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Biography of Pastor Russell

The Watchtower Reprints, December 1, 1916, p. 5997

A Biography of Charles Taze Russell

The Divine Plan of the Ages (SS-1), 1927 ed., p. 69

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Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose, 1959 ed., p. 63

“But, is it true you have never published a biography of Pastor Russell?”

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(continued)

Awake!, June 22, 1964, p. 193

“While historians of all nations have been and are more or less guilty of writing biased history, either consciously or unconsciously, those in the employ of totalitarian governments have been especially notorious in prostituting their art by deliberately tampering with the facts of history...the facts in human history are at times distorted...With the fall of the German Empire and the establishment of the Weimar Republic after World War 1 came the need of rewriting that history. When Hitler and his Nazis came into power, German history as they found it did not suit them and so they rewrote it...All that is stated may be true and yet may present a distorted picture because of what is stressed and what is omitted...True as this is of secular histories and encyclopedias, it is even more true of religious historical works.”

(done)

The WATCHTOWER and Herald of Christ's Presence

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The Watch Tower Editorial Committee:

This Journal is published under the supervision of an Editorial Committee, at least three of whom must have read and have approved as Truth each and every article appearing in these columns. The names of the Editorial Committee now serving are: W. E. VAN AMBURGE, J. F. RUTHERFORD, H. C. ROCKWELL, F. H. ROBISON, R. H. HIRSH.

BIOGRAPHY

Charles Taze Russell, known the world over as Pastor Russell, author, lecturer and minister of the Gospel, was born at Pittsburgh, Pa., February 18, 1852; died October 31, 1916. He was the son of Joseph L. and Eliza Birney Russell, both of Scotch-Irish lineage. He was educated in the common schools and under private tutors. Author of "OBJECT AND MANNER OF OUR LORD'S RETURN," "FOOD FOR THINKING CHRISTIANS," "TABERNACLE SHADOWS," "THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES," "THE TIME IS AT HAND," "THY KINGDOM COME," "THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON," "THE ATONEMENT," "THE NEW CREATION," "WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT HELL," "SPIRITISM," "OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS," "THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION," et cetera, et cetera.

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

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

HIS TEACHINGS

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

He was not the founder of a new religion, and never made such claim. He revived the great truths taught by Jesus and the apostles, and turned the light of the twen-

tieth century upon these. He made no claim of a special revelation from God, but held that it was God's due time for the Bible to be understood; and that, being fully consecrated to the Lord and to his service, he was permitted to understand it. Because he devoted himself to the development of the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit, the promise of the Lord was fulfilled in him: "For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 1:5-8.

He clearly taught and proved his teachings by the citation of Scripture authority—that man does not possess an immortal soul, that he is a soul and is mortal; that the wages of sin is death—not eternal torment; that death came upon man as the just penalty for the violation of God's law; that death means the destruction of man; that God, in his goodness, has provided the great ransom price whereby man may be delivered from the bondage of sin and death; that God's beloved Son, Jesus, became a man and grew to manhood's estate, was put to death as a man and raised again from the dead a spirit-being, possessing the divine nature; that by his death and resurrection Christ Jesus provided and produced the ransom-price for man's deliverance and restoration; that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man; that every man in God's due time must, therefore, have a fair trial for life, and to this end there shall be a resurrection of all the dead; that Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and must come the second time; that the period of time elapsing between the first and second coming of the Lord is devoted to the election of the members of the body of Christ, taken from amongst men; that the requirements for election to that exalted position are, full faith in the shed blood of Jesus as the ransom price, a full consecration to do the Father's will even unto death; that all who thus are consecrated and begotten of the holy Spirit and are overcomers shall have part in the chief resurrection, and be exalted to positions in the heavenly kingdom of God and participate with Christ Jesus in his Millennial reign for the blessing of all the families of the earth; that during the thousand-year reign of Christ all of the dead shall be awakened, and given a fair and impartial trial for life or death; that under said reign the wilfully disobedient shall be everlastingly destroyed, while those obedient to the righteous rule of Christ shall be fully restored to human perfection of body, mind and character; that during this Millennial reign the earth shall be brought to a state of Edenic Paradise, and made fit as a place habitable for perfect man; that man, fully restored to perfection, will inhabit the beautiful earth in all the ages to come.

To the King of Kings and Lord of Lords

IN THE INTEREST OF

HIS CONSECRATED SAINTS,

WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION.

—AND OF—

"ALL THAT IN EVERY PLACE CALL UPON THE LORD"

"THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH"

—AND OF—

THE CROAKING CREATION, TRAVAILING AND WAITING FOR THE

MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED.

"To make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." "wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of the times He might gather together in one all things, under Christ."

Ephesians 3:4, 5, 9; 1:8-10.

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WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY

BROOKLYN, N. Y., U. S. A.

Written in 1886 by Pastor Russell

Made in U. S. A.

N. B.—This volume can also be supplied in the Arabic, Armenian, Danco-Norwegian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hollandish, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Roumanian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish, and Ukrainian languages.

Biography of Pastor Russell

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

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of the fastest growing religious organizations in many countries. . . .

Pastor Russell, . . . a name as sincerely loved and as bitterly hated as almost any in American history.

