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FEATURES

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Conviction Deals Death Blow To The Sect Founded By Mr. Russell

LATE PASTOR RUSSELL WAS A SHREWD BUSINESS MAN

He and His Remarkable Sect Spent Money Like Water in Spreading Propaganda Throughout Canada and United States, But Income Was Immense—Russell's Domestic Troubles — His Financial Ventures.

The sentence of twenty years in the penitentiary for the leading seven figures among the Russellites, following their conviction before Judge H. B. Howe of conspiracy to cause insubordination and disloyalty in the United States forces, undoubtedly will prove the death blow of this mysterious religious sect. Serious troubles have beset the organization since the death of the founder, "Pastor" Charles Taze Russell, and with his successors in prison the leaderless flock will doubtless go the way of the other hosts that from time to time have been gathered together by men who have briefly appeared before the public as the embodiment of a new religious thought.

Joseph F. Rutherford has proved unequal to the task of managing the great Russellite organization built up by that mysterious figure "Pastor" Russell. The latter, whose patriarchal face with white hair and flowing, snowy whiskers, has adorned the billboards of nearly every city and hamlet in the United States, picked Rutherford as his successor. He found Rutherford in a little town in Missouri some eighteen years ago. Rutherford looks the part of leader. He is tall, rather portly, has a large, fine shaped head and an air of heavy dignity. He affects the frock coat style of dress and it shows to Bailey alone, but would look like a typical Southern Member of Congress. Rutherford is a lawyer and claims to have been a judge.

When Pastor Russell passed away some eighteen months ago it was found that he had carefully arranged for the continuation of his religious organization by a series of committees and boards. His will set forth the entire scheme and even named the men and women to go on the various committees, as well as substitutes in the event of death. The instructions all pointed to the designation of Rutherford as the new Pastor and the faithful followers carried out the demands of the departed. Rutherford became the head of the sect which forty-six years ago, quick-witted young American, was selling shirts at Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in the little shop he had inherited from his father when the religious bug began to bite him. He only had to read Revelations over two or three times to realize that the truth about this particular part of the Bible had never been told and that the world was just itching to have him tell it. He did. First to his customers, then to his friends, then to various small groups of religious cranks who were running sideshows of their own in and around Pittsburgh. Every time he told it he became more convinced that he had Ultimate Truth by the tail and only needed a little help to pull it in.

He stopped selling shirts and organized the business of selling salvation. He got hold of a little paper called Zion's Watch Tower to promote his publicity for his ideas, and in 1879 married Marie F. Ackley, the editor, thus reducing expenses. From the first business was good. Subscribers became donors. Sacrifice was one of the central tenets of Russellism. Why lay up treasures in this world, which was going to pot in October, 1914, when it was possible to secure an orchestra chair for the New Dispensation by timely contributions? And if you cannot spare the lucre now leave it to the "Pastor" in your will so that he may spread the Glad Tidings in your name.

"The Finished Mystery," "Pastor" Russell's posthumous book, was found to contain seditious utterances. It was banned by the Canadian Censor, was

condemned as containing "treasonable" statements by the Prosecutor of Toronto and its distributors were fined heavily.

The United States Government soon acted. The Army Intelligence Bureau visited the Bethel home at 122-24 Columbia Heights and the Tabernacle at 15-17 Hicks street, February 28 last and seized a cartload of books and papers, including many copies of the banned book. The indictment of the eight Russellites, seven of whom have been sentenced, was the result of the scrutiny of these seized papers, including the military file of the organization.

Remnants of the organization are now covering to determine the future of the sect.

Dominated by Strong Personality.

With the Russellites as with the Dowiettes, the Millerites, the Holy Ghosters and many other infatuated groups of the same ilk a strong personality dominates the origin and early development of the movement. The Millennial Dawn idea is the central tenet of Russellism. The idea that the end of the world is at hand and the New Dispensation is about to begin has deluded mankind for centuries. At least a hundred pseudo-prophets have gained followings large enough to be noted in religious history by exploiting this idea. There are enough obscure passages in the Bible dealing with the second coming of the end of the world, the Millennial Dawn, and the New Dispensation to tempt both the wise and the unwary.

Dr. S. Parkes Cadman once remarked in connection with Russellism: "If I announce to the world that I have discovered in my backyard a turtle whose shell bears a mysterious inscription thousands of deluded people will be ready to join me in establishing a new religion."

Russell Sold Shirts When Religious Bug Bit Him.

