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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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"Masters of the Word"?

A Review of an Illuminating Book Review.

We publish herewith a book review from *The Sunday School Times* of July 23rd. We have not yet read the book therein reviewed, "Notes on the Revelation, by W. J. Erdman, D.D., Edited by Charles R. Erdman", but we publish this review not to comment upon the book, of which we know nothing, but to analyze the review, and carefully to examine its spirit. We ask our readers carefully to read this excerpt from *The Sunday School Times*, and carefully to weigh also the comments which follow:

NOTES ON THE REVELATION. By W. J. Erdman, D.D. Edited by Charles R. Erdman. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, \$1.25.) The late Dr. W. J. Erdman, who passed away in 1923, was one of the ablest and most beloved Biblical expositors of his time, and as Secretary of the Niagara Bible Conference from 1880 to 1901 he exerted a great and blessed influence on the entire Bible conference movement in this country, now of such immense proportions. He was also one of the editors of the Scofield Reference Bible. It was by his own conference teaching and not by the few writings that he found time to publish, that Dr. Erdman's greatest influence was exerted.

A careful study of this book by Dr. Erdman, recently published, leads one to believe that many of the late writer's friends will regret that it was published at all. There are less than fifty pages of the author's own notes on the Revelation (the rest of the book being taken up with a printing of the entire text of Revelation, and with the notes of the editor); and for mature students of the Scriptures, who will most benefit by this study, fifty pages is too brief a space for adequate exposition of the most difficult book in the Bible.

Many years ago, Dr. W. J. Erdman published a booklet, "Brief Notes on the Revelation," in size about the same as this which Dr. Charles R. Erdman (his son) has now given to the public. It is strange that the editor does not refer to this earlier work by his father, covering exactly the same subjects, especially in view of the fact that many of the statements in the later work differ considerably from statements about the same truths in the earlier book. Did Dr. W. J. Erdman change some of his earlier interpretations? It would seem that the reader is entitled to know something of the history of the author's convictions regarding many of these important but difficult subjects.

Furthermore, some of the interpretations of this beloved teacher as given in this present small book will not be accepted by the great body of students of prophecy to whom the work will principally appeal. This is particularly true in regard to the belief of Dr. Erdman that the believing Church will pass through the tribulation. The united conviction of such teachers and masters of the Word as C. I. Scofield and R. A. Torrey, together with Lewis Sperry Chafer, James M. Gray, H. A. Ironside, A. C. Gaebelein, and many others, that the Scriptures

teach that the Church will be caught up before the tribulation begins its terrible course, cannot be shaken by a brief commentary on the Revelation, published post-humously, by one whose name appears in the title-page of the Scofield Reference Bible.

Finally, the notes of the editor seem likely to confuse the mind of the reader. Thus the editor says that his father, "while classed with so-called Pre-Millennialists, did not feel that the Scriptures were very explicit in their millennial teaching. He found it less important to observe that Christ would return before the Millennium, than to maintain that he must reappear before the glories of his kingdom could be complete." Dr. W. J. Erdman wrote frequently for *The Truth*, an invaluable periodical edited years ago by Dr. James H. Brookes. In the volume for 1880 (vi. 513-518) he has an article on "No Millennium before the Second Coming of Christ"; the following year (vii. 231-234) he writes on "Pre-Millennial Testimony"; in 1888 (xiv. 444-448) on "The Personal and Pre-Millennial Coming of Christ in Genesis to Deuteronomy"; and in March, 1894, (xx. 160-169) he wrote an article called "The Names of the Millennial Kingdom of God." The reader cannot help but ask at what time in his life was it true that "he did not feel that the Scriptures were very explicit in their millennial teaching." The editor writes elsewhere in the book that, though "it is evident that the author regarded the return of Christ as Premillennial," yet "it might be more accurate to say that he regarded it as preceding the kingdom in which the Millennium was to issue." This only adds confusion to the whole subject and leaves the reader really doubtful as to what the author did believe. And for the editor to note that his father did not agree with the view that in the Revelation "from chapter four to nineteen the visions relate only to the Jewish people" is to bring in a theory which no prophetic teacher of this generation of accepted authority and standing has suggested.

There are, of course, some valuable pages in this brief commentary, but clearer light on the meaning of the last pages of the Word of God will, it is believed, be found in the works of Scofield, Gray, Gaebelein, Ironside, Pettingill, Ottman, Sale-Harrison, and others.

The reviewer of Dr. Erdman's book regrets its publication, and notes its brevity, "less than fifty pages of the author's own notes on the Revelation", apparently as his first reason for regretting its publication. And then adds: "For mature students of the Scriptures, who will most benefit by this study, fifty pages is too brief a space for adequate exposition of the most difficult book in the Bible."

That, of course, is quite true. It would be equally true if the same were said of fifty volumes written on the same book. Apparently, however, enough is said in these

fifty pages to stir the ire of the reviewer, and to make it abundantly clear that the view of Revelation therein expressed is not exactly the view entertained by the reviewer himself.

In the third paragraph the reviewer objects because no reference is made to an earlier book by the same author, and adds,

"Many of the statements in the later work differ considerably from statements about the same truths in the earlier book. Did Dr. W. J. Erdman change some of his earlier interpretations? It would seem that the reader is entitled to know something of the history of the author's convictions regarding many of these important but difficult subjects."

What an extraordinary contention! When a man writes his "last will and testament" the law does not require him to review earlier wills which he may have made; nor yet to furnish reasons why he changed his views and his bequests: it is assumed that the testator's "last will and testament" is exactly what it claims to be, namely, his final judgment, and a final expression of his will in respect to his estate.

We have never heard of examiners, perusing a scholar's thesis for a philosophy degree, demanding that it should be judged in the light of his first kindergarten efforts which he brought home to his mother. What a man publishes in his maturer life must surely be regarded as his view on the subject at the time of publication. Many Evangelicals in the last quarter of a century have turned Modernists, and in later years have written books which entirely repudiate the principles of their earlier writing. What of it? One can only assume that they have ceased to be Evangelicals, and they are to be judged, not by what they were, but by what now manifestly they are.

The reviewer's contention in this matter seems to us to be most unreasonable. We do not know who the reviewer is, but presumably Dr. Erdman's alleged earlier, and less mature, views were more in accord with his own. It seems to us that Dr. Chas. R. Erdman did perfectly right in giving his father's maturer views to the world on the subject of the book of Revelation. Evidently he believed that these "notes" constituted his father's "last will and testament" respecting the subject in hand.

But we are getting what those who play hide-and-go-seek, call, "warm", when looking for the reason for the reviewer's strictures on Dr. Erdman's book, when in the next paragraph he says:

"Some of the interpretations of this beloved teacher as given in this present small book will not be accepted by the great body of students of prophecy to whom the work will principally appeal. This is particularly true in regard to the belief of Dr. Erdman that the believing Church will pass through the tribulation."

Door Locked! Keep Out! Don't Knock.

"Wouldn't that jar you"! Apparently Dr. Erdman believed one thing respecting the church and the tribulation in earlier years, and another thing in later years. But the reviewer announces—apparently knowing the mind of all those who accept the pretribulation rapture theory—that Dr. Erdman's interpretation will not be acceptable to them. Evidently he knows the school to which he belongs. Are we to understand that nothing can by any possibility be acceptable that is not in agreement with their view? Of course, it is useless to discuss questions with people of closed minds. If all that may be known on the subject is already known, further discussion, of course, would be useless. They have reached finality, and hence infallibility; therefore no matter who speaks it or for

what reason, whenever a word is spoken out of agreement with theirs, no "conference" is necessary: their mental products being all alike—like Ford cars, there is nothing more to be thought, or said, or done; hence one may speak for all the rest and declare that such views "will not be accepted by the great body of students of prophecy"!

"Students of Prophecy"?

Let us examine for a moment or two this phrase, "students of prophecy". Who are they? So far as we have been able to observe, many of those who call themselves "students of prophecy" are about the most crassly ignorant people we have ever met. Many of them know next to nothing of the prophetic scriptures, and are as ignorant of history as if anything of earlier date than their birth were prehistoric. They are not students of prophecy: they are habitues of so-called Bible "conferences," where nobody *conferes* but where certain so-called Bible teachers bring up their little case of records, and put them in the phonograph and wind them out, saying the same things over and over again.

