

"The FINISHED MYSTERY" AND WHY SUPPRESSED

U. S. Department of Justice and War Intelligence Bureau Act

CLERGYMEN TAKE A HAND

Wide publication has been given through the public press to the fact that the Governments of the United States and Canada have suppressed the sale and distribution of the seventh book of a series written by the late Pastor Russell, named "The Finished Mystery." This book is published by the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION at Brooklyn, New York. The Association also publishes six other books written by Pastor Russell, which have had a circulation exceeding eleven million volumes. Since this matter has become so prominent in the public eye, we give herein a brief history of the Association and an outline of its work, coupled with the reasons for the opposition to and suppression of this book:

WHAT THE I. B. S. A. IS

The International Bible Students Association is a name used by Bible Students throughout the world who adhere to the interpretation of the Bible as taught for many years by the late Pastor Russell. This name is employed generally to distinguish it from its two kindred corporations, to wit: The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and the Peoples Pulpit Association.

The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is a corporation organized under the laws of Pennsylvania, existing since 1884, and handles the business end of the work and the publications of the International Bible Students Association generally.

In 1909 the Peoples Pulpit Association was incorporated under the Membership Corporation Law of the State of New York, to handle the same work in that state, for the reason that the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society being a non-stock corporation organized in another state could not hold title to real estate in the State of New York. The two associations, however, are one and the same, engaged in identically the same work.

In 1914 a corporation was formed in London, England, under the name of the International Bible Students Association, which handles the business end of the work in that country. This is the name also by which all their Bible ecclesias, or churches, throughout the world are known. Therefore, for convenience, the name International Bible Students Association is used as referring generally to the religious organization and work.

WORK AND PURPOSE

The purpose for which these organizations are created is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the oral message and by the printed page. For a number of years branch offices have been maintained in the following places, to wit: London, England; Orebro, Sweden; Copenhagen, Denmark; Barmen, Germany; Zurich, Switzerland; Capetown, South Africa; Melbourne, Australia; and other points. This work is managed from the Brooklyn headquarters, the executive office of which is located at 124 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York, and the business operative office at 13-17 Hicks Street, Brooklyn.

The International Bible Students Association maintains on the road a number of traveling preachers. It has

church organizations, or ecclesias, in almost all the important cities of the United States and Canada, and a greater number of the smaller towns and country districts, which are visited by these traveling preachers regularly who deliver sermons and teach Bible classes. Each church or ecclesia has its own organization and elects regularly its elders and teachers for teaching and giving instruction in the Bible. The text books used for instruction in the Bible are books and concordances and various translations of the Bible, and particularly the writings of Pastor Russell. These writings consist of seven volumes known as *Studies in the Scriptures*—Helping Hands to Bible Study. They are specifically named as follows:

- Vol. 1 The Divine Plan of the Ages.
- Vol. 2 The Time is at Hand.
- Vol. 3 Thy Kingdom Come.
- Vol. 4 The Battle of Armageddon.
- Vol. 5 Atonement Between God and Man.
- Vol. 6 The New Creation.
- Vol. 7 The Finished Mystery.

The first of this series was published in 1886 and the other volumes have been added since from time to time; the last, or seventh volume, being published after the death of Pastor Russell, which occurred in October, 1916. More than eleven million of these volumes are in the hands of the people.

Other publications of the Association are: *The Watch Tower*, a journal published twice each month and devoted exclusively to religious matters and Bible explanations. The regular subscription to this semi-monthly journal is approximately 40,000. *The Bible Students Monthly*, a small four-sheet paper, which has contained usually the sermons of Pastor Russell up to the time of his death, and since then similar matter prepared by other members of the Association, together with a few news items along religious lines.

In addition to these publications there are the following booklets, viz., "What Say the Scriptures About Hell?" "What Say the Scriptures About Spiritism?" "The Tabernacle Shadows," and some smaller pamphlets.

HOW FINANCED

All the funds that maintain this Association and that have been used in this work are received from voluntary contributions. Not even a collection has ever been taken up at any meeting and no money solicited, but men and women throughout the world who have understood the teachings of the Bible as explained by Pastor Russell, and who realize the great blessings that it holds out to the peoples of the earth, and moved by philanthropic desires, have willingly and gladly contributed the money.

A subscription price of one dollar a year is charged for *The Watch Tower*, which about meets the cost of its publication and distribution. The *Studies in the Scriptures* are sold at a very close margin and usually little or no profit is made on them. Many of the other papers are given away freely.

"OBJECTIONABLE MATTER"

Neither *The Watch Tower* nor any of their other publications has editorially discussed the war with reference to whether it is right or wrong. All reference to the war has been in the nature of an explanation of prophecy.

