The Teachings *of* Pastor Russell

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By W. T. CONNER

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THE TEACHINGS OF "PASTOR" RUSSELL

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N this discussion we propose to give, as briefly as possible, some of the leading ideas of "Pastor" Russell. It is difficult, in so brief a space, to give anything like an adequate statement or discussion of his teachings. My main aim will be to state what "Pastor" Russell taught, and some space will be given to criticism. His teachings are so absurd and so contrary to commonly accepted Christian principles that a statement of what he taught is enough. To state his teaching is to refute it.

Mr. Russell put out six good-sized volumes on "Millennial Dawn" or "Studies in the Scriptures." In the first volume he gives a clear general outline of his scheme. My interpretation is based mainly on a study of that volume, and the references in parenthesis are to the pages of that volume, unless otherwise specified.

1. *"Plan of the Ages."*

Perhaps the best place to begin a consideration of the doctrines of Russellism is with Mr. Russell's "Plan of the Ages." This idea of dispensations, or "plan of the ages," forms the groundwork of Mr. Russell's whole scheme of doctrine.

According to Mr. Russell there are three great ages or dispensations in the history of the world: from creation to the flood, under the administration of angels; from the flood to the second coming of Christ, under the limited control of Satan; the world to come, under divine administration, the kingdom of God. He claims that his scheme is pre-eminently scriptural.

He makes the governing consideration in his interpretation of scripture his own arbitrary "plan of the ages," which he claims to be divine. Instead of getting this "plan of the ages" out of the Bible he arbitrarily imposes it on the Bible, and interprets the scriptures to fit his "plan of the ages." He claims that in understanding any passage of scripture the first and primary thing is to find out the age

or dispensation to which it refers. This, he says, is the only thing that will enable us to interpret the Bible in harmony with itself.

Of course, there is some truth in this idea of dispensations. Revelation is progressive. There is a progressive unfolding of God's plan, and that plan is unitary. But it is also true that there are great principles underlying God's dealings with man in every age of the world. Instead of one dispensation displacing another in the arbitrary way represented by Mr. Russell, it is rather true that one dispensation takes up into itself the permanent moral and spiritual values and principles of the preceding. Thus we have in the Bible the general divisions of the Old and New Testaments. But even in regard to these we are warned against making too sharp a distinction. Jesus and Paul (as well as other New Testament writers) give us to understand that the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New and the New is the completion of the Old.

Certainly if any principle is to be made our governing idea in the interpretation of the Bible, and of the whole course of human

history as the working out of God's plan for the human race, then we ought by all means to examine that principle with great care to see if it is a sound principle. About the only argument that Mr. Russell offers for his "plan of the ages" is that it harmonizes the scriptures. But as a matter of fact when we examine this principle and its application to the Bible, we find that it will not stand the test. As applied to the Bible, instead of giving the beautiful unity and harmony that Mr. Russell claims it will give, it really tears the Bible to shreds and leaves this book more of a "crazy-quilt" affair than does any of the schemes of radical criticism. It makes the Bible a jumble of hopeless contradictions and brings chaos instead of order out of its teachings.

To illustrate Mr. Russell's method of interpreting scripture with reference to the "plan of the ages," we might take the doctrines of election and freedom. Mr. Russell claims that this is the age of election—the present gospel age. All the scriptures that speak of election then are to be interpreted as referring to this

age, while all those passages that refer to a universal invitation are to be referred to the coming kingdom, or millennial age. He proceeds upon the assumption that election is inconsistent with a universal gospel invitation. Revelation 22: 17, for instance, has no reference to the present gospel age. Only in the millennial age will the Spirit and the bride say come, and whosoever will may respond to the call. In a similar way he disposes of all passages that give a universal significance to the saving work of Christ, or a universal sway to his reign. Thus Mr. Russell flatly contradicts the common Christian conviction that we are now under obligation to give the gospel to all men. His interpretation takes all meaning for us out of Christ's command to preach the gospel to every creature. If Mr. Russell is right on this point, then practically the whole Christian world is wrong and our sense of obligation to carry the good news of salvation to all men is only an illusion.

2. *The Present Versus the Coming Age.*

One of the most important applications of this principle of dispensation that Mr.

Russell makes is in regard to the present gospel age as compared with the coming millennial age. The first age from creation to the flood is negligible, as far as his scheme of doctrine is concerned. It is put in only to fill out. (It might be interesting to note that Mr. Russell's whole scheme is based on Usher's chronology. He presupposes that the world is only 6,000 years old. He seems to think that there is no question about this.)

It is important to note that Mr. Russell's chief points of division of human history are at the flood and at the second coming of Christ. The first coming of Christ was an event of secondary importance as compared with these. His second dispensation in the world's history reaches from the flood to the second coming of Christ. This he divides into three secondary ages—the patriarchal age, reaching from the flood to the time of Moses; the Jewish age, reaching from Moses to the time of Christ; and the gospel age, reaching from the coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ. According to this either the flood or the second coming of Christ is an event of greater mean-

ing for mankind than was the first coming of Christ. If Mr. Russell was right in regard to this, then the Christian world has been wrong in thinking that the coming of Christ with the establishment of Christianity was the central event of human history. In that case we ought to count time from the flood rather than from the birth of Christ.

Mr. Russell then makes a great difference between the present gospel age and the coming millennial age. The gospel age is the age of the church. The millennial age is the time of the kingdom. The kingdom has not yet been established. (Mr. Russell does in places speak as if the kingdom had been established in a preparatory way. But in most places he speaks as if the kingdom had not been initiated in any sense.) He holds that the kingdom will not be set up until the return of Christ. Accordingly in Mr. Russell's scheme the first coming of Christ was rather a subordinate event. It divided the Jewish age from the gospel or Christian age, but both of these belong to this "present evil world," while the second coming of Christ will usher in an entirely new dispensation.

The purpose of the present gospel age he says is not to save the world, nor even to preach the gospel to all men with a view of giving them an opportunity of salvation. Mr. Russell accepts the idea that there can be no salvation apart from hearing and believing the gospel. And he argues as if orthodox theology taught that all except adult believers were eternally lost. So he says that if God's purpose is to save the world, or even to give all men an opportunity to be saved, then the present age is a failure. The purpose, he says, of the present gospel age is to call out the elect few, "the little flock," "the church," "the bride of Christ." The age of universal salvation or universal probation with a view to salvation will be during the coming age. The gospel age and the kingdom age, therefore, are two different ages. The scriptures that apply to the one must not be applied to the other.

