

young men of his acquaintance, he told them of his intention to study the Scriptures. Soon this small group—about six in number—began meeting weekly for systematic Bible study. At their regular gatherings during the years 1870 to 1875, the religious thinking of these men underwent profound changes. With the passing of time, Jehovah blessed them with increasing spiritual light and truth.—Ps. 43:3; Prov. 4:18.

"We came to recognize," wrote Russell, "the difference between our Lord as 'the man who gave himself,' and as the Lord who would come again, a spirit being. We saw that spirit-beings can be present, and yet invisible to men. . . . we felt greatly grieved at the error of Second Adventists, who were expecting Christ in the flesh, and teaching that the world and all in it except Second Adventists would be burned up in 1873 or 1874, whose time-settings and disappointments and crude ideas generally as to the object and manner of his coming brought more or less reproach upon us and upon all who longed for and proclaimed his coming Kingdom."

Earnestly endeavoring to counteract such erroneous teachings, in 1873 twenty-one-year-old C. T. Russell wrote and published at his own expense a booklet entitled "The Object and Manner of the Lord's Return." Some 50,000 copies were published and it enjoyed a wide distribution.

About January of 1876, Russell received a copy of the religious periodical *The Herald of the Morning*. From the cover, he identified it with Adventism, but its contents were a surprise. The editor, N. H. Barbour of Rochester, New York, understood that the object of Jesus Christ's return was not to destroy but to bless all families of the earth and that his coming would be thieflike and not in the flesh, but as a spirit. In fact, from Biblical time-prophecies Barbour thought Christ then was present and that the harvest work of gathering the "wheat" and "tares" ("weeds") was already due. Russell arranged a meeting with Barbour and, as a result, the Pittsburgh Bible class of about thirty persons became affiliated with Barbour's slightly larger Rochester, New York, group. From his own funds Russell contributed money to print the then nearly suspended *Herald*, becoming coeditor of the journal.

At the age of twenty-five, in 1877, Russell began selling out his business interests and went into full-time preaching activity. He then was traveling from city to city delivering Bible discourses at public gatherings, on the streets and in Protestant churches. Because of this work, he became known as "Pastor" Russell. He

determined to invest his fortune in the promulgation of the work, devote his life to the cause, prohibit collections at all meetings and depend on unsolicited contributions to continue the work after his own money was exhausted.

In 1877, Barbour and Russell jointly published *Three Worlds, and the Harvest of This World*. This 196-page book combined information about Restitution with Biblical time prophecies. It presented the view that Jesus Christ's invisible presence and a forty-year period opening with a three-and-a-half-year harvest dated from the autumn of 1874.

Very noteworthy was the striking accuracy with which that book pointed to the end of the Gentile Times, "the appointed times of the nations." (Luke 21:24) It showed (on pages 83 and 189) that this 2,520-year period, during which Gentile or non-Jewish nations would rule the earth without interference by any kingdom of God, began with the Babylonian overthrow of the kingdom of Judah in the late seventh century B.C.E. and would end in 1914 C.E. Even earlier, however, C. T. Russell wrote an article entitled "Gentile Times: When Do They End?" It was published in the *Bible Examiner* of October 1876, and therein Russell said: "The seven times will end in A.D. 1914." He had correctly linked the Gentile Times with the "seven times" mentioned in the book of Daniel. (Dan. 4:16, 23, 25, 32) True to such calculations, 1914 did mark the end of those times and the birth of God's kingdom in heaven with Christ Jesus as king. Just think of it! Jehovah granted his people that knowledge nearly four decades before those times expired.

All went well for a while. Then came the spring of 1878. Barbour expected that the living saints on earth would then be caught away bodily to be forever with the Lord in heaven. But it did not happen. According to Russell, Barbour "seemed to feel that he must of necessity get up something new to divert attention from the failure of the living saints to be caught away en masse." He soon did so. "To our painful surprise," says Russell's account, "Mr. Barbour soon after wrote an article for the *Herald* denying the doctrine of the atonement—denying that the death of Christ was the ransom-price of Adam and his race, saying that Christ's death was no more a settlement of the penalty of man's sins than would the sticking of a pin through the body of a fly and causing it suffering and death be considered by an earthly parent as a just settlement for misdemeanor in his child."

✓ In the September issue of the *Herald* appeared Russell's article "The Atonement," upholding the ransom