We confess that we listen as often as we have opportunity to "Amos-n-Andy." And there is a certain other "episode" presented over the radio to which we also listen when we can. This last is connected with the advertisement of a certain commodity, and we have heard it so often that we could repeat the radio advertisement word for word. In like manner we can say backwards and forwards, upside-down, inside-out, through and through, and every other way, what many of these so-called "Bible teachers" have to say. They say the same thing over and over again. We wonder that their addresses do not wear out from use. If motor tires could be made of the same material, motorists, like Tennyson's brook could "go on forever." Their monotonous repetition certainly has the effect of wearing out the patience of some of their hearers.

Do "Students" Study or Stereotype?

But to return to our phrase. A "student of prophecy", one might suppose, is one who is always studying prophecy. And if a certain man has anything to say concerning what he believes respecting prophecy, the real "student" would at least be interested sufficiently to hear him through. But why this reviewer, himself apparently a "student of prophecy", should be able to announce in advance that all other students in his school will have shut minds toward this book of Dr. Erdman's—whatever may be its teaching; as we have said, we have not read it—we cannot understand.

"Teachers—Masters of the Word."

But here is a gem:

"The united conviction of such teachers and masters of the Word as C. I. Scofield and R. A. Torrey, together with Lewis Sperry Chafer, James M. Gray, H. A. Ironside, A. C. Gaebelein, and many others, that the Scriptures teach that the Church will be caught up before the tribulation begins its terrible course, cannot be shaken by a brief commentary on the Revelation, published posthumously, by one whose name appears in the title-page of the Scofield Reference Bible."

Well! Well! At last we have come upon something new under the sun—"a master of the Word". We thought as much! We used to suppose that the worthiest ambition to be cherished by any humble believer was to be mastered by the Word. When, may we respectfully enquire, did any finite human become a "master" of the word of the Infinite?

We have no word of criticism to pass upon the names which this reviewer assembles under that general classification. Every one is an honoured name. Every one of these men taught, or still teaches, much that is true. But every one of them, we are constrained to believe, was occasionally mistaken in his interpretations of Scripture, and was subject to such mental limitations as are inseparable from human nature.

The Editor of this book under review says that his father, "while classed with so-called Pre-millennialists, did not feel that the Scriptures were very explicit in their millennial teaching. He found it less important to observe that Christ would return before the Millennium, than to maintain that he must reappear before the glories of his kingdom could be complete."

If that was Dr. Erdman's general attitude toward the subject of the second Advent and the Millennium—and who would be more likely to understand it than his own son?—we are inclined to think that Dr. W. J. Erdman was a very wise man. We see nothing in the titles of the articles to which the reviewer refers as appearing in *The Truth* necessarily in conflict with what Dr. Chas. R. Erdman describes as his father's attitude. We are glad to find that someone else beside the Editor of THE GOSPEL WITNESS "did not feel that the Scriptures were very explicit in their millennial teaching", and regarded it as being "less important to observe that Christ would return before the Millennium, than to maintain that he must reappear before the glories of his kingdom could be complete". Surely this indicates a wise emphasis and a true perspective.

"Amen" To This View.

But we have commented thus on this review specially to deal with this extraordinary statement:

"And for the editor to note that his father did not agree with the view that in the Revelation 'from chapter four to nineteen the visions relate only to the Jewish people' is to bring in a theory which no prophetic teacher of this generation of accepted authority and standing has suggested."

It seems to us that we shall probably find much that is very acceptable, to us at least, in Dr. Erdman's notes on the Revelation, if this is a sample, that he did not agree with the view that in the Revelation "from chapter four to nineteen the visions relate only to the Jewish people". The spirit and temper of the review in question deserve a sharp rejoinder. And we have this to say, that the view with which Dr. Erdman did not agree seems to us to be one of the most absurd ever set forth for human acceptance.

Fundamentalist Infallibility.

But this *Sunday School Times* reviewer objects to it on this ground, that Dr. Erdman's view would "bring in a theory which no prophetic teacher of this generation of accepted authority and standing has suggested."

Now we have it! We are referred to the Bible itself, not in one solitary instance in this entire review. We call attention to the fact that the principle which has led us so strongly to object to the Scofield Reference Bible runs all through this review. There is not a single reference to the Bible as a whole, nor to any portion of it, as a ground for objecting to the views set forth in the book under review. The main objection is that it is out of harmony with the "united conviction of such teachers and masters of the Word as C. I. Scofield," etc. We are told that the theory is unacceptable because it is "a theory which no prophetic teacher of this generation of accepted

authority and standing has suggested". We have long suspected that some of our extreme premillennial friends regarded themselves as "masters of the Word", and as "teachers of accepted authority." But how do men attain to the rank of "teachers of accepted authority and standing"? By what council, conclave or what not are they given this "authority"? By what standards and by what infallible exemplifications thereof is their authority "accepted"? With whom have these authoritative one's "standing"? And upon what ground of superior knowledge do they stand? And these who thus speak call themselves Fundamentalists. They would be the first to object to the pretensions of Rome, and to her claim to infallibility. But surely no council of the Church, or papal bull, ever claimed more for itself than this reviewer claims for the opinions of these alleged "masters of the Word" and "teachers of accepted authority".

Cannot these dear brethren, all of whom so far as we know, stand true to the great verities of evangelical faith; the Deity of Christ, His atoning work, man's lost condition in his natural state, the necessity for the new birth, justification by faith, the perseverance of the saints, and the second personal return of our Lord—can they not see that they are allowing their imaginations to run away with them to such an extent that they are setting up a school of interpretation which they assume to be final and infallible?

"Teachers of Accepted Authority"!

"Masters of the Word" indeed! "Teachers of accepted authority"! On what ground? We have nothing to say against these estimable brethren who are doubtless diligent students of the Word, and whose teachings are entitled to be heard with respect, but their views must be weighed as the opinions of fallible men. This Editor knows of no teacher of "accepted authority", and no teacher who may rightly be described as a "master of the Word".

"To the Law and to the Testimony."

Years ago we put together in a little booklet all the passages in the New Testament relating to baptism, without note or comment, so that when any enquirer asked concerning this matter we could give him or her a list of all the passages of Scripture which refer to baptism, that he or she could turn to his Bible and find and study them for himself or herself. A very ardent Baptist friend, seeing this, said, "But why did you not tell them in your pamphlet what John Knox and Calvin and many other paedobaptists have written about baptism?" Our reply was, "For the simple reason that we did not want to put into the hands of young converts the writings of any man, but wanted them to go to the Bible, to see what the Bible said itself. And furthermore, if you take your case from this supreme court of appeal, and ask that it be heard in a human court, you will always find judges on both sides of the question."

We apply the same principle to this discussion. Without desiring to discount the abilities of any of the gentlemen to whom *The Sunday School Times* reviewer refers, we respectfully suggest that even the greatest of them can scarcely be called greater than those who marked the long list of scholars whose laborious efforts have contributed so much to an understanding of the Word of God. Not to mention the names of devout men who have been specialists in the languages of the Bible, if we view the field occupied by men whose names are more generally known, surely the greatest of these names

mentioned would never presume to claim superiority over some of the illustrious preachers and teachers of the past: Spurgeon, Alexander McLaren, Robert Hall, Canon Liddon, Joseph Parker, Wesley, Whitfield, William Carey, Andrew Fuller.

How is it these tenets of the Scofield school utterly escaped the discernment of such men as these we have now mentioned?

Or if we turn to the American Continent, we find here a list of great names, evangelicals of the most fervent type, but who never taught the fads and fancies of Scofieldism.

There is another name on the title-page of the Scofield Bible, that of Dr. A. T. Pierson. Will somebody please produce one suggestion from anything that Dr. Pierson ever wrote that indicates he was in accord with this pre-tribulation rapture theory, and with all the vagaries of Futurism? And what of D. L. Moody, and A. J. Gordon? What of such men of past generations as the incomparable Joseph Cook, or Thomas Armitage, or P. S. Henson, or George Lorimer, or Theodore Cuyler—or any of the outstanding preachers and teachers of a generation ago, of any demonination? Will our friends name any one of them who held or taught the particular views which are said now to be taught by these “masters of the Word” and “teachers of accepted authority”?