Mr. Russell undertook to tell us when the gospel age would end and the kingdom age begin. It is interesting to see how he gets around Acts 1: 7, where Jesus said to his disciples: "It is not for you to know the times or the

seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" ("appointed by his own authority," Mr. Russell puts it), and Matthew 13: 32 where Jesus said, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels who are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." He says with reference to these passages: "These words of our Lord cannot be understood to mean that none but the Father will *ever* know of the times and seasons; hence, it no more proves that we cannot know those times and seasons *now*, than our Lord cannot know them now" (Studies in the Scriptures, Series II, p. 18.) On the next page, he calls attention to the fact that Jesus, after saying that no one but the Father knew the time of his return to the earth, enjoined his disciples to watch, and argues that the fact that Jesus warned them to watch implies that the time would come when they could know about the times and seasons.

Now this clever dodger of the meaning of scripture fails to take account of the fact that Jesus said: "Watch and pray; for *ye know not when the time is*" (Mark 13: 33). Jesus

based his exhortation to watch on the fact that we could not know; Mr. Russell argues that his exhortation presupposes that we can know. A good many other people have made the same mistake that Mr. Russell did; that is, they have thought that to watch with reference to the coming of Christ meant to be setting dates for his return and gazing into the sky to try to get the first view of him. The best way to watch for his return is to be faithful in the duties he has assigned us so as to be ready to give account of our stewardship. Mr. Russell had October, 1914, set as the time for the kingdom of God to be set up and the millennium to begin. He had worked out an elaborate parallel between the ending of the Jewish age (and beginning of the gospel age) and the end of the "times of the Gentiles" (the period between the downfall of the Jewish nation and the re-establishment of the Jewish power at the beginning of the millennium). According to his scheme of dates, 6,000 years from Adam ended in 1872; Jesus returned to earth (secretly, of course) in 1874; the Jews began to regain power in 1878; and

the millennium was due to begin, October, 1914. (See Vol. 2, especially chapters IV and VII.) When the millennium did not begin in 1914, I think Mr. Russell gave some explanation and changed the date. But if any one will read the chapters above referred to, he will see that Mr. Russell has drawn such an elaborate parallel and made such a definite argument for the above series of dates that for one of them to fail shows that his whole scheme has gone to wreck. Mr. Russell (writing a number of years before 1914, of course) practically says that none of these dates could vary one year one way or the other. Here is his language: "For be it distinctly noticed that if the chronology, or any of these time-periods, be changed *but one year* (italics mine), the beauty and force of this parallelism are destroyed." And now *be it distinctly noticed* that more than ten years have passed since the date set by Mr. Russell for the millennium to begin and it *has not begun*. According to Mr. Russell's own words then his parallelism between the end of the Jewish age and the end of the

"times of the Gentiles" has broken down, his chronology has failed, and his whole scheme gone to wreck.

And it might not be amiss here to say that whenever any other man makes out a program for the future course of human history to follow (premillennial, postmillennial or any other kind) the unfolding events of history will treat his scheme of dates with as much indifference as it is now treating Mr. Russell's. Of all the fool's occupations that I know of for religious men, this thing of fixing dates and making out a course for the future events of history to follow is about the most useless. It is easy enough to make out such a course. All one needs is a vivid imagination, the ability to interpret "symbols" and juggle with dates and the thing can be done. And then history goes straight down the road and does not seem to notice the signs along the way inviting her to take the by-paths.

3. *Probation and Millennial Salvation.*

Mr. Russell argues for the necessity of a second probation, or, as he says, for a fair probation for all. He holds that the vast majority

of the human race never have a fair probation in this life. For men to be condemned on such a probation as they have in this life would be unjust. The justice of God, therefore, as well as his mercy, demands that all men be restored to life and given an opportunity to accept salvation. Calvinism, he maintains, impeaches the character of God by limiting his goodness. According to Calvinism, he saves all that he wills to save, but his will is only to save a small portion of the race. Arminianism, Mr. Russell says, limits his power, while giving him credit for desiring to save all. Mr. Russell's plan, he claims, gives full credit to both God's power and his goodness. God has not designed to save all in this present age. Yet the scriptures clearly teach that his mercy is world-wide. The only way to harmonize the failure of God to save all, or at least give all an opportunity to be saved, in this age, and these scriptures that teach his universal love and mercy, is to hold that all will be restored to life and given then such an opportunity. That will be the time of the restitution of all things.

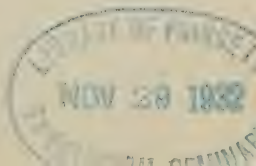
God's grace is to be testified to all *in due season.* The due season for all except the little flock is in the coming millennial age.

The present age is really not an age of probation for any, Mr. Russell holds, except the "little flock" (pp. 141, 145). The whole race had its probation in Adam at the beginning. All his descendants share his condemnation and death. We do not have an individual probation during this age. The race as a race had a probation in Adam and fell. During the millennial age, the members of the race will have an individual probation. Each man's destiny will then depend on his individual decision (pp. 130, 131). No injustice is done to any member of the race in the fact that he is involved in the fall of Adam. Life is the gift of God. Sin brings death or the cessation of life. So if a man should bear the penalty of Adam's sin, he would only cease to be and no harm has been done him, but rather a favor, in allowing him to live for a brief time.

But on account of the ransom-price paid by Christ for Adam's sin, all will be restored to life and (during the millennial age) given an

individual probation. It is in connection with this probation that the advantage will be seen of man's experience with sin in this life. Man will have learned the evil of sin and will be all the wiser for his experience, and therefore more ready to turn away from sin and live a life of obedience. Here is seen the wisdom of God in permitting sin. If God had created man and guarded him against temptation he never would have known from experience what evil is. He might always have had a curiosity to know what it was like and thus would never have been confirmed in righteousness. But having experienced its evil in this life he will be all the more ready to turn away from it when his individual probation comes in the millennial age.

Mr. Russell interprets the day of judgment as being a day of testing, trial, or probation. It is not to be a day of twenty-four hours but a long period, identified by him with the millennium. The world had its first judgment day when Adam was on trial. It is to have another during the coming age. Here is another place where Mr. Russell differs from practi-



cally all other Christians. Practically all others hold that the judgment day will be the time when eternal rewards or punishment will be meted out to men, a time of final reckoning with reference to the lives they had previously lived on earth. But here comes Mr. Russell and tells us that we have all been wrong about that. He identifies the judgment with the millennium and the chief thing in his millennium is a new probation (or the first real probation, as he says), and this probation is to be under much more favorable conditions than were the conditions under which men formerly lived on earth. According to this then the day of judgment will not be a day of reckoning with reference to the life that men have previously lived on earth (the life that we are now living), but rather a new opportunity to correct the mistakes made in that previous life, an opportunity under much more favorable conditions and with a much longer time in which to make the corrections.

