingdom to follow swiftly. As 1914 approached, Pastor Russell saw that much was still left to be done in God's plan before the full establishment of God's Kingdom in Earth and God's will be done as it is in heaven. He repeatedly warned the Brethren, but expectations were high and ears dull. 1914 came and went and the Brethren were still here. The date 1918 seemed likely, and hopes were transferred to that date. It also passed, and hopes were advanced to 1925. This date also proved to be another disappointment, as have numerous hoped for dates since then.

After Pastor Russell died, the Bible Student movement divided roughly in two in the years 1917 to 1918: half stayed with the Society, now called the "Channel", with Rutherford at its head, while the other half, who opposed Rutherford, showed their opposition by leaving. The dissenters went several different directions as they refused to be associated with an organization dominated by a man of such questionable character as "Judge" Rutherford. By 1930-32, about 75% had left of their own accord, or had been forced out by Rutherford, who tolerated no opposition of any kind.

In 1922 in Romania, Rutherford ordered the Romanian Brethren to print only material issued from New York. In 1924, nearly 100% of the Romanian brethren left the Society after Rutherford sold the presses upon which they were printing Truth literature.

Similar actions occurred throughout the Bible Student world.

This sad picture of what happened to the Society following Pastor Russell's death is the basis for understanding the Bible Student movement since then.

A NEW NAME FOR A NEW MOVEMENT

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society and its other legal entities became the sole domain of Rutherford until his death, January 8, 1942. At a convention in Columbus, Ohio, July 24-30, 1931, Rutherford renamed the Society the "**Jehovah's Witnesses.**" While we may show compassion towards those deceived by him, we can no longer think of the Society after Rutherford took over, as the Society that Pastor Russell founded. Under its new autocratic head, it had become the enemy of sincere, truth seeking, thinking Bible Students, whatever other good it might have done. For Bible Students eager to witness to the Truth in our day, the stigma of the Jehovah's Witnesses still attaches to us in the public mind and hinders every effort to represent God's present Truth to the world.

NEW TEACHINGS FOR THE NEW MOVEMENT

While we leave a detailed history of the Jehovah's Witnesses to others, we note their numerous departures from the Truth and its spirit.

Their claim that Pastor Russell is their founder is patently false. Rutherford founded the Jehovah's Witnesses. Some viewed this move as a marketing stroke of genius.

Their belief that only living Jehovah's Witnesses pass through the time of trouble into the blessings of Christ's kingdom on Earth assigns all the rest of mankind, over 6 billion living persons, to second death with no further hope for life. How ludicrous, that one visit from a Jehovah's Witness constitutes one's trial for eternal life. This teaching is a denial of the ransom without directly so stating. Such a spirit is in total opposition to the spirit of God's love, justice and merciful plan for all mankind.

Claiming to be walking in the light, book after book presented new teachings, the latest often contradicting the former. Jehovah's Witnesses had to read the last edition of the Watchtower magazine to know what was currently accepted as truth.

Some notions were particularly revolting. Since all of mankind not converted to the Jehovah's Witnesses (over 99.9 percent) was expected to die the second death in Armageddon, this would leave the earth almost void of population. Thus it was taught that the "Jonadab" class, Jehovah Witness couples, would re-populate it.

Eventually, in 1939, the Ransom was totally denied by refusing Adam a resurrection.

The Society's departure from the Truth did not happen all at once. It was a gradual dilution and perversion of the Truth by substituting new teachings for old. After publishing the "Finished Mystery" in 1917, Rutherford published a book, apparently of his own writing, in October 1, 1921 titled, "The Harp of God." In general, this book held quite closely to the Truth, but made the rash speculation that, "Millions Living Will Never Die."

For a while the Judge continued to publish Pastor Russell's "Studies in the Scriptures." Then, in 1924, he ceased their publication. In October 1920, Rutherford re-published Pastor Russell's "Tabernacle Shadows" along with 23 pages of his own added footnote changes to Pastor Russell's text. These expressed his own, often contrary Tabernacle views.

In 1919, the Society published the green "Reprints" of the Watch Tower magazine, beginning with the first edition in 1879 and including issues up to 1919. In 1920, the remaining supply was sold to the Pastoral Bible Institute, and made available to the Brethren for \$2.50.