We have no strictures to pass upon the views of Dr. Scofield or the persons quoted as being in association with him, either at the beginning or at the close of the article, except to claim the right to disagree with some of them. Beyond all question, every one is the name of a man of God who had or has deep insight into the Word, and who has taught much that has been of tremendous value to those who have sat at their feet. We would not underestimate the value of teachers, for “pastors and teachers”—and the two are usually combined in the one office, according to the Scripture—are gifts of the ascended Lord to His church. But we know of no infallibility outside the Scripture. We know of no teacher whose authority we can accept on all matters. We know of no man, living or dead, who was ever a “master of the Word” of the Infinite. We reject this claim to infallibility, this evangelical popery. We insist upon freedom to examine the Scriptures for ourselves, and we say kindly, but firmly and without apology, that in our experience as a minister we have never met with more intolerance, with more arrogant assumptions of finality, with more bitterness of spirit, outside of Rome than that which too often characterizes the disciples of the “masters of the Word” and the habitues of Bible Conferences addressed by “teachers of accepted authority”, if and when you dissent from their pre-tribulation rapture theory, from their view of a coming earthly Jewish kingdom, or from any of the other tenets involved in Futurism.

We have written strongly in the hope that someone may call the attention of the reviewer in *The Sunday School Times* to our strictures upon his review; and that when he reads it he may find in it something that will “jar” him out of his smug complacency.

TWO LETTERS FROM MRS. ROBERTSON.

Only to-day we received a good letter from our friend, Mrs. Jessie Sage Robertson, of Piedmont, Calif. Enclosed in her letter was a copy of a letter she had sent to a certain well-known minister in the United States. We have deleted the names from these letters, because we

publish them only for the sake of the discussion of Biblical matters they contain.

We have not deleted the name of our good friend Dr. Pettingill because we have published his point of view in these pages. Incidentally, we may say to Dr. Pettingill that THE GOSPEL WITNESS would welcome any word he cares to write us on the important subject which has been occupying our thought in the lectures published in these columns. We publish Mrs. Robertson's letters for two reasons. First, because it is evident she is a diligent student of the Word, who goes to the Book itself, and compares spiritual things with spiritual. Everyone who does that will be sure to bring forth something “new” as well as something “old”; and will therefore have something to say which wise men will desire to hear. We do not commend the views of Mrs. Robertson as though her voice were the voice of an oracle. She utterly disclaims such pretensions, and we believe to thoughtful people will therefore speak with greater authority than if she claimed finality for her judgments. But any sensible, intelligent, believer, who, in dependence upon the enlightening ministry of the Holy Spirit, diligently applies himself or herself to a study of the Word of God, and gives special thought to certain aspects of it, for twenty years, will be likely to be able to make a valuable contribution to the elucidation of the subject in hand.

We commend Mrs. Robertson's letters to our readers for their intrinsic worth in so far as they relate to matters of biblical interpretation.

Her reference to this Editor are altogether too complimentary, and we have great reason to fear that she tremendously overrates our influence. But apart from these very kind words of hers, we believe her letters are of great value.

Our second reason for publishing these letters is the mental attitude Mrs. Robertson assumes toward the subject, and which, after so finely exemplifying a teachable spirit herself, she recommends as a worthy attitude on the part of all who would be students of the Word. We earnestly commend a thoughtful perusal of these letters to all our readers. Do we not all make mistakes again and again? Men have coveted divine infallibility ever since Eden, and failing to possess it, too often have professed it. May the grace of divine wisdom preserve us from such folly!

MY WATCH

Edited and Published by
Mrs. Jessie Sage Robertson
213 Bonita Ave., Piedmont, Calif.

Rev. T. T. Shields

July 30, 1932

Brother in Christ:

Many hundreds of people are following you with intense interest, and perhaps many thousands, but I wonder if any one is following you with more interest than I am. Every issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS opens enlarging vistas of truth.

THE GENEVA BIBLE. I am so glad to know about this. God took care of that effort to mislead the readers of His Word and tie the hands of the Holy Spirit, and He will as surely take care of the so-called Scofield Bible. And He has honored you with leadership in the matter.

THE SCOFIELD BIBLE. It impressed me with its significance as I read the 3rd paragraph in your “sixth” address in the series, for already had I been led to say almost identically the same thing in a letter which I had written to Dr. _____ when he was in Oakland. (I will enclose a copy of this letter. God brought about our meeting each other in a way, that to my mind, seemed to make it clear that we were to meet in His will. The denouement is with Him. I may say something more on the subject before I finish this letter, if it does not run into too great a length.) It was because of this co-incidence, in con-

nection with what happened to the Geneva Bible, that strengthened my faith for the ultimate discontinuance of the publication of the Scofield Bible, as now seems clear to me will happen—sooner or later—since reading what you said of the Geneva Bible. And again I say, I believe God has honored you with the leadership in the matter. And this I also said to Dr. ———. (And if God can use "Mrs. Robertson of California" she is at His service, rest assured.)

THE PROMISED LAND. Your studies have sent me back to a deeper study of the Word concerning this matter; and of course I found many things I had never noticed so fully before.

1. Clearly from Gen. 12:4, 5, God had made it clear to Abraham that he was to go to the land of Canaan; i.e., to the land west of the Jordan. And to get there from Haran he would enter the land from its northern extremity, coming in, as all did from Mesopotamia, by way of Syria.

2. The first tent-pitching was at "Sichem" (Shechem), well to the north. Here came the *first utterance of the land covenant* as pertaining to Abraham's seed; and here Abraham builded his *first altar "unto the Lord,"* in the land. (Gen. 12:6, 7.)

3. He then moved south toward the centre of the land and pitched his tent at Bethel, and builded his *second altar.* (Gen. 12:8)

4. Abraham again pulled up stakes and started south when a famine diverted him and he went into Egypt. (12:9, 10.)

5. From Egypt he returned to Bethel and made a fresh start. (13:1-4) And here at the place of his *second altar* in the land came the *second utterance of the land covenant.* (13:14-17.)

6. From Bethel Abraham went south to Hebron, and there built his *third altar.* (13:18.)

7. Back home after delivering Lot from his captors (chap. 14) —going and coming by way of Syria. See v. 15—in chap. 15:1-7, we come upon the *third utterance of the land covenant* where he had builded his *third altar.*

8. And the Abrahamic seed to whom this land was promised comes into prophetic view in vs. 13-16 i.e., we have the land and Abraham's seed through Isaac and Jacob brought into juxtaposition before the enlarged land covenant comes into prophetic view; as though God wanted us to note that fact. I had never noted that before; nor had I before noted that Abraham had never once crossed the Jordan.

9. Then follows the enlarged land covenant with the explanation for that enlargement. That "NOW" of chap. 16:1 seemed to strike me right in the face as it jumped up at me for the first time apparently. (Why did they divide the Word at such a critical point, and thus divert the reader's attention from the objective of the continuity. I now feel like pasting a strip of paper over the interruption.) And with the explanation for the enlarged covenant of Gen. 15:18 brought into juxtaposition in my mind a lot of things instantly cleared up.

10. I could now see the force of Joshua's words in Josh. 23:4, 5. And just now as I write I have been glancing into Josh. 24, and noticed for the first time that the list of "ites" west of the Jordan as having occupied the *promised land* corresponded to those mentioned in Gen. 15:19-21 (cf. Josh. 24:11), as though God wished again back there to draw our attention to the differentiation between the smaller land covenant and the enlarged land covenant.

11. The most determining factor to my mind is Nu. 20:12, 24 and 27:12, 13, and Deut. 3:27, 28, 32:49-52, and 34:1-6. God distinctly describes the land west of the Jordan as the "promised land" so far as Israel is concerned it seems to me—the land "flowing with milk and honey." That poetic phrase which means a land of pastures and flowers; a land which will abundantly supply meat, vegetables, fruits, and the necessities for wholesome living.