This would imply that men will not be judged for the deeds of the present life. This would seem to follow, at least for all except

the "little flock." I do not mean that he explicitly teaches this, but it is the practical effect of his teaching. This is seen from the fact that Mr. Russell lays practically no emphasis on the present life in relation to one's destiny, but makes it rather the purpose of his whole scheme to show that men do not have sufficient light and opportunity in the present age to determine their eternal destiny, but will have such light and opportunity during the millennium. Thus, again, Mr. Russell runs counter to practically the whole Christian world in emphasizing the coming age as the opportunity for salvation, while gospel preachers emphasize the present as the opportunity to get ready for the future. Mr. Russell's attitude as a practical matter amounts to saying to the sinner: "No need to worry, you will have the whole millennial age in which to see about this matter. You do not know enough to be responsible now anyhow. Sleep on; I will ring the bell in plenty of time for you to get up for breakfast." Such teaching takes all moral zest and earnestness out of life. (See Mr. Russell's disclaimer on p. 145.)

This new probation does not mean that men are simply to hear the gospel and believe and be saved. It means that they are to be raised to life and put on trial for life everlasting. This resurrection is on the basis of the ransom paid by Christ. So that the ransom does not secure life everlasting but only a guarantee of another opportunity to win life everlasting by perfect obedience. The ransom then does not secure salvation, but only a chance to win salvation (or life everlasting). The condition of attaining to life everlasting during the millennium is the same as with Adam, perfect obedience. We will be raised with the same bodies that we hav[redacted]hey will still be subject to death. Each man will be allowed to live at least one hundred years. If during that time he makes progress he will be given further opportunity. Those who wilfully sin will be finally blotted out. But all who make progress will be led on until they attain human perfection (p. 143). Evidently this second probation is a probation under law, not grace. All that grace does is to secure a second probation of law, in which the individual's

destiny will depend on his own obedience rather than that of his representative. He says: "He gave himself a ransom (corresponding price) for all, in order that he might bless all, and give to every man an individual trial for life" (p. 150). Again, "The 'ransom for all' given by 'the man Christ Jesus' does not give or guarantee everlasting life to any man but it does guarantee to every man *another opportunity or trial for life everlasting*" (italics his) (p. 150). In that second probation the sinner will have a better chance because the conditions will be much better (p. 153). Experience with sin here will also help in that probation (p. 143). Perfect obedience will not be required until the disabilities due to the sins of this life are removed (p. 143).

The idea of salvation by grace as taught by evangelical Christians, and found in the New Testament is thus seen to be foreign to Mr. Russell's thoughts. Adam had a probation of law, success depending on perfect obedience. This probation was a race probation. The probation that will come to all individually during the millennium will also depend

on perfect obedience, and consequently will be a probation of law, not of grace. This is shown on page 151, where Mr. Russell says that "the terms or conditions of their individual trial for life (during the millennium, he means, of course) will be the same as the Adamic trial." He then makes it perfectly clear that the trial is one of obedience under law by adding: "The law of God will remain the same—it changes not. It will say, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' " He says again: "But the fact that men are ransomed from the first penalty does not guarantee that they may not, when individually tried for everlasting life, fail to render the obedience without which none will be permitted to live everlastingly."

Here then is what Mr. Russell teaches us: Adam was created and put on trial for life everlasting (continued existence without end) on condition of perfect obedience. Under this trial he failed. Consequently he died (ceased to be, was annihilated). Death came on all his descendants as a penalty. But on the ground that Christ paid the "ransom price" for them (died, was blotted out as a man),

God will bring them back to life at the beginning of the millennium and give them another chance to win life everlasting (continued existence) on the same condition under which Adam was tried (but under more favorable circumstances).

As the idea of grace is absent from Mr. Russell's teaching, so is the idea of guilt in sin. Sin for Mr. Russell is nothing more than a misfortune for which one can hardly be held responsible. In fact, Mr. Russell succeeds in turning it into a blessing. Due to our experience with it in this age, when the great millennium age comes, we will be all the wiser and the more ready to turn away from sin. Sin is thus a means of discipline and education. Such a view wholly disregards what the New Testament teaches about the enslaving power of sin. Mr. Russell seems to think that the only result of sin is physical death and that God can raise man back to life from this death and that man can then go on, having nothing left over from sin except the useful lessons learned from it. He says: "Still, God designed to *permit evil*, because, having this

remedy provided for man's release from its consequences, he saw the result would be to lead him, through experience to a full appreciation of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the matchless brilliancy of virtue in contrast with it—thus teaching him the more to love and honor his creator, who is the source and fountain of all goodness, and forever to shun that which brought so much woe and misery" (p. 124).

There is perhaps nothing about the teachings of Mr. Russell that shows the superficial character of his whole system more than this easy-going view of sin. Any man who has ever considered the teachings of the Bible in regard to sin and squarely faced a conscience quickened by the Holy Spirit will readily perceive the shallowness of his teaching on this point. Along with this there is no recognition in his teaching of the holy character of God. His God is rather a clever manipulator, one could almost say a scheming trickster, who moves men on a checker board so as to outwit an opponent.

Besides, Mr. Russell makes man so helpless in this age that the practical effect is that he cannot help sinning, while during the millennial age, he will be so surrounded with good influences or rather restraining forces that he can scarcely help being saved. The essential elements of a moral probation, either now or during the millennium, are wanting in Mr. Russell's thoughts. The quotations already given show that Mr. Russell teaches that the condition of attaining eternal life during the millennium will be the same as for Adam, namely, obedience to law; but the great advantage then (so he claims) will be in the fact that men will have learned so much from this experience with sin and evil in this life and in these restraining external influences brought to bear on men. Government and society will then be so organized as to make it easy to do right.

As already noted, the reason mankind is given a second probation is that Christ paid the ransom-price to deliver the race from the penalty that came on it as a result of Adam's sin. Mr. Russell's doctrine of atonement is

substitutionary and very crudely so. The substitute was not a divine, but a human substitute. In answer to the question as to how one man could be a sufficient substitute for the whole race, he gives a very clever answer. Here is his answer: "As the entire race was in Adam when he was condemned, and lost life through him, so when Adam's life was redeemed by this man Christ Jesus, a possible race in his loins died also, and a full satisfaction, or corresponding price, was rendered to justice for all men" (p. 155; cf. also p. 129). So the sinless Christ and the possible race that was in him died for the sinful Adam and the actual race that sprang from him. This is substitution with a vengeance.