A NEW FINANCIAL OPERATION

Note the sharp contrast between the Society's financial operation under Pastor Russell and under Judge Rutherford. Under Pastor Russell's administration, the Society received voluntary donations and used these to finance the witness work, giving away free tracts and selling books at cost or slightly above. Under Rutherford, the Society was organized as a large printing operation to cheaply print books and sell them for a handsome profit. The Society was no longer solely dependant upon contributions from supporters, as in the past. It now generated funds from a well-organized and profitable book selling operation. Labor costs were almost non-existent, since brethren volunteered their time and labor for subsistence compensation. This change funded Rutherford's ambitious expansion plans, and freed the Society from money worries.

The dissenters, who walked out, had neither Pastor nor Society. Those who remained had no Pastor, but they had what they viewed as the "Channel". The proposition was put forth that even though bad characters might prevail, the Society is still the "Channel". It reminds one of Papacy's past claims. Many have labored long and hard, enslaved to the false notion of "Channelism."

The dissenters on the other hand were on their own, cast adrift upon a sea of uncertainty. What do we do now? The sheep were scattered without a shepherd. Yet our Good Shepherd is always there, watching over his true church even unto the end. God always provides.

DISSENTERS FORM NEW ORGANIZATIONS

Some simply decided to stay home and study by themselves. Those with forceful, leadership type personalities, described by one sister as "he goats," decided to form new associations to serve the brethren, witness to the truth, and draw followers after them. Various theories about times, seasons and dates evolved to answer the big question? Why is the church still here after 1914? What do we do now? There was much competition for the minds and support of the brethren

The **Pastoral Bible Institute (PBI)** was organized in 1918 by a committee of dissident, former Society leaders, and was incorporated in New York State, November 12, 1918. Its stated

purpose was to provide pilgrim service, a periodical and disseminate Bible Truths. They published a magazine called the "The Bible Standard and Herald of Christ's Kingdom." The 1919 to 1922 publications contained a series of articles by Brother R. E. Streeter on the book of Revelation. The viewpoints expressed answered some of Rutherford's "Seventh Volume" positions. In 1923 and 1924 these were published in book form. In 1928, they published another book titled, "Daniel, The Beloved Of Jehovah". The pastoral work of the Herald was an effort to continue the Pilgrim service as it had been under Pastor Russell. The Judge had begun to close down this service since it did not fit in with his new plans for the Society. Over time, the Herald's doctrinal platform became quite permissive. Some of their Pilgrims denied the Lord was present. Thus many brethren refused the service of their Pilgrims whom they considered to be not well grounded in the Truth. Its emphasis was upon holy living, character development and pastoral counseling. Doctrine and public works became secondary.

In 1918, **Paul Johnson** started a separate movement of his own called "**Epiphany.**" He published a magazine called "The Present Truth," another called "The Bible Standard," wrote numerous books (about 20), and republished Pastor Russell's 1917 Volumes of Studies in the Scriptures. He taught that the door was closed in 1914, claimed to be the messenger to the Epiphany period (1914-1954), and that he would be the last member of the church class to die. Much of his writing was in opposition to teachings and actions of "Judge" Rutherford, and also the PBI. Upon his death in 1950, Brother Jolly, his successor, claimed to be the last member of the great company. This movement goes by the name "**Layman's Home Missionary Movement**". Its followers claim to be of the Kingdom class since they believe that the door to the heavenly calling closed in 1914 AD, or 1918 AD. They look forward to serving God in the earthly phase of the Kingdom when it is fully established. Brother Johnson was well educated, possessed a keen, but sometimes fragile mind, and a vivid, over-active imagination that saw types and shadows everywhere in the Scriptures.

A number of brethren determined to remain **independent** of organizations, and continued to study the Bible using Pastor Russell's books. They served the brethren who held to present Truth teachings as best they could. In the Pacific Northwest, Brother Ted Smith was one who took this course throughout his consecrated life, and served the brethren faithfully in many ways. Others also followed the independent course, among whom was my grandmother, Sister Emma Komen. Today, many Bible Students still keep independent of religious organizations and choose to study the Bible using Pastor Russell's excellent Bible Study aids.