Around that name for years raged some of the bitterest controversies which ever divided the Christian world, and the controversies still rage, although his name is not so much heard in the discussions. . . .

All through his life, he had told his followers not to revere him as more than just a fellow man with divine guidance. And he taught them this so well that his work passed into the hands of others with hardly a moment's halt and the publishing house which he founded has never published a biography of Pastor Russell.¹

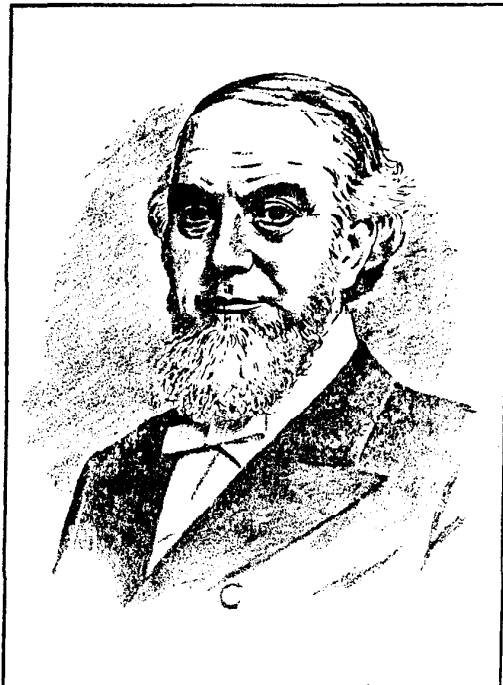
LOIS: Perhaps the fact that his name has been ignored by the world is in his favor. It would seem that all of God's servants in times past were considered of little importance in the eyes of the world, yet their works continue. That pattern certainly

seems to have been the same in Pastor Russell's life, doesn't it? But, is it true you have never published a biography of Pastor Russell?

JOHN: That's right. Jehovah's witnesses admire the qualities he possessed as a man, but were we to give the honor and credit to Pastor Russell, we would be saying that the works and success were his; but Jehovah's witnesses believe it is God's spirit that guides and directs his people.

Some have stumbled over that point; and these qualities that he possessed and that were so admired by many in the organization at that time were to provide a real test that caused them to fail in their endurance and seek an occasion against Russell's successor as president of the Watch Tower Society, J. F. Rutherford, and against the Society itself.

¹ *Where Else but Pittsburgh!* by George Swetnam (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1958: Davis & Warde, Inc.), pp. 110, 116.



CHARLES T. RUSSELL IN 1906



JOSEPH F. RUTHERFORD IN 1915

them to delusions of grandeur, and makes nations bitter, arrogant, insufferable and vain."

While historians of all nations have been and are more or less guilty of writing biased history, either consciously or unconsciously, those in the employ of totalitarian governments have been especially notorious in prostituting their art by deliberately tampering with the facts of history; Red Russia providing one of the most glaring present-day examples. Says a recent survey of the problem of rewriting German history, as published in *The Saturday Review*: "In East Germany school books are written in accordance with the Soviet propaganda line to serve the interests of the Communist state. All historical references in this context become political weapons and cannot be taken at face value."

That the facts in human history are at times distorted can nowhere be better seen than in the record of German history during the past half century. In the days when the Hohenzollerns ruled Germany it had one kind of history. With the fall of the German Empire and the establishment of the Weimar Republic after World War I came the need of rewriting that history. When Hitler and his Nazis came into power, German history as they found it did not suit them and so they rewrote it. The collapse of the Third Reich again required changes to be made in German history. It appears that there was some laxness on the part of the educational authorities in this matter, but the resurgence of anti-Semitism and the trial of Eichmann, among other things, have spurred the authorities to yield to the clamor of school-teachers and others for a new approach to German history.

As a result, a tremendous revision of history is going on today in West Germany involving hundreds of history books, and

the study of modern history is compulsory in all types of schools. The crimes of the Nazi regime are explicitly stated and condemned. Typical is the statement appearing in one of them: "The terror and crimes of the National Socialist regime are without parallel in modern history . . . No German can escape responsibility for the crimes committed in the name of the nation."

Yet even in this statement there is betrayed a trace of human frailty. What about all the Germans that preferred to go to the concentration camps, if not also to certain death, rather than support the Nazi regime? Certainly such Germans did escape responsibility for the terror and crimes of the National Socialist regime; most conspicuous of whom, incidentally, were the Christian witnesses of Jehovah.

Yes, because of human frailty the facts in human history are at times distorted and, therefore, must be taken with the proverbial "grain of salt." All that is stated may be true and yet may present a distorted picture because of what is stressed and what is omitted. The same must be said about the historical records appearing in such authoritative works as encyclopedias. True as this is of secular histories and encyclopedias, it is even more true of religious historical works.

In particular are works dealing with Bible history to be viewed critically. The contents of such works invariably depend upon whether the author is a "higher critic" or one that believes in the inspiration of the Bible. Thus a greater contrast could hardly be imagined than between that which appears in *The New Bible Dictionary* by J. D. Douglas and that which appears in *Harper's Bible Dictionary* on such subjects as who wrote the book of Deuteronomy; the latter work presenting the speculations of "higher critics" as sound sense and truth. Even such an extensive