Moreover, Christ died the same kind of death that was inflicted on Adam and his posterity—namely, extinction of being. (Death always means annihilation, or extinction of being, with Mr. Russell.) As a result Adam and his race will simply be restored to life and put on a new probation (pp. 152, 154, 157, 159). Christ has made no provision then for individual disobedience under the second proba-

tion. The wilful sinner there then will be blotted out (p. 158). Christ's ransom only delivers from the death that came as a penalty of Adam's sin. Deliverance from that penalty means resurrection to the same kind of life that we now enjoy, with a new opportunity to win life everlasting by obedience to God.

A question comes to mind in regard to the resurrection as based on Christ's ransom-price. After God has blotted men out of existence in death, why should he want to bring them back into existence again in the resurrection? Why should he not create others in their place? As a matter of fact that is about what Mr. Russell's doctrine amounts to. He says in substance that God blots men out of existence and then brings them back into existence in the resurrection. He does seem to recognize that when they come back into existence in the resurrection they can remember their former experiences in this life. It is in this that he finds the blessing (for that is what it amounts to) of sin. But the question comes to mind as to how there could be continuity of conscious life in memory across the chasm

of annihilation that Mr. Russell represents death to be. The only thing left for Mr. Russell would evidently be an arbitrary appeal to the omnipotence of God. (It would be in accord with Mr. Russell's general methods of thought to solve the problem that way.) But even an omnipotent God cannot do things that are inconsistent with himself and the world he has created. God cannot make a thing to be and not to be at the same time. Christians can believe in a resurrection of the body because they believe in the persistence of the soul. God can give to the spiritual personality that persists in death another body corresponding to its needs and the higher life that it will live beyond the grave. On the other hand, Mr. Russell reverses this relation. He makes the soul only a function of the bodily organism. Consequently when the body is dissolved in death, the soul ceases to be, and only comes back into existence when the body is raised again. If the principle of identity and continuity is in the soul, then I can live beyond the event that men call death, and God can give me a new body—continuous in some sense, as

Paul shows in 1 Cor. 15 with the present body and yet transcending its mortality and corruptibility. But if the principle of identity and continuity lies in the body, then of course death means annihilation and resurrection is in fact an impossibility. Any form of the doctrine of "soul sleeping," or unconsciousness between death and resurrection amounts to Mr. Russell's doctrine of annihilation in death and recreation in the resurrection, and is based on a materialistic philosophy. Such a doctrine holds that there can be no conscious life apart from a body, and it usually thinks of the resurrection body as being a "flesh and blood" body very much like our present bodies; but Paul says that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God—meaning of course the eternal kingdom of God. (For Mr. Russell's materialistic idea of the soul, etc., see Vol. 5, p. 320ff, of "Studies in the Scriptures.")

Accordingly Mr. Russell thinks of the bodies in which the great majority of men will be raised at the beginning of the millennium as bodies very much, if not entirely, like our present bodies, hence subject to death and decay.

(This will be true of all except those who are raised as "spiritual" beings. These will not be men any longer but "spirits" or "divine" beings. See discussion further on as to salvation.) Those who are raised with "human" bodies will never attain to immortality. They may reach "everlasting life"—continued existence as human beings. Those who become members of the "little flock" will become immortal as God and Christ are—dependent on no one outside themselves for their existence.

Perhaps all that need be said about this is that the New Testament knows nothing about two kinds of salvation—one the attainment of "human perfection" and the other kind being made a "divine" or "spirit" being. Nor does it know anything about such a thing as a human being attaining immortality in the sense of being independent of God. Such a thought is repugnant to any mind that believes in God as the supreme creator and ruler of the universe. No man can ever live without God. On the other hand, united with this dependence on God, is the natural immortality of all men. Men are made not to perish as the beast, but to live

forever. This belongs to the nature of man as a spiritual being. So that everlasting life in the sense of continued existence is not something to be achieved in the millennium; it belongs to man as man. (It is interesting to note Mr. Russell's difficulty with Revelations 20: 5. It is there stated that the rest of the dead live not until the end of the thousand years. The ordinary pre-millennial theory holds, on this statement, that while the righteous, or at least the martyrs, will be raised at the beginning of the millennium, the wicked will not be raised until the end of the millennium. But this does not fit Mr. Russell's theory. He said that all the dead will be raised at the beginning of the millennium. Hence, he tells us, with a great show of learning, that the text is spurious. But I notice that Westcott and Hort give it as genuine. And since Mr. Russell confessed that he did not know anything about Greek, I suspect that these two great Greek scholars—Westcott and Hort—really are better authorities than Mr. Russell. Mr. Russell goes on to say that, even if this text were genuine, it would not

contradict his view, since the wicked dead do not live in the full sense of the term until the end of the millennium. This means that, if a passage stands in his way, he will arbitrarily read it out of the text; and if he cannot do that, he will even modify his fundamental conception of death as annihilation—anything to get over a difficulty.)

4. *Salvation Offered Now.*

We come now to what might be called Mr. Russell's doctrine of present salvation, though what he teaches on that subject is so different from the teaching of the New Testament that what he teaches can be called a doctrine of salvation only as a matter of accommodation.

As already stated, he teaches that Adam was created a perfect man. When he fell the whole race fell in him, so that now all men are born depraved and sinful. Mr. Russell holds that the purpose of the present gospel age is not to offer salvation to everybody but rather to select the favored few, the "bride of Christ."

Perhaps we can best understand his doctrine by looking at the steps in the selecting of this

"bride of Christ." The first step is that they shall be justified. This means that they accept Christ as their ransom, and then God justifies them or reckons them as perfect human beings. This puts them in God's reckoning back where Adam was before the fall. It does not, however, change their character (or nature, as Mr. Russell usually puts it). This comes, in his scheme, to be altogether a different thing, and follows later (if it takes place at all).

This change of nature, as we will soon point out, means that they cease to be human and become "spiritual" or "divine" beings. Evangelical Christianity has always meant a change of character in talking about a change of "nature" in regeneration. The conception of character was lacking in Mr. Russell's doctrine of salvation. Moral concepts cut a very small figure in his scheme of doctrine. That is one reason his whole scheme could so admirably be represented on a chart. Any conception of salvation or the Christian life that can easily be put down on a "chart" is mechanical and therefore is not Christian. Look out for the brother with a chart of "salvation" or a chart

of "prophecy." Such charts may commend the ingenuity of the author and his ability to interpret "symbols" and manipulate sacred "figures" but they are worth about as much to a Christian as the multiplication table would be to a mouse trying to figure out how he could get out of a barrel of water.

