

RUSSELLISM

Russellism is a mixture of Universalism, Unitarianism, Adventism and Materialism. This conglomeration of religious vagaries was originated by Charles T. Russell, commonly called "Pastor Russell". He first published his tenets under the name of "Millennial Dawn", but later brought them out under the title of "Studies in the Scriptures". His writings were mostly un-Scriptural and anti-Scriptural, although there was just enough truth in them to make them plausible enough to be doubly deceiving. He enriched himself greatly from the sale of his books.

Mr. Russell's character as a man was nothing of which to boast. The courts of Pennsylvania ruled that he tried to perpetuate a fraud upon his wife and denied his plea of being penniless when his wife sued him for divorce. It later developed that he had transferred \$317,000 to the Watch-tower Bible and Tract Society, of which he was president, seemingly with the intent to avoid paying his wife alimony. His wife obtained her divorce from him on account of his unmanly conduct and gross familiarity with other women. Open court testimony concerning his character recorded him saying of himself, "I am like a jelly-fish; I float around here and there; I touch this one and that one, and if she responds, I take her to me, and if not, I float to others."

Pastor Russell taught that Jesus Christ and his apostles came to earth in October, 1874, and have been here ever since. He further predicted that the consummation of the ages would occur in 1914.

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

- I. That one can not have the true light without the help of "Studies in the Scriptures", first called "Millennial Dawn".

"If any one lays 'Scriptural Studies' aside even after he has become familiar with them, even

after he has read them ten years, and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness." (Watch-Tower, Sept. 15, 1910, page 298.)

"If the six volumes of Scripture Studies are practically the Bible topically arranged, with Bible-proofs given, we might not improperly name the volumes—The Bible in arranged form. That is to say, they are not merely comments on the Bible, but they are practically the Bible itself." (Same page above.)

THE BIBLE:

1. God's Word is the lamp and light (Psa. 119: 105).
2. The Bible is sufficient to perfect the man of God (II Tim. 3: 16, 17).

GOD

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

I. There is only one person in the God-head.

"The careful student of the preceding chapters has found abundant testimony from the Scriptures, to the effect that there is but one Almighty God." (Vol. 5, page 166.)

"Verily, if it were not for the fact that this Trinitarian nonsense was drilled into us from earliest infancy, and the fact that it is soberly taught in Theological Seminaries by gray-haired professors, in many other ways apparently wise, nobody would give it a moment's consideration." (Vol. 5: page 166.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Baptism is into the name of three personalities (Matt. 28: 19).
2. Christ taught three personalities in the God-head (John 14: 15, 16, 26; 15: 26).

CHRIST

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

- I. That Christ was a "created angel" before He came to this earth.

"As He (Christ) is the highest of Jehovah's creation, so also He was the first, the direct creation of God, the only begotten." (Vol. 5, page 84.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Christ was more than an angel (Heb. 1: 1-8).
2. Christ was not created—He was eternal (John 1: 1-3; 8: 58; Rev. 1: 8; 21: 6; 22: 13).

- II. That Christ was not a combination of two natures—human and divine.

"Neither was Jesus a combination of the two natures, human and spiritual When Jesus was in the flesh He was a perfect human being and since His resurrection He is a perfect spiritual being of the highest or divine order." (Vol. 1, page 179.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Prophesied that God would tabernacle in the flesh (Isa. 7: 14; Matt. 1: 23).
2. Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, making two natures, human and divine (Matt. 1: 18-20).
3. Christ was made in the likeness of man (Phil. 2: 6, 7; Heb. 2: 16).
4. Christ was human and divine (John 1: 1, 2, 14; 16: 28; I Tim. 3: 16).
5. Peter confessed Him as the Son of God (Matt. 16: 16).
6. He who does not confess that Christ came in the flesh is a deceiver and not of God (I John 4: 3; II John 7).

- III. That Christ did not atone for the sins of the race.
"We shall see subsequently, when we come to consider particularly the ransom feature of His work, that it was absolutely necessary that He should be a man—neither more nor less than a perfect man." (Vol. 5: 95.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Christ taketh away sins (John 1: 29; Matt. 10: 28; Rom. 5: 11; Heb. 10: 3-14).