These publications have pointed out for the past twenty years that a great international war would be upon the world which would begin in 1914; and that practically all the nations would be involved. The Society has never published anything with a view to hindering the progress of the war at all, for the reason that they recognize it as of Divine permission, and could not oppose its progress without opposing the very foundation of their belief.

"THE FINISHED MYSTERY"

"The Finished Mystery" is the seventh volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, a large portion of which consists of Bible interpretations written by Pastor Russell in his lifetime, to which additions were made by the compilers, Messrs. Woodworth and Fisher, with copious quotations from other writers. Amongst these quotations are some from ministers of different denominations.

In February, 1918, agitation by clergymen became very pointed against the seventh volume, "The Finished Mystery," and in Canada the public censor put a ban upon the book and the press freely published the "objec-

tionable" part. When this matter was called to the attention of the officers of the Association, Mr. Robison, a representative of the I. B. S. A., was sent to Washington, D. C., and appeared before the Censor Committee of the War Department, and submitted to that body "The Finished Mystery," and upon examination of it they suggested to Mr. Robison that pages 247 to 253 be removed. The pages consist largely of quotations from two ministers of different denominations. The Association immediately took steps to have removed from the book these pages to which objection was made.

WHY OPPOSED BY THE CLERGY

In Jesus' day, "the common people heard him gladly," and the ecclesiastics of that time persecuted him. The same persecution has applied to the International Bible Students Association with reference to their promulgation of Bible truths. Pastor Russell preached to more people than any man that ever lived on earth. For some time his sermons appeared in as many as four thousand papers each week, and in many different languages. Those associated with him in the work

Pastor Russell clearly proved from the Scriptures that the doctrine of eternal torment of human souls is the fiendish doctrine of the great Adversary and a defamation of God's holy name; that the doctrine of the divine right of the clergy to teach the Bible and the divine right of kings to rule are wholly unscriptural, and that both have been the cause of untold suffering of the peoples of earth.

In 1881 Pastor Russell announced his intention of publishing seven volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. He published six of these volumes during his life and shortly after his death the seventh volume of the series was published, the latter, as before stated, more particularly explaining the prophecies of Ezekiel and Revelation and proving how the unrighteous ecclesiastical systems have grown up in the earth and oppressed the people. This volume also points out that Messiah's Kingdom is near at hand and that soon indescribable blessings will flow out to mankind.

FORETOLD WAR 20 YEARS AGO

More than twenty years ago Pastor Russell pointed out from the Bible that God had granted to the Gentiles a lease



THE CLERGY WOULD CENSOR THE BIBLE

of power which would legally end in 1914 and that then the nations would become angry and God's wrath would come; that a great international war would begin at that time and would be followed by greater trouble, and that the trouble would usher in Messiah's Kingdom of righteousness, which would be "the desire of all nations." (Haggai 2:7) Long ago he showed that it would be impossible for the United States to keep out of that war. The facts, now well known by every man, prove the correctness of Pastor Russell's interpretations of the Bible. His exposition of Scripture has greatly angered the majority of clergymen, because it shows that their teachings in the past have been out of harmony with the Word of God; and if he is correct in his interpretation of the Bible, their position as clergymen is wholly untenable. The clergy were called upon either to show the people that his Scriptural interpretations are wrong, or to join with him in explaining them to the people and thus to help in leading the people into greater light and happiness. This the clergy failed to do. They had no answer to the clear exposition of Scripture given by Pastor Russell and those who joined with him in the work.

In 1869, young Charles T. Russell, being a diligent student of divine prophecy, discovered that the Bible contains an outline of Jehovah's wonderful plan of salvation which will ultimately bless mankind. So enthused was he with the message of hope that he at once devoted all of his time and money to making it known to others. At the very beginning of his ministry he spent \$40,000 out of his own pocket to distribute freely in the City of New York and other places a little booklet entitled "Food for Thinking Christians." A few clergymen saw he was right, and with gladness joined with him in the work. The greater majority of clergymen, instead of explaining these Scriptures to the people and helping them, began a cruel and systematic persecution of this great reformer, and thus they persistently continued to persecute him until his death.

have likewise been engaged in preaching the glad tidings of great joy concerning Messiah's Kingdom. The common people and a few of the clergymen have heard gladly, while a great majority of the clergy have opposed.

In order that the motive of this opposition to the I. B. S. A. may be understood, we outline here more in detail the history of their work.

Work began on the book by the compilers in the month of November, 1916, and a large portion of the proof

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE OF MODERN CLERGY

In Jesus' day, the clergy of the Jewish order, being unable to meet his forceful words, stirred up the people against him and had him arrested, charging him with treason against the Roman government and with blasphemy against God. "The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you," declared Jesus to his disciples.—John 15:20.