This change of "nature"' begins in the next step after justification. It is what Mr. Russell calls spirit begetting. He says: "During the gospel age God has made a special offer to justified human beings, telling them that on certain conditions they may experience a change of nature, that they may cease to be earthly, human beings, and become heavenly, spiritual beings, like Christ, their Redeemer." The condition of this spirit begetting is that they shall consecrate themselves utterly to God and his service. He appeals here to Romans 12: 1 where Paul exhorts the Romans to present their bodies a living sacrifice to God. Those who do this are begotten of the spirit. (Mr. Russell writes the word spirit here with a small letter.) Those who consecrate themselves to God are no longer accounted as

human beings but as spiritual. He says: "These, from the moment of their consecration to God, are no longer reckoned as men, but as having been begotten of God through the word of truth—no longer human, but thenceforth spiritual children" (p. 226). "But their spiritual being is yet imperfect; they are only *begotten*, not yet *born* of the spirit. They are embryo spiritual children" (pp. 226, 227).

The next step is to be born of the spirit. This takes place in the resurrection. This is conditioned upon carrying out the covenant entered into at the time of spirit begetting. Those who perform that covenant throughout their earthly career—keeping their body under (dead), keeping their own will out of sight, and performing only the Lord's will—these will in the resurrection be "made perfect spiritual beings with bodies like unto Christ's glorious body." Those of the faithful who are living at Christ's coming will also be transformed. (See p. 227.) These will then be spiritual children of God.

The process, however, is not yet complete. Hear Mr. Russell: "But there is a still further step to be taken beyond a perfection of spiritual being. . . . . We do not here refer to a glory of person, but to a glory of power or office. . . . . But after we are thus perfected, and made entirely like our Lord and head, we are to be associated with him in the 'glory' of power and office—to sit with him in his throne, even as he, after being perfected at his resurrection, was exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Thus shall we enter everlasting glory" (pp. 227, 228). This is the final step in the glorification of the "little flock," the "bride of Christ." The "elect few" are now no longer human beings. They are divine beings in the same sense that Christ is divine. They are immortal in the same sense that he is and will reign with him during the millennium.

It is further to be noticed that Mr. Russell teaches here that the members of the little flock who are exalted to share the "divine nature" and the divine throne with Jesus go through the same experiences that he did. Jesus, so he says, sacrificed his human nature in death.

When he was crucified his human nature was annihilated, blotted out of existence. He was then raised a divine being and exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high. The members of the little flock go through the same kind of experience, except that they begin one step lower down—they begin on the plane of human depravity, as fallen men, while Jesus began on the plane of human perfection.

Speaking of Jesus, Mr. Russell says: "When he thus presented himself (in baptism, he is speaking of), consecrated his being, his offering was holy (pure) and acceptable to God, who showed his acceptance by filling him with his Spirit and power—when the Holy Spirit came upon him, thus anointing him.

"This filling with the Spirit was the begetting to a new nature—the divine—which should be fully developed or born when he had fully accomplished the offering—the sacrifice of the human nature. This begetting was a step up from human conditions. . . . . On this plane Jesus spent three and one-half years of his life—until his human existence ended on the cross. Then, after being dead three

days, he was raised to life" (p. 230). But we must not take this statement of Mr. Russell's to mean that Jesus was raised from the dead in the sense in which Christians usually hold that doctrine. Mr. Russell holds that the body of Jesus did not rise from the dead. It may have dissolved in gases (Vol. 2 of "Studies in the Scriptures," p. 126). The death of Jesus rather meant the annihilation of his human nature and the resurrection meant that he came to life as a divine being. (See the section on the person of Christ.) So Mr. Russell says: "Jesus, therefore, at and after his resurrection, was a spirit—a spirit being, and no longer a human being in any sense. True, after his resurrection he had power to appear, and did appear, as a man, in order that he might teach his disciples and prove to them that he was no longer dead; but he was not a man . . . . 'So is every one that is *born* of the Spirit' " (p. 231).

Following after the example of Jesus we too may be begotten of the spirit when we, after being justified, fully consecrate ourselves to the service of God. Then if we live

up to our vow of consecration we will be born of the spirit, that is, raised a spirit being in the resurrection, and as the final step, may be admited to the throne of glory to reign with Christ. (In some places, Mr. Russell seems to distinguish between spirit and divine natures. For instance, he teaches that Christ was a spirit being before the incarnation, not divine. But in chapter XII of Volume 1 in discussing the glorification of the "little flock," he seems to disregard this distinction.) Setting forth the idea that we go through the same process that Jesus did, Mr. Russell says: "The steps of the church to glory are the same as those of her leader and Lord, who hath set us an example that we should walk in his footsteps—except that the church starts on a lower plane" (p. 231).

Now let us look at a few of the ideas advanced by this man who was "the Lord's special servant to give the Household of Faith meat in due season." (See preface to Vol. 7, of "Studies in the Scriptures," published by some of Mr. Russell's followers after his

death.) He has certainly advanced some novel ideas in setting out "the path to glory."

One of these novel ideas is the thought that one may be justified without being begotten or born of the Spirit. I have heard a good many amateur theologians (as well as some not so amateurish) discuss the question as to which comes first, justification or regeneration, and try to settle just the relation of the two. But Mr. Russell is the first theologian (?) I remember to have read after who holds that one could be justified without being regenerated. Some have said that justification came first, and some have said that regeneration came first. Mr. Russell says, not only that justification comes first, but that one may go that far and stop. Protestant theologians have usually said that justification gives one a new standing before God and regeneration gives him a new nature. But they have also said that justification and regeneration practically took place at the same instant in time (whichever might precede in the order of logic). But Mr. Russell says that one may have the new standing without ever having the new nature. This "man

of great modesty" (preface to Vol. 7) did not hesitate to set the whole of the Christian world right on this point, on which according to "Pastor" Russell they were all wrong until he appeared as the Lord's chosen servant to set them right. So hear, all ye Protestant theologians, and learn that you have all been wrong in thinking that when a sinner was justified by the grace of God he was at the same time born of the Spirit. What a pity the Lord did not raise up this prophet sooner to set us right in our theology as to the "order of salvation" and "the path to glory"!

Mr. Russell holds that one may be justified and not go any further on "the path to glory." In that case God regards him as a son, but only a human son, not a spiritual son. Those who are justified but go no further Mr. Russell says "are justified but not sanctified. They are not fully consecrated to God, and not begotten, therefore, as spirit beings. They are higher than the world, however, because they accept of Jesus as their ransom from sin; but they have not accepted the high-calling of this age to become part of the spiritual family of

God. If they continue in faith and fully submit to the righteous laws of Christ's kingdom, in the times of restitution, they will finally attain the likeness of the perfect earthly man, Adam. They will completely recover all that was lost through him. They will attain the same human perfection, mental, moral and physical, and will again be in the image of God, as Adam was; for to all this they were redeemed" (p. 230).