Charles Taze Russell, a shrewd, quick-witted young American, was selling shirts at Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in the little shop he had inherited from his father when the religious bug began to bite him. He only had to read Revelations over two or three times to realize that the truth about this particular part of the Bible had never been told and that the world was just itching to have him tell it. He did. First to his customers, then to his friends, then to various small groups of religious cranks who were running sideshows of their own in and around Pittsburgh. Every time he told it he became more convinced that he had Ultimate Truth by the tail and only needed a little help to pull it in.

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When the Family Takes the Powerful Katrinka Along on a Beach Party They Never Have To Go To the Trouble of Unloading Things From the Boat.



Thousands Parted With Their Dollars.

It sounds ridiculous but it persuaded thousands of sincere people to part with their earthly belongings. How many millions Charles Taze Russell accumulated before his death on October 31, 1916, will probably never be known. The mass of interlocking property-holding corporations which he created was so shrewdly organized that some of Pittsburgh's wildest lawyers were unable to get at the facts when they sought to make him pay the alimony which the courts had awarded his wife. Occasionally they got track of some single big deal, as a transfer of \$317,000 worth of property to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, with reference to which the Pennsylvania courts declared: "The purpose of this whole transaction was to deprive his wife of her dower rights and was a fraud on her."

It was Russell's trouble with his wife that broke up his business in Pittsburgh, and persuaded him to move to Brooklyn. She obtained a separation on the ground of cruel and inhuman treatment in 1907 after a bitter fight in which "Pastor" Russell exhausted every possible appeal that money could buy. The evidence in the case and the remarks about the "Pastor" embodied in the decisions of the various courts are highly sensational and the head of the Millennial Dawn sect was never able to live them down.

But the success of his propaganda was marvelous. He sent representatives into every county of the United States, who worked with particular success among the ignorant people living in farming communities. He published newspapers in twenty different languages and paid to have his so-called sermons published in thousands of newspapers here and abroad. When he opened the old Plymouth Bethel, on Hicks street near Fulton, in February, 1909, he brought with him from Arch Street Tabernacle, in Pittsburgh, seven carloads of Millennial Dawn propaganda.

Russell's Marvelous Propaganda.

At about this time "Pastor" Russell gave out an interview in which he discussed his prospects in Brooklyn. He said:

"Fortunately I am not only a minister of the gospel, but an editor as well. Then, too, I know a little something about business. We expect to do well here. There are in the territory around Brooklyn something like fifteen million people, very, very intelligent people, and we feel that we can sell our books and pamphlets more readily from this point than from Pittsburgh. And, believe me, we are doing it all for the Lord."

These labors for the Lord ran into constantly increasing figures. According to sworn evidence given by W. E. Van Amburgh, the Russellite treasurer, the propaganda expenditures of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in 1912 totalled \$371,715 and the receipts exceeded that amount. The investments which "Pastor" Russell made in various corporations, such as coal mine companies, real estate ventures, asphalt companies and others, were transferred to various dummy corporations, among them the United States Investment Company, capitalized at \$1,000, with Charles Taze Russell holding \$390 worth of the stock.

He maintained his control over the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, to which he transferred much of his property in an endeavor to escape paying alimony, by a special device known as "voting shares." Every time he gave something to the society he exacted "voting shares" in return, thus maintaining absolute control over the organization.

Was Confident of Success in Brooklyn.

The doctrinal side of Russellism was developed as rapidly and successfully as the business side. Russell expounded the central tenets of his creed in a

series of six books, largely consisting of rambling explanations of various Biblical passages, some original, others borrowed from older writers. These books were known as the Millennial Dawn series and millions of copies were sold. Originally, Russell put most of the emphasis on the forthcoming end of the world in October, 1914, but as this date approached he explained that it was, after all, approximate and that some time must elapse before the blissful state to which the elect were to be called could materialize.

One thing which made his cult popular is that it involves a generally blissful Millennial Dawn, but nothing in the way of hell or hell fire. There is no ordination according to the Russell creed, and such title as Reverend and Doctor of Divinity or such distinctions as between laity and clergy are to be abhorred. Nor is there any immortality in the commonly accepted sense: "When a man's dead he's dead, and all prayers on earth won't affect him" is the way this idea is phrased in a Russell sermon. "God ordained me" was his answer to a question as to how he came to call himself a "pastor."