However, the label or name, "**Independent Bible Students**" is sometimes used by those holding various doctrinal beliefs, not necessarily Pastor Russell's. It can merely convey separation and independence from control by any religious organization, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Herald, Dawn, et cetera. At this time, no doctrinal position can be inferred from this label.

On the West Coast, several brethren met in Bellingham, Washington in 1918, and signed a declaration to "**Stand Fast**" and remain loyal to the Truth as Brother Russell presented it. This resulted in a large Stand Fast movement which was opposed to Rutherford's changes in the Society and its message. Conflicts arose over the "Finished Mystery" as efforts were made to explain the 1914 disappointment. Dissension in the Stand Fast movement spawned several groups, who for the most part held onto the "Finished Mystery" in some way. Most Stand Fast brethren held that the time for witnessing was past and that the door to the high calling was closed. Many were very well studied in the Truth and able to give an answer for their beliefs. Several had been persecuted as conscientious objectors.

About 1922 a fairly large number (about 300?) of "Stand Fast" brethren formed a commune in **Sooke**, British Columbia near Victoria. It lasted for several years before breaking up. They anticipated the end of the church class on Earth and the Ancient Worthies resurrected in 1925, as did the Judge, who built a house for them in San Diego, California. Those consecrated before 1918 were waiting for their change. Of those consecrated after 1918, some looked forward the earthly Kingdom, while others still claimed the heavenly promises. Many in this movement later associated themselves with the Dawn movement.

In 1922, John Harderson, who spent several years in prison as a Bible Student conscientious objector, formed the "**Elijah Voice Society**." While in prison he studied the "Finished Mystery" and concluded that its method of witness was correct, that the church in the flesh must execute the judgements written and thus be put to death by the authorities before the Gospel Age could close. Some Stand Fast brethren interested in a public witness joined this movement. They obtained a press, printed polemic tracts, wrote accusatory letters to public officials and attempted to elicit persecution so as to fulfill their prophetic expectations of dying a violent, untimely death. Nothing much came of this movement except that the government kept an eye on it. Brother Harderson, a Bible Student of well-respected character, died a natural death with his basement filled with tracts, letters and his press.

The **fatal flaw** in Stand Fast thinking was giving equal or higher weight to the "Finished Mystery" than to the true writings of Pastor Russell. This same mistake was repeated later by the Dawn movement, which placed higher emphasis on the Dawn magazine, Dawn booklets and Dawn books than on Pastor Russell's Volumes. It took many years and hard experiences for Stand Fast brethren to discover and correct this error, and some never did.

DAWN MOVEMENT BEGINS

About 1930, some brethren in the New York area, no longer associated with the Society, decided to attempt a radio witness. These were active, work-oriented brethren who enjoyed the witness work and were good at it. Some had been involved in the Photo Drama and colporteur work in Brother Russell's day. They were eager to carry on witness activity outside of the Society.

In April 1931 they made their first broadcast of the "**Frank and Ernest**" radio program in connection with the Brooklyn Ecclesia, an independent class formed in the New York area in 1918. It aired for thirteen weeks before funds ran out. A magazine called the Radio Echo was printed to follow up radio responses. In 1932 the name "Radio Echo" was changed to the "Dawn" magazine. The name "Dawn" was selected to associate the movement with Pastor Russell's "Millennial Dawn Volumes," (later changed to Studies in the Scriptures) and from a deep conviction that they were living in the Dawn of the Millennium. The first issue was published in October 1932. The second issue was a complete copy of Pastor Russell's "Divine Plan of the Ages."

From a small start during the Depression, the Dawn movement gained momentum. Scattered brethren appreciated the doctrinal standard of the early Dawn movement and its witness activity. The movement grew. A corporate business entity, named the "Dawn Bible Students Association," was formed to purchase property and equipment to publish the Dawn magazine, tracts and booklets. Its corporate structure resembled that of the PBI rather than Pastor Russell's Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

An excellent booklet titled "When Pastor Russell Died" was published in 1944, which gave a short history of the Bible Students and their experiences up to that time. The booklet also

established a sound doctrinal foundation for the Dawn movement, but later was substantially revised. In the 1940's all of Pastor Russell's Millennial Dawn Volumes were republished.