As compared, then, with those who go on in "the path to glory" these justified ones only get a poor kind of salvation. They only stand a chance (a pretty good chance, to be sure, one that scarcely anybody could miss) of becoming perfect human beings, along with the great mass of mankind, during the millennial age. In order to make this perfection, according to the quotation just given, they must "fully submit to the righteous laws of Christ's kingdom" (during the millennium) as well as "continue in faith" (meaning perhaps during this life). This statement seems to imply that one might fall back and lose his standing.

Now, I believe I have made another discovery. I hesitate somewhat to announce it, for it is rather a serious matter. But to be true to the facts I must. My discovery is this: that this "modest man" whom God raised up to set all the rest of us theologians right knew nothing about what the great Apostle Paul meant by justification. It looks a little suspicious when Mr. Russell announces a doctrine of justification that is utterly at variance with what Protestant theologians have set forth with almost unanimous consent. But it looks more than suspicious, it gets very serious in the eyes of Christians, when he departs fundamentally from the view of Paul; because Christians have held that Paul was right. And it is quite evident to any one that reads Paul and then reads Mr. Russell that Paul means one thing by justification and that Mr. Russell means an entirely different thing.

Without going into detail as to Paul's doctrine of justification, it is enough to say that Paul held that justification put a man down into the very midst of the richest blessings that a sinner saved by the grace of God could ever

know. Paul did not hold that the justified man came immediately into possession of the fullness of all these blessings; but he did hold that nothing beyond justification, no subsequent transaction based on something other than faith in Christ as Redeemer, was necessary to put one in possession of the beginning of these blessings. In other words Paul held that the faith that justifies makes one a child of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ, an heir to every blessing that God can conceivably bestow on his children. This he sets forth in glowing language in Romans 8. Whatever spiritual blessing you find in Romans 8 belongs to the justified man on no other condition than the faith that justifies. Every thing from the "no condemnation" of the first of the chapter to the "no separation" of the climax belongs to the sinner justified by faith in Jesus Christ. This includes sharing the eternal glory of Christ, the highest glory that can come to any man born of the Spirit of God. All this belongs to him as one justified by faith.

Put over against this Mr. Russell's doctrine of justification as a transaction that puts one

in a relation to God that makes it possible for him during some approaching millennial reign to recover the position and condition that belonged to Adam before he fell! Paul never dreamed that any sinner justified by the grace of God would be put back where Adam was. He had something more glorious in mind for the justified man than that. It is the difference between being a child of God, redeemed by his grace, and an Adam under law whose security depends on perfect obedience. It is the difference between salvation by grace and a poor specimen of legalism. It is the difference between Paul, an inspired apostle, and Chas. T. Russell, whose thoughts are so mechanical and materialistic that they rattle like a tin pan.

Not only does Mr. Russell make this arbitrary and unscriptural separation between justification and "spirit begetting"; he makes an equally unfounded separation between "spirit begetting" and "spirit birth." There is a Greek word used in the New Testament that means to beget, but in the passive voice it means either to be begotten or to be born. This word is used in a spiritual sense in John

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3: 3-8, 1 Peter 3: 9, 1 John 5: 1 and in many other places in the New Testament. The King James translators usually translated the word to be born. The American revisers sometimes translate it to be born, sometimes to be begotten. This is the regular word in the New Testament for the idea of being begotten of the Spirit or born of the Spirit, and shows how utterly unfounded is Mr. Russell's idea that being begotten of the Spirit is one thing taking place in this life, and being born of the Spirit another thing to take place in the resurrection at the beginning of the millennium. This shows that Mr. Russell's confession, when he was cornered on the witness stand, that he knew nothing about Greek, was a true confession. (See a pamphlet by J. J. Ross, "Some Facts and More Facts about the Self-styled 'Pastor' Chas. T. Russell, etc.") And it shows that he knows very little more about the English Bible, for no one would ever get the impression from any translation of the Bible in English that being begotten of the Spirit is one thing and being born of the Spirit something entirely different, coming in another "age" of the world.

It is perfectly clear from the New Testament that to be born of the Spirit is not identical with a resurrection to take place in the future; it is a present experience, something without which we cannot see or enter the kingdom of God (John 3: 3-5). Those who believe in the name of the Christ, or receive him, are born of God now (John 1: 13).

This reminds us of another of Mr. Russell's errors. He says that to believe in Jesus as our ransom brings justification; but to be begotten of the Spirit these justified ones must go further and consecrate themselves utterly to God and his service. He cites here Romans 12: 1 (pp. 227, 237). But Paul in that passage says nothing about being begotten of the Spirit; he is urging those who are born of the Spirit, to a life of consecration. He also shows on page 233 that to go beyond justification on "the path to glory" works are a condition. This shows again that in his scheme salvation is not by grace and grace alone, but that he brings in the idea of works as a meritorious cause of salvation. Nothing is further from Mr. Russell's thoughts than the idea of salvation by grace through faith.

Another one of Mr. Russell's absurdities is his identifying of consecration to God's service (as a condition of spirit begetting in his scheme) and of devoting one's human nature to destruction or annihilation (pp. 225, 227). Mr. Russell teaches that Jesus at his baptism devoted his human nature to death or annihilation. When he died his human nature ceased to be; he was raised to a divine being, no longer human in any sense. So we may, after justification, devote our human natures to destruction, and if we live up to this vow we will in the resurrection be made divine beings (p. 196 *et al*).

Now it is true that Jesus talks about our denying self and taking up the cross, about losing our life to save it. But to interpret this as meaning our annihilation as human beings and our becoming divine beings shows an utter incapacity to understand spiritual experience. What Christian in devoting himself to the service of God ever thought of that as meaning that he was devoting his human nature to annihilation and that he would therefore cease to be a human being?

This idea that Jesus was human only and then became divine in the resurrection, and that we too may cease to be human beings and become divine is one of Mr. Russell's most fantastic doctrines. He holds that those who experience this "change of nature" will become "divine" and "immortal" in the same sense that the risen Christ is or that God is. He insists that "natures" must be kept distinct and that consequently Jesus could not be human and divine at the same time. But by his easy and arbitrary transition from the human to the divine he really breaks down the distinction between the human and the divine. Any man who believes that man may become divine and immortal in the same sense that God is shows himself capable of believing any thing. He shows that he has no proper conception of deity. No wonder that Mr. Russell spoke of God in materialistic terms as having a body. His whole system is a kind of magical, jumping jack, "pig or puppy" materialism.

