

My Testimony

Edith Russell

This hand-written, unlined page was found amongst Edith's papers when they were being collected to send to the Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University in Canada in 2020. The title is hers. She had written her testimony some six weeks after her husband's death in 1970. Each following year on 2 February on Bertie's anniversary, until her own death in early 1978, Edith added a little more.

Bertrand Russell led a noble life, noble in the greatness of his vision and in the undeviating pursuit of that vision. And he accomplished work rarely paralleled and in many fields.

Through many years, with increasing wonder and assurance, I have found that it is impossible to describe him accurately in any terms but those of praise and in nothing less than superlatives.

The scale, both of the man and of his work, is immeasurably generous: vitality; intensity of feeling and of thought; patience; gaiety and the enjoyment of ironies and absurdities large and small; sensitivity and gentleness and consideration; determined courage and penetrating clarity of understanding and expression; and a total lack of vainglory – these characteristics, each existing in supreme degree, are seldom found together. In him they were welded in one surpassing individual. [The whole is greater than the sum of its parts – see *The Infinite* by Leopardi.]

He was the most lovable and loving of human beings and the most delightful, full of kindness and fun and prejudices recognized as such — the most life-enhancing.

He hated only cruelty and the pretence which cloaks, in the name of 'respectability' and 'prudence', the greed and the thoughtlessness and the cowardice which lead to cruelty.

His passionate feeling, his vast mental ability, and his immense, wide-ranging knowledge disciplined each other into complete integrity, cleared of dross by the brilliant flame of his desire to foster all

that's beautiful in the world and in human beings.

He strove with his utmost strength, in spite of illness or fatigue or personal stress, to achieve light and laughter and happiness for all mankind.

For all this and for the warmth and steadfastness of his hope, many thousands of people all over the world loved him and looked to him to guide and help them.

Whom can the people of his own or any country more justly honour?

Edith Russell

13/3/70, Plas Penrhyn

For me, 'the brightness of the day is done' — so warmly bright for so many years. 2/2/71

Still feel this 2/2/72 and always shall ... & in 2/2/73

I seem to feel it more and more strongly which I didn't think possible. 2/2/74

I feel all this still, and the pain of his loss more and more intensely. The world, too, has sore need of him. There seems no human being left of his great moral and mental stature, nor anyone so delightful or — to me — so close. 3/2/75

I still feel and think all that is written on this page and I love him with all my mind and heart. 2/2/76

All this I still, and more and more clearly, believe profoundly. 2/2/77