The Dawn started as primarily a public witness movement. About 1940 a new attempt at a radio witness was started and became very successful. "Frank and Earnest" became well known Bible commentators throughout the land. The radio witness, along with an active Pilgrim service, reached isolated brethren and initiated new interest as well. Pilgrim Christian Zahnow was particularly active and effective in forming new classes from scattered and divided brethren. The Seattle class that I attended when first in the Truth was brought together by his efforts. Brother William A. Baker of Portland and others served actively in the Dawn Pilgrim Service. Many who formerly stood fast against Rutherford joined this movement, and those who held that the door was closed reconsidered their position. Some called it a regathering of the scattered sheep.

Many scattered brethren rejoiced to be meeting together again in sweet fellowship in the Truth with those of like precious faith, and to once again have the privilege of engaging in an active witness effort heralding our returned Lord and his Kingdom. The number of newly interested, some consecrating and making the Truth their own, evidenced that the door was still open. Crowns had evidently fallen, and others were being invited in to make up the full number of the Little Flock.

Like many organizations before it, the Dawn, after a good beginning, later deviated from its earlier doctrinal position. In the 1950's and on into the 1960's the sound doctrinal platform established at the beginning was replaced by new teachings many refused to accept. Questions arose about financial matters that went unanswered. It was claimed that the Volumes contained thousands of errors and needed to be extensively edited. A German Volume was edited and printed in edited form. Brethren who were once strong supporters of the Dawn and who continued to hold to the Truth as presented by Pastor Russell, opposed the Dawn's actions, teachings and leadership. Activities once performed by individual classes in cooperation with the Dawn were pulled back to headquarters.

Early on, the brethren had some indication that all was not well at the Dawn. When the Dawn decided to reprint the Volumes, it made a strange compromise. The 1917 forwards, prepared by Pastor Russell before his death, were used as written and prepared for the printers to print during the slow 1916-1917 winter season. However, changes made to the text of the 1917 Sixth Volume were not used. The 1916 version was substituted. Thus, tentative justification is dealt with in the forwards, but not in the main body of text. This compromise gave a false and conflicting view of the Pastor's last thoughts on the subject of justification.

Later, after the New Brunswick brethren reprinted the Volumes in 1983 using Brother Russell's revisions for the 1917 edition, the Dawn requested the right to use New Brunswick's improved text in reprinting the Dawn Volumes. It was granted, but the Dawn did not use the 1917 text in total. Instead, they removed the 1917 pages in the Sixth Volume that addressed tentative justification, and substituted pages from the 1916 edition. Thus, the original misrepresentation was repeated.

Numerous other doctrinal changes emerged among Dawn leaders and followers, contrary to Pastor Russell's teachings in the Volumes and Reprints, and some were published in the Dawn magazine. They were also contrary to the teachings published in early Dawn literature. The old Jehovah's Witness excuse of "walking in the light" was given for these

changes. Brethren were urged to remain for the sake of the work, and the old "Channel" concept was revived.

The following are some doctrinal positions and changes presented to brethren in Dawn classes and at Dawn conventions after 1950. Not all brethren were aware of them, and they did not all appear in print in the Dawn magazine. Nor did all "Dawn Brethren" accept or support these views.

DAWN DOCTRINAL CHANGES

The beautiful **Jubilee year type**, a type of Restitution, was modified so that it no longer supported the chronology of our Lord's Second Presence, and no longer typed the 1,000 year Restitution work beginning in 1874. Instead, the anti-type of Israel's Jubilee was moved to the end of the Millennial Age after the restitution work is completed. This later thought was also noted by Pastor Russell, but was a secondary, not a primary application of the Jubilee type.

The promises to the nation of **Israel** were modified and applied almost exclusively to the World. It was claimed that the dynamic return movement of the Jews to the land of Israel was merely a token fulfillment. The argument was that the typical people could not be the anti-typical, thus ignoring the teachings of the Jewish double.

Extending the above position, it was concluded that the seat of the kingdom was no longer to be in Jerusalem, but would somehow be diffused throughout the whole world.

The promised kingdom, which Jesus went into a far country to receive and return with, was put off into the future, thus effectively negating the meaning of Christ's second presence. **Jesus was not reigning**; he was not a returned King at all. He had returned without a crown or a kingdom. He was merely sitting and waiting for future events.