- IV. That Christ's body was not raised from the dead.
"Our Lord's human body was, however, supernaturally removed from the tomb; because, had it remained there, it would have been an insurmountable obstacle to the faith of the disciples. We know nothing about what became of it, except that it did not decay or corrupt. Whether it was dissolved into gasses, or whether it is still preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God's love, of Christ's obedience, and of our redemption, no one knows; nor is such knowledge necessary." (Vol. 2, pages 125-130.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Jesus said He would raise His body (John 2: 19-22).
2. Jesus showed Thomas His raised body (John 20: 24-28).

- V. That Christ is forever dead.

"It was necessary, not only that the man Christ Jesus should die, but just as necessary that the man Christ Jesus should never live again, should remain dead, should remain our ransom-price for all eternity." (Vol. 5, page 443.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Prophesied that Christ would be resurrected (Psa. 16: 10).
2. Peter said Christ was raised from the dead (Acts 2: 30, 31).

3. Christ showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs (Acts 1: 1-3).
4. Christ was seen alive by many brethren (I Cor. 15: 1-8).

VI. That Jesus was not divine until after His resurrection.

“The human nature had to be consecrated to death before He could receive even the pledge of the divine nature. And not until that consecration was actually carried out and He had actually sacrificed the human nature, even unto death, did our Lord Jesus become a full partaker of the divine nature.” (Vol. 1, page 179.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Christ was always divine (John 1: 1-3; 17: 5).
2. Christ was equal with God (Phil. 2: 6).
3. Christ and God are one (John 14: 11; 17: 21).

VII. That Christ was no longer the same person after the resurrection.

“If our Lord is still” the man Christ Jesus . . . then instead of being exalted higher than angels, and every name that is named in heaven as well as in earth, He is still a man.”

THE BIBLE:

1. The Bible says He is the same person after resurrection (Acts 1: 11; Eph. 4: 10; Heb. 10: 12).

VIII. That Christ is not a Mediator.

“In our issue of 1906, page 26, we said, ‘Our Lord Jesus, in His own person, has been the Mediator, between the Father and the household of faith, during the Gospel age.’ This statement is incorrect. No Scripture so declares. It is a part of the smoke of the dark ages, which we are glad to now wipe from our

eyes." (Watch Tower, Sept. 15, 1909, page 283.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Christ is our Mediator (I Tim. 2: 5; Heb. 9: 15; I John 2: 1).

THE HOLY SPIRIT

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

- I. That the Holy Spirit is only the influence or power exercised by the one God.
"And equally consistent is the Scripture teaching respecting the Holy Spirit—that it is not another God, but the spirit, influence or power exercised by the one God, our Father." (Vol. 5, page 165.)

THE BIBLE:

1. The Holy Spirit is part of the God-head (Matt. 3: 16, 17; Matt. 28: 19).
 2. The Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5: 3, 4).
- II. That the Holy Spirit is not a personality. (See above statement.)

THE BIBLE:

1. "He" can teach (John 14: 26).
2. "He" can talk (Acts 8: 29; 10: 19, 20).
3. "He" can testify (John 15: 26).
4. "He" selects fields of labor and sends preachers (Acts 13: 2; 16: 6-10).
5. These are attributes of personality.

THE KINGDOM

1. That the kingdom is not yet established.
"To whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom in an age to follow this" (the Gospel-age.) (Vol. 1, page 172.)
- II. That the kingdom is not to be established until the Millennium.

“In the end of this age, and the dawn of its successor, the Millennial age, Satan is to be bound and his power overthrown, preparatory to the establishment of Christ’s kingdom.” Vol. 1, page 73.)

THE BIBLE:

1. John and Jesus preached the kingdom at hand in their day (Matt. 3: 2; 4: 17).
2. Jesus said some in His generation would not taste death until the kingdom should come (Matt. 16: 28; Mark 9: 1).
3. We today are translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col. 1: 13).

NOTE: How could we be translated into a kingdom if it did not already exist?