So you see what you have done for me already. You, no doubt have long since seen all these things; but there is a clarity about it all now that I did not have before.

KINGDOM OF PRIESTS. Within the past few days I seem to have discovered in Rev. 1:6 (cf. *Greek Text*) a clew that leads me to believe that in Ex. 19:6 God had His spiritual kingdom in mind, viz., "the kingdom of heaven" declared to be "at hand" by John Baptist. The Lord Himself emphasizing it over and over again.

Peter in his first letter to the Christian Jews of the *diaspora* seems to give us the clearest teaching upon this subject as I now see it. He gathers up Ex. 19:6; Deut. 7:6-9 and Ps. 118:22, and interprets them in the light of Calvary and John 3:3 in this first epistle, emphasizing the part that "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" plays in this "royal (*basileion*) priesthood."

John seems to have had something of the same thought in mind in Rev. 1:6. It has always seemed to me, though I may be

wrong, that The Revelation was intended for Israel particularly. It is addressed to God's "servants," and in Lev. 25:55 God so declares them. Nor must we forget, in spite of all that has happened in the interim, that the time limit of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has not yet expired in the light of Deut. 7:8, 9. There was a covenant of grace in effect prior to the giving of the Law, which covenant was confirmed in Christ, and which the Law could not disannul. The doctrine of the second birth was no new doctrine according to our Lord's words to Nicodemus, as I understand His words in John 3:10. Men were saved from eternal death only thus since Adam sinned. Praise God that the Blood of God's Lamb was retroactive; and that before Adam sinned God had already provided a sacrifice for Sin (cf. Rev. 13:8.) And praise God that in Christ there is neither Jew or Gentile; but all are one in Him. And "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

SCOFIELD VERSUS SCOFIELD. Would God it had been so while Dr. Scofield was yet in the flesh. And may it yet be *Pettingill versus Pettingill* while that man of God is still this side the veil that hides Dr. Scofield from our view and now hinders an effective "Scofield versus Scofield" testimony. The most effective witnessing in this world is ever the *man that is versus the man that was.* Just listen to *Paul versus Saul* in Acts 22; and again before Agrippa in Acts 26. Who of us has not many a case against ourselves, if we have at all lived a life of progress in the things of God, and the knowledge of His word?

I have had three splendid letters from Dr. ——— since you introduced us to each other in THE GOSPEL WITNESS of May 12th, and in my reply to his last letter this week, among other things I said: "How very radically has my whole understanding of the prophetic Scriptures changed within the past few years as I have given myself definitely to the study of God's Word, yielding myself, the best I knew how, to be taught of the Holy Spirit Himself as sent of God to lead us into all truth. The original intent of God's Word never changes; and it was that intent I sought under the guidance of Him who indited it." The woman that is against the woman that was; in other words—ROBERTSON VERSUS ROBERTSON. Praise God that I have lived to see that day.

I would like to see the copy of "Just A Word" to which you refer. Will you be so kind as to have your secretary inform me as to where I can secure a copy? And also send me Dr. Pettingill's address. Really we ought to pray more for each other than we do; I know I should. There is really only One who can cause us to see eye to eye in the things of God and His Kingdom.

NORTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION. Just a sideline echo. I had given Dr. ——— a copy of THE GOSPEL WITNESS of May 12, before the Convention opened—though apart from that many of them were no doubt fully acquainted with your present position re the Scofield Bible—and the subject of your position was informally discussed by a certain group, as of course you would expect it to be. The opinion seems to be that "the Scofield Bible has done a great deal of good," and should be let alone. Just as though that settled the matter.

Have had another letter from my friend in ——— who was so disturbed because I had taken from her the belief in a secret rapture. Perhaps I should not say "taken from her", because she still clings to it, and writes: "I must be honest and tell you that the more I study the more I seem to be convinced that we are to expect a secret rapture of the church. I looked up the references you gave me, but even they can't make me see it." But she quotes no Scripture that makes her see it. I fancy she is studying the Word through the eyes of those who teach the secret rapture. Poor dear. In her letter she speaks of Rev. ———, a friend of hers—I suppose he attended the Convention—and the editor of *The ———* and to whom she had evidently written, and he asked her for a copy of THE GOSPEL WITNESS that had so disturbed my little friend, so she sent to me for another copy, which I of course was glad to send her for Mr. ———. She said of him: "He is quite surprised at Dr. Shields' change in belief." (*We have not "changed our belief" in these matters fundamentally. We hope our views of the Word of God enlarge as they mature. We have changed our practice in that we now speak on matters concerning which we have long been silent.—Ed., G. W.*) And "that's that."

I really must not write more at this time.
God bless you and enlarge your borders.

Yours and His,
JESSIE SAGE ROBERTSON.

Copy of a Letter to a U.S. Minister by Mrs. Robertson.
July 11, 1932.

Brother in Christ:

I am just going to let Dr. Shields introduce me to you in his GOSPEL WITNESS of May 12th, a copy of which I handed you yesterday in case you had not seen it. First, because of Dr. Shields sermon itself. And second, that he might introduce me. Of course you have been too busy to read it just now, but on the train, or after you get to your son's you may have the time.

You may wonder why I desire to be introduced. For years you have been one of "the big four" to me, viz., Dr. Straton, Dr. Norris, Dr. Shields, and yourself. Of the four, until yesterday, Dr. Straton was the only one I had seen face to face, for when he came to California a few years ago he came to my home in Piedmont to see me. Dr. Shields, through THE GOSPEL WITNESS, which I have read from its first issue, and through our correspondence occasionally throughout those years, has perhaps touched my life the most vitally. While Dr. Norris and yourself have been known to me only through your printed messages. Anyway this "big four" are in a class by themselves in my mind; and I am grateful that God has permitted me to contact at least two of you in those things of The Kingdom that lie so near to our hearts. And I counted it a rare privilege to be able to hear you twice yesterday; and am hoping to be able to hear you again on some of the evenings this week, though I cannot count too much on it as I am not physically equal to very much, and almost never attempt an evening meeting.

I was glad to know that you believe the Roman Empire absolutely a dead issue. (*Addenda, July 30—It seems that I misunderstood Dr. _____ at this point, he is looking for the ten toes to yet eventuate out of the Roman Empire that was.—J. S. R.*) I was misled for years before I settled down to an independent study of the prophetic Word. Then, search as I might, I could not bring that Empire to life in the ten toes of the Image. For years I had been watching for those "ten" toes; and at last I gave it up. Like a flash last night as you were speaking I saw that Image as it is in the Word. (1) The "head of gold." A world empire. (2) The "breast and arms of silver." A world empire. (3) The "belly and thighs of brass." A third world empire. (4) The "legs of iron." A fourth world empire. And that was the last world empire. I had never seen it just in that light before. (5) The "feet part of iron and part of clay." (6) The "toes." And the number of the Great Image was finished. There never will be another world empire. All the powers of earth and hell are helpless now. I got a new view of the Kaiser's ambitions last night. I had never seen those historic facts presented before.

Praise God we are living in the very "days" of Dan. 2:44, when "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these (6) kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." God's own seventh kingdom. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 11:15).

I was glad to hear you say that prophecy-studying specialists had their place today, because it does seem that God does set aside some to spend their time digging where others have not the time to dig, especially busy pastors like yourself and Dr. Shields.

I may not be a real specialist, or even a near-specialist, but there has been an irresistible urge, which I have believed of the Holy Spirit, burning in my heart for over twenty years now, that has set me to digging independently in the Word of God. Thus was discovered many a precious nugget of purest gold. And always I found the historic facts to exactly fit the prophetic mold when I found the true historic facts. If they do not fit without theorizing I discard them and start all over again, and keep at it until I find the historic facts that do fit the mold.

It was thus I found that the "great tribulation" of Mat. 24:21 was not ahead of us, but behind us; rather behind Israel, for that is Israel's "great tribulation." A tribulation nearly two milleniums long. It began just where the Lord Jesus said it would begin, viz., with the "generation" he was addressing in Mt. 23. (23:36); and Lk. 21:22 played its part in the deciding factor, together with 1 Thess. 2:14-16.