It is manifest that the teaching of the International Bible Students Association, and particularly that of "The Finished Mystery," has not in any manner influenced any person against the Government nor in any manner retarded the war. It is likewise manifest from the facts, as shown by numerous newspaper reports publishing the declarations of clergymen, that for some time the clergy have been seeking to stir up the people against the I. B. S. A. and to have the attention of the Government called to them on the flimsy theory that their publications are in the nature of German propaganda. It is quite certain that the civil powers would have had no occasion even to consider "The Finished Mystery" had not the agitation of the clergy forced it upon them.

Pastor Russell wrote, we might say prophetically, concerning the events we now see transpiring. More than twenty years ago he pointed out from the Scriptures that the experiences of the Prophet Elijah with King Ahab and his queen, Jezebel, pictured the closing experiences of the true Christians on earth: Ahab representing the civil powers, and Jezebel the Papal system. Further he stated that Herod and his unlawful wife, Herodias, again typed the same thing as did Ahab and Jezebel; and that John the Baptist and his last experiences pictured the trying experiences to which Christians would be subjected after the close of the Gentile Times, viz., A. D. 1914; and that the daughter of Herodias (Salome), pictured nominal Protestant churches united in a common cause. John the Baptist rebuked Herodias for her wrongful course. An explanation of Ezekiel and Revelation, as set forth in "The Finished Mystery," is a rebuke to the clergy of both Papal and Protestant systems. Referring to this in *The Watch Tower* for March 15, 1898, Pastor Russell said:

"The Church nominal, in her false position, would be anxious to stifle the reproofs and destroy the reprovers, and the effect would be that the civil powers would be induced to pass such legislation as would restrain the liberty of the faithful ones and hinder them from public utterances, as John was hindered by imprisonment. Jezebel's (Papacy's) personal influence, being insufficient, may subsequently be augmented by the influence of her daughter (united Protestantism), who will be so fully in sympathy with her as to become her tool in the destruction of the most loyal servants of God."

For years clergymen (Catholic and Protestant) have vehemently opposed the teachings of the International Bible Students Association. When they read "The Finished Mystery," their anger knew no bounds. Being wholly unable to answer the clear argument therein presented, they began to seek some way to destroy those responsible for its publication. Early in the month of February, 1918, the clergymen of Canada began a system-

atic denunciation particularly of "The Finished Mystery," and of the International Bible Students Association and its publications generally. For instance, the Winnipeg papers announced that certain clergymen had denounced the publications of this Association from their pulpits and stated that the attention of the Attorney General had been called to the matter. Later, the Attorney General examined certain of the Association's publications and the public censor placed a ban upon them in Canada. "The Winnipeg Tribune" says, "The censor's order is believed to be the direct result" of these representations of the clergy. Shortly thereafter, in various parts of Canada, members of the International Bible Students Association were arrested, their houses were searched and their books and other publications taken away from them, and Christians were punished by fine and imprisonment for using their text book, "The Finished Mystery," for Bible class study.

CLERGY INSPIRED PERSECUTION

About the same time, the President of the Association addressed a great mass meeting at Los Angeles, California, one of the leading papers of that city carrying a full-page report of the meeting the morning following. The ministerial alliance of that city immediately held a meeting and sent a representative who waited upon that paper with a view of preventing further publication of the Bible truths as proclaimed by the International Bible Students Association. The clergy failed in this mission. A few days later, certain officers swooped down upon the Bible Students' local headquarters, took possession of their various publications, including Bibles and hymn books, and took them away. Later many of the books were returned. They forced an entrance into the private office of one of the elders of the local church, without even having a search warrant. The next Sunday, clergymen of Los Angeles advertised such subjects as, "Is the End of Russellism Near?" One of the leading clergymen, from his pulpit said, "Thank God, Russellism is now downed forever." In various parts of the country, men and women have recently been arrested and thrown into jail. In the State of Oklahoma, a poor woman, selling books at a small profit for a living, was arrested because she was selling "The Finished Mystery," the seventh of Pastor Russell's series of books, her bond fixed at \$10,000, which was impossible for her to give, and she was compelled to stay for some time in a jail too filthy to house swine.

CLERGY CRY "HUN PROPAGANDA"

In big headlines, the clergymen have advertised the publications of Pastor Russell as "German Propaganda." Their evident object was to stir up the minds of the people against these Bible Students, classifying them as German sympathizers. As an illustration, the Winnipeg Tribune printed this bold heading: "Russellism is Hun Propaganda Under a Cloak." "An infamous German propaganda under the cover of religion," said Dr. French E. Oliver to a crowded audience at the First Presbyterian Church, Winnipeg.

In Worcester, Massachusetts, Rev. B. F. Wyland published in the *Daily Telegram*, under big headlines, "Hun Propaganda is Being Pushed in Worcester." Among other things, he said, "And one of your patriotic duties that confronts

Has Ended
Living
ALL NEVER DIE!

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f will be submitted in evidence.

NEWSPAPERS
AND PLACE