There is another serious trouble with Mr. Russell's scheme of salvation. That is, it is so complicated that it would take a "Philadel-

phia lawyer" to understand it. I have heard people talk about the "plan" of salvation. This is more than a plan; it is a scheme. And it is a scheme that impresses one with two things. One is that it is meant to take all the moral zest and earnestness out of the present life. There are several stages or degrees of salvation; and if a person misses one, he is pretty sure to hit on another. The other is that it is meant to compliment the cleverness of the author of the scheme. When a sinner is saved by the grace of God, or when as a Christian he has a deeper experience of the love of God that saves, he is apt to say: "Thank God for his grace." When one reads Mr. Russell's works, he feels that it was meant to make one feel: "Isn't the author of that scheme smart?" But a person with any moral sense would never think of attributing the scheme to God. The cleverness belongs to Mr. Russell. His ingenuity in twisting scripture passages and making them mean any thing to fit in with his scheme is certainly marvelous.

When I speak of the scheme as difficult to understand, I do not mean to say that Mr.

Russell's thought is obscure—usually it is not. He succeeds in making his thought clear. But his scheme is complex. For instance, during the millennial age, he has mankind divided up into several classes: at the top are those who have reached the throne of glory with Christ; next are those who failed to reach the throne and were made "spirit beings" only; below them are the Israelites restored to human perfection (note that the Jews are above the great mass of mankind but are not "divine" or "spirit" beings—perhaps the best the Lord could do with an ordinary Jew. I hope Mr. Russell will consent for Moses and Paul at least to reach the top); below these are the great mass of mankind, being restored to "human" perfection; below them (if one could speak of any below in that sense) are the incorrigibles, who are blotted out in the second death.

I have heard people talk about "degrees" in heaven, or in rewards, but Mr. Russell has nearly as many varieties of salvation as there are pickles of a certain brand—almost fifty-

seven varieties. It is quite handy to be able to "pay your money and take your choice."

Not only is the scheme complex in that it has so many "degrees" of salvation, but also in that it tries to be a plan of redemption based on atonement, appropriated by faith, and yet constantly runs back to works as a basis. The Lord helps a little, but man has a lot to do, especially if he gets a high grade of salvation. How silly all this is compared with the New Testament view of salvation as the work of a God of love whom we can trust completely to save "to the uttermost" from sin!

Leaving aside, however, the complexities of the scheme, we need to notice that in general Mr. Russell has two plans of salvation. One that is being carried out during the present age, the object of which is to select the "bride," the "church," the "little flock," those who are to be exalted to the "divine" nature and the throne with Christ—rather with Jesus, the term Christ being constantly used by Mr. Russell to denote Jesus and those exalted to the throne with him. It is this plan that we have been considering under the head of "salvation

offered now." But there is also the plan that has as its object the restoration of the mass of mankind to "human perfection," during the millennium. That we have considered in discussing "probation and millennial salvation." Perhaps enough was said there about this phase of the matter. Taking these two plans together we have Mr. Russell's view with reference to salvation. And by the time we get through considering the different "varieties" of salvation offered, the conditions to be met in each, the racial elements involved, the different "ages" when it will all take place, and even the possibility (or as Mr. Russell says the certainty) that in the testing time at the beginning of the millennium some will fall even from the highest heights into the abyss of nothingness; when one gets through with all this one of the main effects is a dizziness in the head and a kind of nausea that is any thing but pleasant. I am in the habit in teaching theology to say to my students that all the credit for salvation belongs to God. But I would not charge him up with this business. Let Mr. Russell have the credit.

To top this "doctrine of salvation" is Mr. Russell's dogmatic assurance given the sinner, over and over again, that if he completely misses salvation, now and during the millennium, the worst that can happen to him is to die, be annihilated, and all his pain and misery are over forever. Mark you this is not a doubt or a question about eternal or everlasting punishment; it is dogmatic teaching affirming that there is no such thing. And he backs up his system by the copious use (or misuse) of scripture. He claims to give the only true interpretation of the Bible on the subject. I do not think anybody could find a scheme better calculated to lull the conscience to sleep and lure the soul to its eternal destruction.

5. *Person of Christ.*

One of the most distinctive things in Mr. Russell's system is his doctrine of Christ. He says that before his earthly life, Christ was a spiritual being. Mr. Russell holds that human, spiritual and divine natures are distinct. (See p. 176.) When he came to earth he became *human.* He and Adam were the only two

perfect men the world ever saw. He had to be human or he could not be man's substitute. There can be no blending of these different natures (pp. 178, 179). To blend any two of them would mean that they would lose their identity and become something else. Christ was not originally divine. He was a spirit being higher than the angels. In coming to earth, he passed by the angels and became man. In his death his human nature was sacrificed; it died, was annihilated. As a reward for his sacrifice and obedience God gave him the divine nature. Christ could be a spirit being, and a divine being in succession, but he could not be human and divine at the same time. He was first, before coming to earth, a spirit above man, but lower than God. He became a man and lived here among men. He then died, ceased to be as a man. Then God made him divine.

Note now some consequences of this:

(1) Jesus was not divine while in the world. During that period he was man and man only.

(2) He is not human now. He is now divine and divine only. When he died his human nature ceased to be.

(3) There was no incarnation, because God and man could not be united in one person. Christ could be human and divine successively, but not at the same time.

Orthodox Christianity has always held just the opposite on these points. It has held that he existed from all eternity as the Son of God and creator of all finite things; that Jesus was divine as well as human, while in the world; that he is human now and henceforth forever, as well as divine; that Jesus was and is the incarnation of God.

The ideas of the deity of Christ, of his genuine and permanent humanity, of his being the incarnation of God—these are not ideas incidental in Christianity; they belong to its essence. But Mr. Russell denies the possibility of an incarnation. According to him deity and humanity could not be united in one person. If Mr. Russell is right on this point, then God has never given any final revelation of himself by taking on himself the form and nature

of man in Jesus Christ. Paul and John believed in a genuine incarnation of God. To them Jesus was the eternal Son of God, become man for the salvation of men. (See John 1: 1, 14; Phil. 2: 5ff, and many other passages.) If Paul and John were right, Mr. Russell was wrong.

Moreover, if Jesus was not divine, then his suffering and death did not represent divine love and sacrifice for the salvation of men. The very essence of Christianity is that Christ's cross expresses and reveals the sacrificial love of God for the salvation of sinful men. God so loved that he gave his Son. But if Jesus was not divine, there was no divine sacrifice in his death. And if there was no divine sacrifice, then salvation is nothing more than a scheme of human effort at self-improvement. As a matter of fact, Mr. Russell teaches that Jesus died only as a man. So he denies that the death of Jesus represented any divine suffering for the salvation of man. Jesus died as a man, and died in the sense that his human nature was blotted out of existence, was annihilated.