SIN

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

- I. That each does not die for his own sin, but for Adam’s sin.

“The day in which every man (who dies) shall die for his own sin, only, is the Millennial or restitution day.” (Vol. 1, page 109.)

THE BIBLE:

1. We do not die for Adam’s sin, but our own (Rom. 5: 12).
2. All have sinned and come short of the glory (Rom. 3: 23).

CONVERSION

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

- I. That God is not trying to convert sinners in the Gospel-age, but that conversion begins in the Millennium.

“The conversion of the world in the present age was not expected of the Church, but her mission has been to preach the Gospel in all the world for a witness, and to prepare herself under

divine direction for her great future work.”
(Vol. I, page 95.)

“When the called out company (called to be sons of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord—who have made their calling and election sure) is complete, then the plan of God for the world’s salvation will be only beginning.” (Vol. 1, page 98.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Christ commanded the Gospel to be preached to save sinners (Mark 16: 15, 16).
2. Salvation is offered before the Millennium (Acts 2: 40; 13: 26, 47).
3. Paul says today is the day of salvation (II Cor. 6: 2; Phil. 2: 12).
4. Paul says God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17: 30).
5. Paul says we can not escape if we neglect so great salvation (Heb. 2: 3, 4).

SALVATION

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

I. That salvation is by faith only.

“The only ground of salvation mentioned in the Scriptures is faith in Christ as our Redeemer and Lord. ‘By grace are ye saved through faith.’” (Vol. 1, page 100.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Faith without works is dead (James 2: 17).
2. Abraham’s faith was justified by works (James 2: 21).
3. James says we are not justified by faith only (James 2: 24).
4. Faith without works is dead (James 2: 26).
5. If faith alone would save, then every devil would be saved. That would be universal salvation (James 2: 19).

A SECOND CHANCE

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

I. That every man shall have another chance.

"The 'ransom for all' given by 'th e man Christ Jesus' does not give nor guarantee everlasting life or blessing to any man; but it does guarantee to every man another opportunity or trial for life everlasting." Vol. I, page 150.)

"The second chance will be more favorable than the first because of the experience gained under the results of the first trial." (Vol. 1, page 143.)

"All were sentenced to death because of Adam's disobedience, and all will enjoy (in this life or in the next) a full opportunity to gain everlasting life under the favorable terms of the New Covenant." (Vol. I, pages 130, 131.)

THE BIBLE:

1. No second chance taught in the Bible (Luke 9: 59-62; 16: 19-31; Acts 13: 44-46; 18: 5, 6; II Thes. 2: 10-12; Heb. 10: 26).
2. Given to men to die and then the judgment (Heb. 9: 27).

DEATH

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

I. That death is a destruction.

"The penalty is death, not dying; and death is the absence of life, destruction." (Vol. 5: 465.)

II. That death is annihilation.

"It should be remembered, however, that it is not the pain and suffering in dying, but death—the extinction of life—in which the dying culminates, that is the penalty of sin." (Vol. 1, page 154.)

III. That death is unconsciousness.

"As the natural sleep, if sound, implies total unconsciousness, so with death, the figurative

sleep; it is a period of absolute unconsciousness; more than that, it is a period of absolute non-existence." (Vol. 5, page 329.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Jesus said that killing the body does not kill the soul (Matt. 10: 28).
2. Jesus said that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob still lived, even though their bodies were dead (Matt. 22: 32).
3. Moses and Elijah still lived though their bodies were dead (Matt. 17: 3).
4. Death does not mean extinction, for the spirits of men live after their bodies are dead (Heb. 12: 22, 23).
5. The soul is conscious after death (Rev. 6: 9 11).

HELL

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

- I. That there is no eternal punishment.

"The theory of eternal punishment is inconsistent with the statements that 'the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all,' and that Christ 'died for our sins.'" (Vol. 1, page 159.)

"It is absurd to suppose that God would perpetuate Adam's existence forever in torment for any kind of a sin which he could commit, but especially for the comparatively small offense of eating forbidden fruit." (Vol. 1, page 159.)