The **millennial age** had not begun in 1874, but was **future**.

Earth's **thousand-year Sabbath day** was future, or was simply **called a tradition**.

It was claimed that **Pastor Russell's chronology** was **faulty** and unreliable. One Dawn Pilgrim went so far as to claim that chronology was not taught in the Bible.

About this time, a compromise position was suggested by some to allow divergent millennial views amongst the Brethren. It was suggested that there were actually two millenniums: one starting in 1874, and another starting when the Church is complete and the mediatorial reign begins.

Others **rejected the over-lapping of the ages** clearly shown on the Chart of the Ages.

Consecration was moved to the **gate** where the Judge had placed it, thus negating Pastor Russell's teachings on justification and the Tabernacle.

Some Dawn leaders went so far as to claim that **Pastor Russell did not write Volumes 1, 2 and 3**, referencing a book titled, "The Day Dawn," co-authored by Pastor Russell with Brother Paton, to supposedly prove their point.

Volume Bible studies were **replaced** by Dawn Magazine studies. Volume One studies were replaced by studies in "The Creators Grand Design", with the claim that it was more up-to-date.

Changed doctrinal beliefs resulted in the Dawn editing and **rewriting their own publications**, such as, "When Pastor Russell Died" and "Behold Your King," to bring them into conformity with their new positions.

Some Dawn classes **discontinued studying Volumes 2,3,4** and even 6.

Many sincere brethren, sound in the Truth, tried to correct or reform the Dawn without success.

ANOTHER TIME OF TESTING: DIVISIONS AND HEARTACHES

It was another testing time for Bible Students. Many disassociated themselves from the Dawn Movement over the above issues, and stopped their financial support of the Dawn for conscience's sake. Some attempted to remain in Dawn dominated classes, only to find themselves ostracized for opposing the new Dawn doctrinal changes.

Numerous Dawn members and former supporters sent in letters of resignation, clearly stating the reasons for their departure. Dawn members numbered fewer than 100, and were all appointed by the Dawn leaders themselves.

One Dawn pilgrim mounted attacks upon classes that did not support them, and warned the brethren not to attend conventions that were not Dawn recognized conventions.

Pilgrim brethren who once had traveled for the Dawn, but who did not go along with their new teachings, were dropped from the pilgrim service.

Some staunch Dawn supporters viewed it as the new "channel", similar to the "channel position taken in the "Society" under Rutherford. Others saw some of the Dawn's problems, but stayed for the sake of the public witness work that they highly valued.

Families and classes were split. It was a heart breaking time as once close ties were broken.

Not all Dawn members, followers and supporters accepted or were in harmony with the above doctrinal changes.

An abortive effort was made by the Dawn to hold onto the dissenters by publishing a booklet titled "**Oh The Blessedness.**" For many this was the last straw. In it, the author misquoted Pastor Russell to give the impression that the Pastor did not support the 7,000-year picture of God's plan. The writer claimed that Pastor Russell viewed it only as a "venerable tradition" and not a valid picture. In reality, Pastor Russell wrote, "this venerable tradition is not without a reasonable foundation". Others have also fallen into the trap of using quotes from Pastor Russell in a less than forthright manner to support their own viewpoints.

What can be learned from such experiences? Proper priorities must be set and followed. No organization, no public witness activity or any other work is more important than the Truth itself. Our loyalty to God, whom we have not seen, is being tested by our loyalty to His Truth that we have seen. Those who would be pleasing to our Heavenly Father must put

truth and righteousness first, and walk honestly as in the day. It is God's truth and God's standard, and we must prove loyal to it.

Since then the Dawn family and some large Dawn classes have shrunk dramatically in numbers, while other activity movements have sprung up.

FORT COLLINS AND NEW ACTIVITIES

In 1970, a convention held at Fort Collins, Colorado, was well attended by brethren determined to respect Pastor Russell's memory and office, and hold fast to the Truth he presented. Once again the brethren heard the lovely strains of the "old, old story" in its entirety, and many enjoyed the revived spirit of the Truth. At this convention and subsequent conventions, Bible Student classes were encouraged to provide services to the brethren without a central agency. Diverse views and opinions made a unified effort untenable, and some hesitated to found another Bible Student organization subject to the same problems as past organizations. This released the energies of many brethren who worked long and hard to witness to the truth and serve the brethren.