Again, Mr. Russell's idea that a spirit being is displaced by a human and that then the human is blotted out and a divine being takes his place—this idea destroys all personal continuity in Christ. The idea, as held by Christianity and denied by Mr. Russell, that the eternal Son of God became man for our salvation, took on him our lot and nature—this idea may be, yea is, mysterious. But it does leave room for personal continuity. Christ was the eternal Son of God. When he became man he did not cease to be divine. Nor did he cease to be human when he sat down at the right hand of God. He is the permanent union of God and man. Here is a problem for thought truly, one that challenges the best in us. But Mr. Russell's idea that one kind of being could be substituted for another—a human being for a spirit being, and a divine being for a human being—his mere assertion that such a thing took place, unsupported by facts or even argument—this we can only consider amusing ingenuity in the handling of terms, not an effort at serious thought. (On this point see especially Chapter X of Volume 1 of "Studies in the Scriptures.")

(NOTE—Mr. Russell holds that both God and Jesus have bodies of some kind. He says that we cannot imagine them without bodies. This looks very much like materialism (p. 200). His God seems to be only a magnified man, p. 201.)

6. *The Kingdom.*

In an initial way Mr. Russell recognizes the kingdom as already in existence (pp. 282-284). This preparatory stage of the kingdom he identifies with the church (not organized Christianity, but perhaps the "little flock"). The kingdom, however, will not be set up in power until the return of Christ. Christ returns to judge (rule) mankind (p. 283).

At first there will probably be opposition to the rule of Christ, but this opposition will be put down by force, and when men have seen enough of it to recognize its beneficent results they will willingly submit to it. There will be great revolutions and times of trouble at the ushering in of the millennial reign in which existing governments and the existing social and industrial order will be overthrown preparatory

to the new order. God is during the present order allowing man to govern himself, but his effort to do so will end in complete failure. Hence the necessity of the divine rule.

There will be two aspects of this millennial kingdom—one visible, the other invisible. The visible aspect will be administered by those who have been saved to the plane of human perfection during the Jewish age. They will be the visible agents of the divine administration. It will be pretty largely, if not entirely, a Jewish order of things (pp. 289, 290, 294).

The invisible phase of the kingdom will be administered by those who have been saved during the gospel age to the divine plane of being. They will be crowned the real rulers of the kingdom. It seems that the visible human administrators will be under the direction of these invisible divine rulers (p. 288).

7. *Some Criticisms.*

In brief, we point out a few general criticisms, in addition to what has already been said:

(1) In the first place, we charge that the whole system is devoid of moral depth and earnestness. One is impressed that Mr. Russell's plan of the ages is a cleverly worked out scheme, but its cleverness is its chief attractiveness. One feels that the kind of God that Mr. Russell presents is primarily a God of scheming cleverness. It is true that Mr. Russell talks about the justice and love of God, but the scheme of doctrine does not allow any place for the reality corresponding to these terms. The idea of sin is that it is a misfortune into which God allowed men to fall in order that they might learn a useful lesson. All meaning is taken out of the present life so far as a moral probation is concerned. The only real probation for most men is to come in the next age. Mr. Russell emphasizes the sin of Adam and its effect, and also the coming millennial age and its probation, but lays no emphasis whatever on the present life and its moral responsibility. Any doctrine of Adam's sin that relieves man of present moral responsibility is somehow out of joint with the New Testament and moral reality. The same thing

might be said concerning any doctrine of the millennium that takes off the Christian the pressure of responsibility to take the gospel to every man on earth and press home on that man the claims of Christ.

(2) As a second criticism, then, there is no missionary motive or dynamic in Russellism. The present age is not an age of salvation, is not meant to be, for the masses of mankind. World-wide missionary operations are to be postponed until the millennium. Mr. Russell once made a trip around the world. He came back and published a lot of disparaging statements about the work being done on the foreign mission fields, which he had presumably investigated. But when Mr. W. T. Ellis investigated Mr. Russell's trip it was found that he had really met perhaps two missionaries on the trip, had visited no missions, was really gone one hundred and sixteen days, having left San Francisco on December 3 and landed in New York on March 28, most of the one hundred and sixteen days having been spent on board his ship. Certainly the world ought to listen to such a first-hand authority on

missions as that! (See "All About One Russell," a pamphlet published by Charles C. Cook, New York.)

(3) Mr. Russell plainly discourages the idea of Christians having anything to do with civic, social or industrial reforms. The present age has been turned over to the control of Satan. God is now allowing man to try himself out to see if he can govern himself. His efforts are doomed to failure. The only hope for the world is in the establishment of a totally different order of things under Christ as king and mankind as the passive subjects. The whole scheme discourages an aggressive type of Christianity for the moral and spiritual uplift of humanity. It reminds one of mediaeval monasticism in its despairing other-worldliness and lack of moral and social dynamic (p. 342). Christians believe in supernaturalism in religion, but not in a supernaturalism that denies all present reality to moral responsibility and makes us passively wait for a ready-made, perfected social order to be let down out of the skies sometime in the future.

(4) The novelty of Mr. Russell's view is against it. His position amounted to saying that a correct interpretation of the Bible had never before been known. So far as I know some features of his view had never been set forth by anybody else—his theory, for instance, that members of the "little flock," the "bride of Christ," are changed from human into divine beings, while those saved during the millennium only attain to human perfection.

Here then is a man coming on the scene nearly two thousand years after Christ lived and died and saying in substance: "Nobody before me has ever understood the Bible. I, at last, have found the key to its true interpretation." What does such a claim amount to? It amounts to saying that there has been practically no true Christianity in the world for centuries, possibly not since the New Testament age. This is almost equal to claiming that God has given Mr. Russell a new revelation. While Mr. Russell did not put the matter that way, as Mrs. Eddy and Joseph Smith did, it practically amounts to that. (See for

instance his claim, as C. C. Cook sets it forth in the pamphlet above referred to. He claimed that a person could get along better with his "Studies in the Scriptures" without the Bible than he could with the Bible without his "Studies" to guide him in understanding the Bible. That comes perilously near putting his Studies above the Bible.) For if nobody has understood the Bible until Mr. Russell appeared on the scene to interpret it for us, then we have been practically without a revelation from God. The world was full of electricity before the days of Benjamin Franklin, but Franklin opened a new era in the understanding and control of electricity. So, according to Mr. Russell, we had the Bible before he appeared, but nobody understood it. He gave us the key to its proper interpretation.

But is it reasonable that, after completing the revelation recorded in the Bible, God left the world for nearly 2,000 years without anybody that understood it? Such a claim is an astounding claim to make, and certainly we would need some very clear and positive evidences before accepting such a conclusion.

Such evidences Mr. Russell has not given. He has given us nothing except his own unsupported and unreasonable assertions. Surely it did not take the Lord, after giving a revelation, 2,000 years to produce a man who could understand that revelation.

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