THE BIBLE:

1. There is an eternal punishment (Dan. 12: 2; Matt. 25: 46; John 5: 28, 29; Rev. 20: 10).

NOTE: The same Greek word is used in Matt. 25: 46 to qualify punishment and life.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

- I. That the Lord's Supper took the place of the Pass-over feast.

“Our Lord’s evident intention was to fix in the minds of his followers the fact that he is the antitypical Lamb to the antitypical first-borns and household of faith. ‘This do in remembrance of me’ implies that this new institution should take the place with his followers of the former one.’” (The Passover.) (Vol. 6, page 462.)

THE BIBLE:

1. The Passover feast was observed in memory of their passing out of Egypt (Deut. 16).
2. The Lord’s Supper could not take the place of this Passover, because it was observed for another purpose—to remember Christ’s death (Luke 22: 19).

II. That the Lord’s Supper should be observed annually. “We would not understand this to imply the doing of it without respect of time and place, etc., but as signifying that when this cup and unleavened bread thenceforth were used as a celebration of the Passover . . . as it would not have been lawful, proper or typical to celebrate the Passover at any other time than that appointed of the Lord, likewise it is still not appropriate to celebrate the antitype at any other time than its anniversary.” (Vol. 6, page 462-9.)

THE BIBLE:

2. Early church observed the Lord’s Supper every week (Acts 20: 7).
2. NOTE: The same phraseology is found in (I Cor. 16: 1, 2) and all understand that in the latter reference weekly collection is taught. Also the same phraseology is found in the command, “Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.” Every Jew understood this to be a command to keep every Sabbath.

BAPTISM

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

- I. That baptism is added to the scheme of redemption.
- II. That water baptism symbolizes the baptism of the heart.

THE BIBLE:

1. Baptism is part of the plan of redemption (Mark 16: 15, 16; (John 3: 5; Acts 2: 38; Acts 8: 26-39; 22: 16; Gal. 3: 27; I Peter 3: 21).
2. Baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6: 4, 5).

TIME SETTING

RUSSELLISM TEACHES:

- I. That the apostles and Christ have been living on the earth since 1874 as invisible spirits in bodily form.

"1874 was the exact date of the beginning of the times of restitution and hence our Lord's return." (Vol. 2, pages 170, 171.)

"And while we therefore conclude that their resurrection is now an accomplished fact, and hence that they as well as the Lord are present in the earth, the fact we do not see them is no obstacle to faith when we remember that, like their Lord, they (the apostles) are now spirit beings, and, like Him, invisible to men." (Vol. 2, page 234.)

THE BIBLE:

1. Christ says no man, angel or even He knows the day or the hour (Mark 13: 32).
2. At Christ's return the dead Christians are to be raised and the living Christians are to be translated (I Thes. 4: 13-17).
3. NOTE: Mr. Russell and his "little flock" must have been overlooked.

II. That all worldly kingdoms will end in 1914 and the Church of Christ will be set up with Christ as Head.

“That the Lord must be present, and set up His kingdom, and exercise His great power so as to dash the nations to pieces as a potter’s vessel, is then clearly fixed; for it is ‘in the days of these kings’—before their overthrow—i. e., before A. D. 1914—that the God of heaven shall set up His kingdom.” (Vol. II, page 170.)

THE BIBLE:

1. No man knows the day or hour (Mark 13: 32; Acts 1: 7).
2. 1914 is history and this did not come to pass.

III. That the harvest of the Gospel age was to end in 1914.

“Remember that the forty years of Jewish harvest ended Oct., A. D. 69, and was followed by the complete overthrow of that nation; and that likewise the forty years of the Gospel age harvest will end October, 1914, and that likewise the overthrow of Christendom, so-called, must be expected to immediately follow.” (Vol. 2, page 245.)

THE BIBLE:

1. No man knows the day or hour (Mark 13: 32; Acts 1: 7).
2. 1914 is history and this did not happen.
Try the spirits to see if they are of God (I John 4: 1-3).

All quotations from the six volumes of Scripture Studies and the Watch-Tower.