There was only one place to turn for the historic facts to see if they would fit the mold. God had provided His own historian. And to "The Jewish War" by Josephus I turned and found that exactly that which the Lord Jesus said would fall upon

that generation fell upon it. And I knew that just the comma of His short ministry marked the parenthesis between "the acceptable year of the Lord", and "the day of vengeance of our God" of Isa. 61:2, and not two milleniums as I had previously supposed, for the Lord Himself declared it. (cf. Lk. 21:22). And Paul witnessed to the fact before he died. (cf. 1 Thess. 2:16). And Josephus says of the seige of Jerusalem alone: "Accordingly the multitude of those that therein perished exceeded all the destructions that either men or God ever brought upon the world."

"The abomination of desolation" for the third time stood "in the holy place." The first time Manasseh placed it there, and Israel went into captivity for the broken Palestinian Covenant. After their return, Antiochus Epiphanes placed it there. And then as part and parcel of the "great tribulation" of Mt. 24:21, Titus placed it there for the third and last time and Lk. 21:24 began its age-long functioning in this greatest of all Israel's tribulation periods. Just in our own day have we seen those nearly two milleniums of desolations begin to lose their grip.

This discovery brought me face to face with "the time of Jacob's trouble" of Jer. 30:7. To just what did that prophecy refer? I had been taught that too was still future; but if the "great tribulation" of Mt. 24:21 was past, maybe Jer. 30:7 was too. And I tell you I got busy with my Bible. The outline of the result of that study I enclose. (See *My Watch*, No. 25) I will not therefore say more on that here.

Last winter Mr. _____ Missions to the Jews," of _____, came to see me, and of course we talked over these things. My findings presented a point of view he had never had drawn to his attention before. Then he asked me what I did with Ezek. 38 and 39, "For," he said, "you, of course, know that this prophecy has never been fulfilled, and that we now believe that Russia will fulfil it."

I replied that up to then I had not prayerfully studied the prophecy, and, was therefore, not in a position to make any statements concerning it; but that I would at once begin such a prayerful study of these two chapters, and if it pleased the Lord to help me in that study I would later let him know of my findings.

So I laid the whole matter before the Lord, as is my simple custom, and began my study. In the margin of my Bible I had noted, from some source which I could not now recall, that this prophecy referred to "Russia," and that "Meshech" was "Moscow," and "Tubal" was "Tobolsk." So I took a new Bible and started all over. At first I made absolutely no progress, and all I could do was to pray and wait before the open Book. Full well I know that the intent of that Word of God never changes. It means today exactly what it did when it was indited by the Holy Spirit. If Ezek. 38 and 39 meant Russia then, it means just that today; but if the Holy Spirit did not have Russia in mind when He indited this prophecy, then it does not now mean Russia. He is here to lead me into "all truth;" and He is the only one utterly competent to do that. So I went over these two chapters as I continued to wait upon the Lord. I never turn to Commentaries; I may have time for them later. At last the opening words of these chapters challenged me, and I began to get all the light that the Word itself threw upon them.

I got my first clew from Gen. 10:2-6. This prophecy then was against the seed of Japheth. The next question was: "Where were they when this prophecy was uttered?" So I turned to the map of The Ancient World in my Oxford, and light began to break, for I found the seed of Japheth scattered just where Gen. 10:5 said they would be. Clearly they had moved north after the tower of Babel episode and began to settle in Asia Minor, Armenia, and southern Europe, and were there as separate nations when the prophecy of Ezek. 38 and 39 was uttered.

I was now "off to a good start," that I knew from the part that "Togarmah of the north quarters" played in the prophecy, for already had I become acquainted with the geography of the historic "four quarters" of Ezekiel's day. (See *My Watch*, No. 23, p. 93). Ezekiel would have no difficulty in locating the nations of the prophecy of chaps. 38 and 39 within the historic "four quarters" of his own day; and Russia was not at all in the picture; but Asia Minor loomed large. And I knew where I was, for I had been doing some intensive study of the prophecy of Dan. 8 and had found an indentifying phrase in Dan. 8:23, viz., "in the latter time of their kingdom (Grecia), when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance . . . shall stand up." etc., etc.

In Ezek. 38 and 39 I was face to face with none other than Antiochus Epiphanes, and those same "latter years" of the Seleucid dynasty as in Dan. 8. Here was the "Gog, (of) the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, "that is of Asia Minor, and in a larger sense, the Grecian Empire which would include the others of the Japhethites mention in this prophecy.

"The Land of Magog" seems a covering expression for the land of Japheth's descendants. This would also seem to be the implication of a like expression in the Rev. 20:8.

Once I had my geography and chronology straight I turned to the historic account of fulfillment which God has provided for us in the books of the Maccabees, and the history exactly poured into the mold prophecy had made for it. The margins of Ezek. 38 and 39 in my new Bible is rapidly filling up with references to these two books of the Maccabees, and other historic accounts of the times of the "four notable" horns of Dan. 8:8. Dan. 11 is but another unfolding of the third kingdom of the Great Image of Dan. 2. Here are "the princes of the north" of Ezek. 32:30. Ezek. 27 and 32 ought to help us understand this.

There seems to be much confusion today over the use of the words: "the latter years," "the latter time," "the time of the end," and like expressions, and they are made to refer to the end of the age in which we are now living, whereas, in nearly every instance, if not in every instance they refer to Israel's own end time, which was coincident with that of "the latter time" of the Seleucid dynasty (cf. Dan. 8:23), and culminated in "the last end of the indignation" (cf. Dan. 8:19) under the Romans. Deut. 31:29, and Rom. 11 ought to help us to understand this. Israel's national probation under the Law ended with her rejection of the Lord Jesus, and coincidentally with the expiration of the "70th week," which "week" immediately followed the expiration of the 69th "week." Paul knew what he was talking about in Rom. 11; national Israel was at an end "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Israel's end time is behind them; they are now facing a new beginning in that respect. The Gentile nations are facing their end time however, and for the same reason that Israel faced hers, viz., for the rejection of God's Son as Saviour, Lord, and King.

I believe that we are now watching the fulfilment of Isa. 61:4 in Palestine. (cf. *My Watch*, No. 28, p. 2). If not, then there is no logic in our teaching the soon coming of the Lord Jesus, for that cycle (*dor*) of Israel's "desolations" are her last before He comes. See Isa. 62:4. These two chapters belong together. The Arab—Ishmael and Esau—will make their last move in their millenniums of jealous and murderous hatred in the not distant future, I believe, and we shall be face to face with Armageddon and the fulfilment of Isa. 63:1-6. But that day of "vengeance" is against Ishmael and Esau, and not against Israel. Do let us bear that in mind when this stroke of God's outpoured wrath falls. If you are not following closely the present unfolding of the Arab situation you are missing the most tragic events in the unfolding of our end time. And, I believe, that this is the direction in which to look for the "revelation (uncovering)" of "the son of perdition" of 2 Thess. 2:3. I almost hold my breath when I speak of these things, for well I know that all this is not in accord with what we are being taught by our prophetic teachers of the day. I do not hold these things in a dogmatic spirit. I only know that I am seeing these things in this light as I study ever more and more deeply the Word of God. I can only bear my testimony in humility. If the Holy Spirit is thus unfolding the Word, then He will establish it, for that is His business. I know that the original intent of God's Word never changes; and it is that intent alone I seek. To this end I pray and study. My only text books are His Word and the historic data that exactly fits that mold. God's Word is its own best commentary.

You said that your exposition of Ezek. 38 and 39 would disappoint me. Brother ———, believe me when I say, that whatever disappointment I feel it will not spring from a controversial spirit. You have done your best with your point of view; and if it is according to the original intent of God's Word it will stand, and no one can do anything against it. And if it is not, you would be the first one to want it to come to nought.