Numerous services and witness activities resulted. The Bible Students News Letter was started. Some made a witness effort in Africa, and others in Japan. Tape services were started. Brother Ted Smith of the Bellingham Ecclesia sent out monthly Truth articles and discourse summaries. Some classes utilized free TV channels to air Truth programs. The Chicago class republished most of Pastor Russell's writings starting with the Reprints. Later, Pastor Russell's works were made available on computer disks. Brother Morton Edgar's Pyramid books were re-published by the Portland class. Brethren in Canada made broader contacts with Polish and Ukrainian brethren. New translations of Pastor Russell's works were made and printed in these languages. When the Soviet Union collapsed, brethren contacted and aided their formerly oppressed brethren in Poland, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine and Siberia.

Brother George Wilmott of the Fort Worth Ecclesia started a television effort, which emphasized the "Divine Plan" and the "Divine Plan of the Ages" chart. His program reached many parts of the United States and also into Canada and Europe. He also reprinted the Volumes and Tabernacle Shadows in one large book that was widely used by Bible Students in their class studies. A magazine size and style Volume One, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," was printed at low cost in large numbers for witnessing. Many brethren liked his respectful manner of presenting the Truth, and he drew considerable support. Some brethren came into the Truth and consecrated as a result of this witness effort.

The New Brunswick brethren re-published the Volumes with Pastor Russell's text and forewords prepared for the 1917 edition along with their own publisher's forewords and some publisher's footnotes, using modern print, good quality paper and a quality binding. Later, another quality set was published without their publisher's forewords or footnotes.

These efforts were not organized, directed or accomplished by a large, centralized agency. Individuals, Ecclesias and small groups or associations were moved to labor and sacrifice in the Lord's service.

While the Fort Collins Convention brethren refused to accept the new Dawn teachings and generally wished to hold fast to Pastor Russell's teachings, their views on the present work of the church and interpretation of end time prophecies varied substantially. Several elements of thought emerged supported by various factions.

FACTIONS OF THOUGHT

One faction was determined to generate a "Smiting of the Jordan" type witness work which would execute the "judgements written," trigger the "Time of Trouble" and attract severe persecution upon themselves to fulfill the anti-type of the closing experiences of John the Baptist. Many brethren considered this motivation for witnessing to be contrary to Pastor Russell's admonitions.

Another faction believed that God was still begetting spiritual children in the nominal churches, and that a special work was needed to help a vast "Great Company" class escape from Babylon. Those of this persuasion believed that the Harvest was still going grandly on, despite the shrinking numbers in the Truth movement and the very few newly interested ones coming into the Truth. Professional programs were developed and shown on television as well as in a number of well-attended public meetings. While this work accomplished a general witness to the Truth, the anticipated numbers of Great Company coming out of the Nominal Church never materialized. Few came into the Truth via this witness effort.

Others believed that the harvest ended in 1914 at the end of Pastor Russell's very effective and productive ministry, and that no further effort was needed to call the wheat class out of Babylon. While believing that the door to the "high calling" was still open, some of those holding this persuasion believed that the Gospel Age ended in 1914, as well as, the harvest. In light of Jesus' clear statement that "the harvest is the end of the age," this position required extensive philosophizing to explain how the church can still be here when the Church Age (the Gospel Age), the anti-typical "atonement day" was ended. Their beliefs tended to minimize the need for witness activity, while they continued to use Pastor Russell's writings extensively in their Bible Study meetings and conventions.

Another faction was deeply interested in the promises to the Nation of Israel and were strongly motivated to attempt to repeat Brother Russell's comfort message to the Jews, which was given at a time when the Zionist movement to return to the land was languishing. This new comfort message had to be altered to fit the times, for the Jews were already in their old homeland. Therefore, the new comfort message consisted of assuring the Jews of God's watch care over their nation, and that God had a future place for the nation in his plan to bless all the families of the earth. This effort also produced a very professional videotape that was shown to primarily Jewish audiences in America, Israel, Russia and elsewhere. While most Jews seem little interested in being comforted by gentile Christians, the approach used regarding the Nation of Israel's part in God's plan was favorably received by many Jews who viewed it.