One of the weirdest of the many unusual tenets held by Russellites is their belief in "fallen angels" or "demons," as they are sometimes called. These have the habit of materializing on earth and assuming the form of well-known persons. In his publication, the Watch Tower, of January 1, 1911, Editor Russell tells how these wicked devils tried to interfere with his reputation. He received a letter, he says, from an Australian brother relating the visit to his wife of a "fallen angel" who had assumed the form of Editor Russell. This "angel" conducted himself in a most unbecoming manner. "At such a distance," Editor Russell comments, "it is easy enough to prove an alibi to prove the editor was not there. But suppose this materialization in all of its particulars had transpired in Brooklyn?"

Russell Expounded Creed in Books.

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The Russellites of Brooklyn Which Lost Their Leader By Hand of Death and His Successors By That of the Law Receives Staggering Blow, Although It Is Likely To Survive For a Time—Pastor Russell's Marvellous Propaganda.

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Materialization in Brooklyn. Materialization of other forms took place in Brooklyn—materialization of hard cash that went to line the pockets and to fill the coffers of the preacher. Shrewd business men than Russell are not hard to find, perhaps, but it would be difficult to discover any who took more devious ways to attain their ends; who turned the deeper emotions of human nature into cash with defter touch.

Many of Russell's money-making schemes were not dishonest. Most of them were of the J. P. Wallingford type—the kind that ran very close to the borderline and yet kept their originator within the limits of the law. The "Miracle Wheat" matter, for example, was hedged about by so many safeguards that it was difficult to prove the direct connection of the "Pastor" with the transaction. Grown on land owned by one of Russell's camouflage corporations, it was offered for sale by a "brother" of the Russell cult at the Russell religious headquarters in Brooklyn. The "brother" said that the "Pastor" had nothing to do with the sale; yet the money derived from the sale went directly back to the Russellite coffers, directed and controlled by none other

than the "Pastor" himself. Wheat, worth \$5 a bushel in the ordinary market, brought \$50 when sold under its religio-mystic title.

For a man who expounded the simple doctrine of the truth of the Bible, "Pastor" Russell took the byways of untruth on many other occasions. Even in the exploitation of his cult he hesitated not to draw the lower bow to its greatest extent. One of his favorite stunts was to publish in various papers throughout the world long accounts of his sermons. It developed, much to the surprise of some of his faithful followers, that a great many of these "sermons" were simply that much prepared press-agent matter, inserted in newspapers as advertisements and often paid for at advertising rates. Many of these sermons were never preached anywhere except in the newspaper columns. A much heralded trip around the world "to investigate conditions of Christianity" was largely a huge advertising jaunt. For example, on this excursion, which was billed just like a circus, but a few hours were spent in the investigation of missionary conditions in China, and a commensurate amount of time in other countries shows how valuable it must have been.

Russell's Financial Ventures.

Among the "Pastor's" other little financial ventures was the sale for \$50 of a \$35,000 piece of property to deprive his wife of her dower rights. The property was sold to the Watch Tower Society, which was merely "Pastor" Russell in a hasty-to-prepare corporation disguised as the "Watch Tower Society." Again the "Pastor" showed the quality of his beneficence by making large donations to the Watch Tower Society. But to every single donation was tied a string that led directly back to Russell's pocket-book. This string was in the form of voting shares for every \$10 contributed to the society. By these voting shares Russell kept control not only of the affairs of the organizations, but of the money he had turned over to them, as well as the money turned over by other persons for the advancement of his work.

While spreading his doctrines over the face of the earth, the "Pastor" also kept several financial sheet anchors to the windward against a possible stormy day. He was interested in a number of companies, dealing in such varied commodities as brick, coal, asphalt and turpentine. And every turn of the wheel ground money into the Russell coffers. All this was in addition to the stream of funds supplied by believers in his creed, who gave in the total hundreds of thousands of dollars. And so, for a considerable time, affairs prospered.

The turning point for Russellism came in connection with his suit for libel against The Brooklyn Eagle. The Eagle had exposed the money-making scheme on the part of the Russellites to sell ordinary seed wheat at thirty times its market value by calling it Miracle Wheat and claiming for it certain superhuman attributes. Mr. Russell brought suit for \$100,000. There is no question that The Eagle had libeled the plaintiff. The court so charged. Its only justification was that it had told the truth about the Russell operations. Mr. Russell's attorney told the jury: "A verdict for

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BRINGING
UP
FATHER
BY
McMANUS