Equally you may be disappointed in my findings; but, like you, I have done my best with the light I have had, and if my findings are in accord with the original intent of the Word, then they will stand. But if they are not they must come to nought, and I will be the first one to want it to be just so; for there is nothing I can say that has any value whatsoever apart from its utter harmony with the Word of God. Feeling this way about it has taken every bit of the desire for controversy out of me. I do long for real conference with men of God over

these things, and together search the scriptures to see if these things be so in a truly Berean fashion. A controversial spirit will get us nowhere. Neither will it get us anywhere to dismiss the points of disagreement with a wave of the hand, and "agree to disagree." If earnest, sincere seekers after truth, disagree there ought to be a sincere desire to find out just where we begin to disagree. Our conclusions are not the place to start but rather with our premises. If we disagree in our premises we can never hope to agree in our conclusions. So I feel that we will do well to thoroughly examine our premises; and the more carefully if we find we are not all in agreement on a vital doctrine or interpretation.

No "root of bitterness" must be allowed to spring up in our hearts as toward each other as we pray and labor toward an agreement. But our endeavor toward that end must not end in a lot of "pussy-footing," for that will get us nowhere. We simply have to get rid of all shoulder chips, roll up our sleeves and go at it as though we meant business. This is no "petting-party" business.

I believe that Dr. Shields has raised an issue that demands the prayerful attention of every Fundamentalist. Dr. Scofield meant all right, but there is no man living or ever has lived, whose interpretations of the Scriptures are not open to amendment; and for that reason, if for no other, no running Commentary by any man, or body of men, should be allowed to be bound under the same cover with the inerrant Word of God. The Holy Spirit indited that Word, and He must be left free to interpret it to the heart of the reader.

You know, and I know that thousands are reading the Bible with the Scofield notes appended as though those notes were as authoritative as the text itself. What chance has the Holy Spirit in case Dr. Scofield should be wrong? and indeed as he can be proven to be wrong, for he was but a fallible man after all.

We loved Dr. Scofield while he lived; and we love his memory now that he has gone to be with the Lord; but if it can be shown that his interpretations of God's Word are not borne out by the Word itself, those interpretations should be amended, or removed from the Book. But even if that should be done, still it would be found necessary with increased light to amend those amendments, because only fallible men are available for a revision of the marginal comments and footnotes of what has now come to be known as The Scofield Bible; something that never should have been possible. I never realized the enormity of it until I began to read Dr. Shields recent series on the Lord's return. It has come to me as something of a shock. But it has set me thinking.

God could not have chosen a better man for his hard task than Dr. Shields. It ought not to make him enemies, but it will. What a pity that the very men who should be glad to help from a sheer love of the Truth will perhaps be the very ones who will try to hinder him in his search for it. As he says, "the Truth has nothing to fear from discussion." If Dr. Scofield is wrong, he would be the very first to make an effort to have the wrong corrected; I know that from my own personal experience with him. I do not say that Dr. Shields is always right, and I may not always agree with him; but I do believe that the time has come when the Fundamentalists should meet the challenge which the Scofield Bible itself makes. (*Addenda, July 30th—I did not mean by that that I was right and you wrong, for the very opposite is more likely to be true. You will understand.—J. S. R.*)

If it is right for one man to Copyright and bind his running Comments and interpretations with the Word of God as has been done by Dr. Scofield, then it is right for any other man to do the same thing; and will no doubt be done by others. That phase of the matter ought to receive prayerful attention, even apart from the questions that Dr. Shields is raising as to the reliability of many of the Scofield Bible footnotes.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is seeking to right a great wrong, and the question is, will we help or hinder Him? Personally I want to help, though I am not sure that there is very much I can do. But whatever I can do I stand ready to do. The Truth as revealed in the Word of God means more to me than anything else in all the world.

Under separate cover I am sending a full set of my little paper, *My Watch*, to date, i.e., Nos. 1 to 30. I have not been able to publish further issues since my husband's death in January, 1930. I will enclose No. 25 however with this letter, for I would like you to read my reasons for believing that "the time of Jacob's trouble" of Jer. 30:7 is long since past.

If that awful tribulation period of God's outpoured wrath upon Israel in Jeremiah's day for their persistent idolatries

(Continued on page 16)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"PRISONERS OF HOPE."

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields.

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, July 31st, 1932.

(Stenographically Reported). Broadcast over CFRB, 690 k.c.

"Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee."—Zachariah 9:12.

Prayer before the Sermon.

For this great truth, O Lord, we give Thee thanks, that the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. We thank Thee for the multitude in this place who have been found of the Good Shepherd, and who have been brought in safety to the fold. We praise Thee for the assurance that the other sheep which have not yet come must be brought. We thank Thee for the truth that salvation is all of grace: in its beginning, in its continuance, in its completion; we are saved by grace alone.

We beseech Thee to grant us the illumination of Thy Spirit this evening, that this great truth may dawn upon the consciousness of many, that souls dead in trespasses and sins may be quickened into newness of life; that some who see men but as trees walking, and who have an imperfect conception of Thy salvation, may be led to a clearer view of Jesus Christ, and may thus rejoice in Him as Saviour.

Bless, we pray Thee, the testimony of Thy word by radio this evening. Wherever Thy gospel shall reach, whether from this service or from other places of worship where Jesus Christ is uplifted as the sinner's only Saviour, and men are commanded in His name to repent, we pray that the power of Thy Spirit may be present to heal.

Be mindful of such as are laid aside, those who in hospital, in sanatoria, and in their own homes, hear this service this evening. May Thy presence be very real to them, and Thy quickening power be experienced by many. Use this service, we beseech Thee, for the glory of Thy great name in the salvation of men.

Thus would we pray for all who are assembled in Thy name. We thank Thee that Thou art ever present in the midst of Thy people. We beseech Thee to bless the small companies of people who gather in the countryside where there are but few in number; may the presence of the Lord in the midst fill the place, so that they shall be more conscious of Him than of each other. Let Thy blessing abound toward all who seek to worship Thee in spirit and in truth.

Guide us in every exercise of this hour to Thy praise, since we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

It is surely self-evident that if no man knows the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. And, as the New Testament writers claim to speak not in words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, we are on the surest footing when we find a New Testament interpretation of an Old Testament text.

The sixth verse of this chapter is brought by the inspired writers of the Gospels into the light of the New Testament: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." That prophecy was fulfilled when our Lord rode triumphantly into Jerusalem.

The eleventh verse of this chapter speaks of sending forth prisoners out of the pit by the blood of the covenant. There is also a New Testament record of the fulfillment of that scripture. In the sixty-eighth Psalm it is said, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among

them." And Paul, in the epistle to the Ephesians, records that that prophecy was fulfilled by our Lord's ascension: "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

This prophecy, however, has a larger sweep and a fuller significance than the mere passing recognition of our Lord as He entered Jerusalem. Beyond doubt, it is a prediction of the ultimate universal triumph of Jesus Christ when He shall be everywhere recognized as King of kings and Lord of lords. But this verse which I have read to you is a word, which, properly understood and appropriated, may prepare us all to share in that glorious triumph: "Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee."

The tenth verse represents our Lord as the Prince of Peace; and all our fine plans for a universal and unbreakable peace must fail apart from Him. Enduring peace will come to the world only when this prophecy becomes history: "And his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

A description, an exhortation, and a promise, will engage our thought for a little while this evening.

I.

Here CERTAIN PEOPLE ARE DESCRIBED as "prisoners of hope". I am sure we know something about the principle involved in that description, for by nature we are all thus imprisoned, and the gospel, the whole message of the gospel, is predicated on that assumption; it hinges on the assumption that men have been deprived of their divinely-ordained liberty, that they have lost their crown and their sceptre, and have been brought into captivity to one who is their master, and who leads them captive at his will. The gospel always assumes a jailer, and unbreakable fetters, and a locked door, a soul in bonds which no human power can break.

If there are any here this evening, or any who hear me through the air, who are not prisoners, who boast of their freedom, of their liberty and ability to do whatsoever they will, to go wheresoever they desire;—if you are among the number who suppose that you have power to work out in your own character all the beauties of holiness blended in moral perfection in that divine masterpiece, the man Christ Jesus; if you suppose that you are able without moral impedimenta to ascend into the heavenlies, and keep company with the angels; or, if you imagine you are a warrior with strength to overcome all your enemies, and subdue them to your will,—if you fancy you are entitled to the Throne which exercises dominion over the works of God's hands, if thus you are sufficient to yourself, then there is no message in the gospel for you. But if you are a prisoner languishing in a dungeon; if you complain that when you would do good evil is present

with you, if you find that you are cribbed, cabined, and confined, and shackled by chains which you have no power to break, then I bring you a message of good cheer this evening. For such is the gospel, a message to all who are prisoners.