Another active element was ecumenically minded. Its goal was to gather Bible Students of all persuasions into joint projects of various kinds. The emphasis seemed to be on the joint effort, rather than the project itself. A European convention labeled, "International," was begun, and many from various groups and countries served and attended. This convention continues to draw quite large numbers of brethren of various persuasions. Other projects and activities also included brethren of different persuasions.

BIBLE STUDENT NAMES

The Bible Student movement, since Pastor Russell died, contains brethren holding diverse beliefs. Individuals, classes and organizations have adopted various names to indicate their positions. These names are generalities, and those going by them often hold very different views about the Truth. The names of several organizations have already been considered.

The label, "**Divine Plan Bible Students**," is sometimes used to describe groups who left the Dawn movement, because they tend to use the "Divine Plan of the Ages" chart at their meetings, and use the "Divine Plan of the Ages" book (Volume One of Pastor Russell's Scripture Studies series), as well as the chart, in their witness activities. Some classes use this title in their class name.

An entity called the "**Divine Plan Foundation**" was formed in 1970 with an original membership of 10 brethren (later expanded to 15 members) to facilitate a witness effort in Japan. Radio scripts were written, broadcasts made and First Volumes printed in Japanese. Several brethren from the United States made extensive trips to Japan to nurture the interest there. Some Japanese Brethren came into the Truth via this witness effort. Over the years the foundation has accepted bequests and distributed funds to witness and other activities.

Different Bible Student groups use the name "**Associated Bible Students**." The name was suggested and used in Pastor Russell's day. Some using this name are associated with the PBI movement, while others using it are independent classes not associated with any organization. The name has been widely used by brethren of various viewpoints.

Some Bible Student groups call themselves "**Free Bible Students**." Their views vary considerably. Some use the name to denote that they are not associated with, or controlled by, any organization or individual, even when this is not so. Others use the name to declare their freedom to pursue any line of religious thought they choose without using Pastor Russell's Bible study aids. These tend to study the Bible referencing other teachers, some of whom had, or have, a partial knowledge of the Truth. Others use the name to reflect their opposition to any incorporation of organizations or groups to meet government legal requirements for bookkeeping and tax purposes. Some "Free Bible Students" are freewheeling thinkers, who show little respect for Pastor Russell and his work, and often are blatantly hostile to him. Beliefs of those using this name vary so greatly, that the term only reveals its meaning upon thorough investigation.

Efforts to uphold the Truth in opposition to the teachings of Rutherford's Jehovah's Witness movement and in opposition to the errors of mainline Christian churches continues among Bible Students of different persuasions. Individual brethren, small classes, and small associations continue to proclaim the Truth in various ways. While doctrinal views vary, many continue to hold Pastor Russell in high regard for his position in God's plan.

Some dissenter movements have died out, while others are greatly diminished in size and activity. The "Layman's Home Missionary" movement, the "Pastoral Bible Institute" movement, and the "Dawn Bible Students Association" movement continue their activities, but at much lower levels of support and activity than in the past.

BROTHER RUSSELL STILL PASTOR TO MANY

Today, vitality seems centered in sections of the Bible Student movement that uphold the teachings and principles that Pastor Russell taught in the Volumes and his other writings. This movement of Truth and loyalty to the principles of the Truth transcends corporate business organizations and various doctrinal sidetracks that continue to test the brethren and will continue to the end. Many Bible Student Ecclesias regularly use Pastor Russell's "Studies in the Scriptures" as their Bible study guides, recognizing that God has provided this beneficial method for topical study of the Bible. The desire for Truth and Righteousness still motivates many, and spiritual growth continues to be observed.

GOSPEL AGE EXPERIENCES REPEATED

In reviewing the history of the Bible Student movement after Pastor Russell's death, it becomes apparent that the church's experiences in this brief period of time seem to replicate in miniature the whole Gospel Age experience. The Society repeated the same form of digression as the early church into a top down Catholic-like institution headed by an autocratic, domineering Pope-like figure. Efforts to reform the Jehovah's Witnesses and its leaders' errors were ineffective, and many Brethren left the movement to remain loyal to the Truth. A Protestant-like organization arose with initial success in restoring the Truth, only to fall again into former habits. Efforts were made to reform the Dawn, to no avail. Again, many Brethren, following the dictates of their conscience, left the movement to remain loyal to the Lord, the Truth and the Brethren. Dissenting Brethren gathered to the Truth and were sustained by it, though often labeled evildoers by those who were once their brethren. Thus was repeated, in miniature, the whole Gospel Age.

There is an old adage that says, "Those who ignore history are sure to repeat it." There are tendencies in the Truth movement today that appear very similar to Rutherford's "Finished Mystery" spirit and ideas, ideas that were carried forward into the "Elijah Voice Society." It is a spirit of aggressive criticism of political and religious leaders and organizations. It exceeds the divine commission to preach the Truth in season and out, and could bring Bible Students into the error of suffering for foolishness sake. It was a mistake then, and will be a mistake now if pursued. If we preach the Truth in the Spirit of the Truth as Pastor Russell did, we will have opposition enough without seeking it. And if not, we will be ignored as inconsequential, which Pastor Russell also suggested might happen.

PASTOR RUSSELL'S ADMONITION

In his later years, Pastor Russell repeatedly warned against preaching the truth in any way except in the spirit of love and kindness. "--- whatever we shall do at any time under the guidance of the Lord's Holy Spirit will be in harmony with justice and all the time intermingled with sympathetic love. **None except those possessing and controlled by this, the Holy Spirit of God, will ever be permitted participation in the kingdom glories and power.**" (Reprint 5450, May 1, 1914)

We need not preach in a way as to draw persecution. To do so would repeat the spirit of Rutherford's "Finished Mystery" book and his Jehovah's Witness movement. The word spoken in season with Love will suffice.

God knows those who are his, wherever they may be. Many will fulfill their consecration vows while holding prophetic expectations that are incorrect and will never be fulfilled. One thing is certain: our hearts must be fully in accord with respect for truth and righteousness, his word, the Bible, and the spirit found therein; and our dedication must be absolute. We must handle the word of God honestly, logically, reasonably and with full regard for the facts of history.

It is evident that Bible Student numbers are shrinking, and that few members of the feet class remain on this side of the veil. This should not discourage us, but instead encourage us that our goal, the completion of the church, is nearer than when we first believed.

Let us hold fast to the Truth, fulfill our consecration vows and never forget the blessed privilege of understanding the Truth before our fellows who will soon know it as we do. In the meantime, it is our privilege to stand with our Lord. It is His Truth, not ours. We show and prove our loyalty to God by being loyal to His Truth. Whatever small sacrifice we make

is nothing compared to the blessings we have received. We must never put works ahead of principle and truth, as was done in the past. Nor are we to be motivated by political or social purposes. We must develop the Christ-like character that will fit us for service beyond the veil and without which we will be but dross.

The Truth goes forth despite opposition. It is the Lord's truth. None can stand against it. Let us handle the Word of God and Pastor Russell's writings honestly, for in this we will be held accountable. What a privilege to represent it in the world! None merit this privilege. It is by grace alone.

What can be gained from experiences of the past? "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:23) Self-examination to detect early the enemies of God's Holy Spirit: pride, ambition and self-seeking, which blind the mind to reality and truth. Place God and his truth first and foremost always, lest it slip away from us as is the tendency recorded in history. Always be willing to pay the price.

God could have arranged Bible Student history differently, but he chose to use this method of allowing trial and testing for the development of the new creature by adversity.

The foregoing is a brief history of the Bible Student movement after our Pastor's death. It is the view of one who lived through the later part of it, listened to the stories of those now gone who experienced the early part, and has read several accounts of this period. It is undoubtedly imperfect, even though it attempts to be as factual as possible. Constructive suggestions or corrections will be appreciated.

The above remarks should not be construed in any way as judging the eternal destiny of any individual. Such is the exclusive domain of our Heavenly Father, and it is our hope and desire that all the called should make their calling and election sure.

We thank all those who have read, corrected and made suggestions. Their effort and thoughtful help is very much appreciated.

Lawrence E. Kirkham, July 2002.
Revision 18

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