There are some who are enslaved by the powers and passions of the body, who are in bondage to their grosser nature, men who are bound by chains of vice; but there are others who wear the silver shackles of worldliness, and who are just as truly captives as those whose sins are more open and flagrant. While some yield perhaps to the appetites of the body in the grosser sense, there are others who are equally bound by a passion for ease, for comfort, for luxury. But whatever be the form of bondage, to all such the body is not a palace but a prison, not a temple but a tomb. Thus men are held in bondage to their natural desires, living on the low carnal plane, the flesh, and the mind of the flesh, dominating the life.

The same principle holds *in the mental realm*. Of course, I know there are some who boast of their intellectual freedom. They tell us they are free to spread their wings, and to fly into all the upper wider reaches of truth. That is their special vocation. I heard a university professor address a graduating class on one occasion, when very solemnly, as though he were giving utterance to some very profound principle, he said, "Young ladies and gentlemen, this is an age of quest; we must take nothing for granted." He said it with such an air that one might have supposed the interrogation point came into use chiefly when he went to college. Every mother knows that every child that ever lived was born in an age of quest. Leave the cupboard door unlocked—and you will soon discover it. All people have enquiring minds, and those who demand what they call "academic freedom", liberty to ask questions about everything, and boast of the wide range of their intellectual explorations, are after all but barnyard fowl. They have no wings to fly with. If, indeed, they seek the exploration of regions beyond they soon discover that they are on a tether. They are like prisoners who are allowed to walk in the courtyard, or occasionally to mow the lawn or trim the flowers. But let them try to get away, and they will soon discover that the watchful eye of the guard is upon them.

For only so far does the master of human spirits, the slave-driver who has brought men into captivity to his will—only so far does he allow these so-called free men to explore, for "the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." There is no freedom apart from that which is divinely conferred; there is no liberty apart from Him Who is Himself the source and sum of all law, for the perfection of law means the perfection of liberty.

These prisoners are here described as "prisoners of hope", which does not mean that they are imprisoned by hope, but, being in prison, they have hope. They are not prisoners of despair, but live in expectation of some day being delivered.

What a blessing that is! I suppose there is a sharp distinction drawn in penal institutions between the man who is usually called a "lifer", and the man who is sentenced to a certain determinate term. The passage of the years gives the latter hope that by and by a great deliverance will dawn, that the prison doors will swing wide to him, and that he will again go out into liberty. There are

men, so I have read, who have been so long immured that they have lost all desire for liberty; they have become so separated from the world, and from natural fellowships, that even when the prison doors are thrown open, they prefer their chains to their freedom, and would deliberately choose to remain captive. There are others, who, while not content with their lot, yet have no expectation of deliverance.

But these prisoners are not resigned to their fate; they have not settled down to the conviction that there is no hope, that it is useless to expect they will ever be free men. I have heard some men say, "It is no use, sir; I am a prisoner. The chains will never be broken. I despair of deliverance." I am not sure that they mean what they say, for I believe that when hope dies within a man, when all hope of a better day and better things is taken away, life ceases to have any value. We are, indeed, "saved by hope" in every sense of the word. The hopeless man has no longer any reason for living.

I wonder if there are some who hear me to-night who are ready to acknowledge that they are prisoners, who in their own words have already made such acknowledgement, while others in the actual words of Scripture have exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" They cherish a hope that some day—some day—somehow, the shackles will be broken, and the prison doors will be opened.

Have you read the history of "Chinese Gordon," or as he was later known, "Gordon of Khartum"? You remember how he was permitted to go to the Sudan, and how there, by a British Government of which I have always felt ashamed, he was forsaken and left to his fate. The British residents of Khartum, when the forces of the Mahdi became supreme, found themselves prisoners indeed; and yet I am sure that every British heart throbbed with hope. I am sure that everyone of them felt there must somehow come a day of deliverance.

I remember talking, a few days after the Armistice, with a Belgian gentleman in Brussels, before the railways were restored giving access to Belgium's capital. He told me of the four years of bondage when they were required, when going along the street and meeting a German officer, to step off and give him right-of-way and salute him; and of how they had to go to military stations and report periodically; of how, without permission, the enemy walked into their houses and took an inventory of all they possessed, and helped themselves to anything they wanted. After describing those four years of terror under the tyrant's heel he said, "We knew something was happening outside that ring of fire, but we did not know what; and not until an hour or so before the German army evacuated Brussels had we any idea that the war had gone so well, and that deliverance was near. But still we kept up a cheerful heart. We lived by hope, although we had but little on which to base our hope."

Perhaps there are some who hear me this evening who may be described as "prisoners of hope"? What a picture this is! Can you imagine the emotions of the prisoners? Confined within their dungeons, their thoughts have wandered far afield; and though their feet were in fetters, imagination took to itself wings, like Noah's dove, to explore and bring news of the other world. And into the prison there came at last news of a great Conqueror Who was rapidly approaching. Presently they heard the sound of bugles, and of trumpets, and the tramp of a great army

—even of chariots which were twenty thousand. And as the invincible and irresistible Conqueror drew nigh, a great multitude acclaimed Him, saying, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation." That word came through the iron bars, and penetrated even to the deepest and darkest dungeon, and found its ways to the lowest depths of the horrible pit. And wherever that word was heard it came as a gospel, and the prisoners became prisoners of hope.

Have you heard it, O soul within the prison-house? What? Didst thou not hear the music of the angelic host, "Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"? And hast thou not heard His own gracious words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"?

And when the battle was joined with His enemies and thine, did not His shout of victory reach thee in the prison-house, "It is finished"? And did not the light of His resurrection penetrate thy darkness when He ascended on high and led captivity captive? And didst thou not hear how Heaven acclaimed the Conqueror and Deliverer?—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory."

If so, though a prisoner still, surely thou art a prisoner of hope? Mayhap even now though the gloom of the prison still wraps thee about, thou art saying in thine heart,—

"I know the serpent touched my heart;
I saw his trail on hand and brow;
No sinless thought, no perfect part,
But sullied breast and broken vow.
But now I feel my need of Thee,
And pride's elusions pass away;
And oh, that Thou hast died for me
Is more than all the world can say.

"The wounded fawn in yonder glade
Beside the doe seeks rest from harm;
The babe that scorned its mothers aid
Flies to her at the least alarm.
And thus I feel my need of Thee,
When sin and pride would tempt me most,
And oh! that Thou hast died for me
Is more than all the sceptic's boast."

II.

Suffer now this WORD OF EXHORTATION: I exhort you "to turn to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope", to "cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, to cease from yourself, to cease to expect deliverance by anything that you can do, to cease all attempts to justify yourself by

works of righteousness which you may do. Our salvation is in God, and in God alone. And if Jesus Christ be not God, then there is no salvation for any of us. Our salvation is in Him, for He is the only God we know.

He is our Stronghold because *He is in covenant with His people*. He is in covenant—will you understand me when I say it, that He is in covenant with Himself? Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have entered into covenant with each other, undertaking to save rebellious men. That is the ground of our hope.

There are people with whom one cannot make a covenant. I do not know how the present leader of the Irish Free State expects any nation on earth to trust them when they openly and deliberately violate the explicit and unmistakable terms of a covenant solemnly made. When a man thus deliberately breaks his word, how can you trust him in anything? What is the use of making treaties with people who regard them as nothing more than "a scrap of paper"? There are men of honour who would die rather than break their word. Even men confirm their covenant with an oath, and there is scarcely a greater crime in the eyes of the law than that of perjury, for a man to swear to something that is not true. We are told in the New Testament that God, because He could swear by none greater, swore by Himself that "by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

Salvation has at its base the oath-bound covenant of God that cannot lie. That is a stronghold, when you remember that God has promised, and that He can sooner cease to be God than He can violate His own word. Turn ye to that stronghold. You have resolved yourself—and have broken your promise. Others have pledged their loyalty, have promised some act of service to you—but they have failed to implement their promises. You have become cynical, and have asked if there is anybody you can trust. Yes, there is. But I know of only One, and that is God above. You can trust Him absolutely for time and for eternity.

And He has covenanted to release the prisoners. Who is He? None other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the King.

I grow weary of hearing men talk of my Lord Jesus Christ as the "meek and lowly Nazarene". He was meek and lowly in heart, blessed be His name; but we must never forget that in fulfilment of the terms of His covenant He "spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it". The mightiest thing God ever did He did at the place called Calvary. Only Almighty could keep Almighty in check, and when He sovereignly yielded His almighty hands to the nails, He invoked all the powers of Deity for the fulfilment of His covenant-pledge: "He died the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God." Hence it is here written, "By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit."

More than three hundred men went from this place during the Great War to put to flight the armies of the alien, forty-one of whom laid down their lives. And I am sure that even here, within the realm of human interests, we are not unmindful of the value of those things

which were obtained for us at a price of blood. We ourselves feel that we are under obligation to see to it that the principles for which men died shall triumph.

But this Blood belongs to another category, to another realm. The blood that was shed at a place called Calvary was more than human. He Who died there was made "after the power of an indissoluble life". No man took His life from Him: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down to myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." In that crimson stream were all the wealth and power of the universe. That was the divine pledge that He would proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: "By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit."

Let me remind you, my dear friends, that our covenant-keeping God is bound—may I say it reverently—is bound by the blood of the covenant to fulfil His promises. It is written, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." Men may have died in vain, and the causes for which they shed their blood may ultimately be overwhelmed in defeat, but Jesus Christ did not die in vain. Not one drop of His precious blood can possibly be wasted. He paid a price for the redemption of sinners, for the opening of prison doors to the prisoners of hope, and because He is God, and while He is God—and He must for ever be God—we may be absolutely certain that liberty will be given to those for whom Jesus Christ died.

I revel in the seventeenth chapter of John which records what I think might well be called the high priestly prayer of our Lord. Often He says, "Father, I will! I will! I will! I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Your salvation and mine is not in our feeble wills. We have no power to break the chains, we have no power consistently to the end of the journey to carry out any clearly defined programme. Your will is of no value in this matter. The only guarantee of the salvation of any soul is the sovereign will of God Himself. On the basis of what God has planned, what He has promised, and what He will sovereignly perform, we may dare to hope for the larger liberty.

"Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." How often have I seen it in this place! How often have we all seen it!—those who have found every other person fail, and all institutions fail, and their own efforts fail, and who have been all but in despair, have heard of the great Conqueror, the Lord Jesus; and as they have trusted in Him they have found liberty at last. There is in Him freedom for this life, and eternal salvation in the future.

III.

Come we now, briefly, to consider THE PROMISE: "Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee." Not very long ago a man came to see me, asking that he might have a private interview. I took him aside and he said, "I have just come out of Kingston penitentiary. I served a short sentence, and was allowed some months and seventeen days off for good conduct. They offered me a suit of clothes, but anybody who had ever been there would

have recognized that suit. Because I was a short termer my clothes were put away, so I came out with the same suit I wore when I went in; in that way nobody would recognize me as an ex-convict. The authorities gave me five dollars, and offered to send me back to the place whence I came, but I asked to be sent to Toronto, thinking there would be more chance of my securing employment there. But my five dollars are spent, I have no employment, and I cannot even get home. This is my whole story." I should liked to have done more for him: I merely sent him home.

I fear that men who get out of prison these days are in danger of faring not very well. It is hard enough for people who have never been in prison to get work, but what is to happen to the man who has been in prison. When he comes out he must begin all over again—but how?

What if the Lord were to deal with us after the principle of law and simply say, "I have cancelled your obligations of the past, and will give you another chance; begin to-day and make good"? I think most of us would say, "If salvation is nothing more than the remission of sins that are past, and a chance to do better, I cannot see much prospect of my making the end of the journey." But that is not the gospel. Listen: "To-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee." Grace has a way of making up the deficit. Grace has a way of completing the broken circle. Grace has a way of fulfilling life: "We are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." Our God can pack a great deal into a few years.

What is it you need my friend? Pardon for your sins? I am authorized to tell you that He will "abundantly pardon"; He will blot out all your sins so that nobody will ever find the record again. His way of pardoning is to obliterate the record altogether. In the safe in the church office—or somewhere in our archives—is a minute-book of this church dating back seventy-five years or more. In that book there are a few pages that have been marked, I do not know whether with ink or paint, but there are wide black stripes drawn across the writing on both sides, so that even if you hold it up to the light you cannot see what was written there. I suppose there was something written there that was not very complimentary to someone, and the person who blotted it out was determined that no one should read it in the future. The hand that did it has long passed away. In our denominational battle for the Book of a few years ago, a little man of whom no one had ever heard, went to the Home Mission offices of the old convention and asked if he might examine the minute books to see if he could "get something on Dr. Shields"! I had given years of service to Home Missions, and fortunately, had he been given access to the minutes he would have found enough to humble him. But the thought of that adversary and his malignant endeavour were just like Satan himself. How the devil would gloat over us if he could "get something on us!" But when our covenant-keeping God liberates the prisoner He "abundantly" pardons. He blots out our sins so that even the accuser of the brethren standing before our great High Priest will never be able to lay an accusation against us. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." He washes it away so that not only the devil cannot see it, but better than all, even God Himself cannot see it. It is promised, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

The Union Baptist Witness

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JOY BELLS RINGING.

Pages might be devoted to the news which has recently come from our workers in the Republic of Liberia, West Africa. How interesting are the letters which bring to us the happy tidings of souls converted in that far-off land and tell us of changed lives among those who but a short time ago were raw heathen.

Geah-Bar-Zondo Trophies.

Miss Stacey writes of the little girl who has been given to her, little Gray-Bow. The story of Gray-Bow is an interesting one. Her mother and her father are both Christians, but their little one belonged from the standpoint of possession to the Chief. It was with great joy, therefore, to all when the Chief's permission was obtained to give the little girl to the missionaries. Of the return trip from the New Cess Station, Miss Stacey writes:—

"We took the babies with us, and Gray-Bow's mother met us half way when we were making the return trip. She gave us such a nice big hug, she was so glad to see us, and that did make us feel good, because it showed that she really did love us. She is a real Christian. Her husband, too, is a good Christian man, and he is often called 'small boy', because he has but one wife. That may seem to be a small thing to the folks at home, but out here it is considered an insult to be called 'small'."

Miss Stacey further writes: "We have some of the sweetest Christians here at Geah-Bar-Zondo. There are now seven church members, and when you think that this Mission has been established for just a little more than a year, I think the Lord has been more than gracious to us."

Another Little Bassa Girl Comes.

We are told that another little baby girl has been given to Mrs. Mellish. Her name is Joy, and she is just about two years old. Miss Stacey tells us that the first day little Joy was with them, Gray-Bow began instructing her; she made her close her eyes and put her hand over them when the others were praying.

A Bible Study Class and a New Church.

In Mrs. Mellish's letter, dated June 5th, we are introduced to the Bible Study Class, which meets each Friday evening in the living-room of the missionaries' home. The class was first of all begun that the Head Boy, Lafayette, might have definite Bible instruction, as it seemed that at other times he was so busy interpreting, or helping, that he had little time to get help himself. The people, hearing of the class, came too, and were permitted to attend. We are told that it is a splendid opportunity, for they often bring new town people with them.

After the class held on Friday, June 3rd, Mr. Mellish opened his heart to those gathered there and told them how much a church building was needed. He explained to them that their help should be given to make this possible. It was indeed gratifying to see how those who had so recently believed upon the Lord

Jesus Christ responded. They wanted to help build the church, and all agreed to do all they could; indeed they planned to start getting the sticks on the following Monday. The women are going to do the smearing; the men will get the mud, the sticks and the thatch, and put the building together, and at Geah-Bar-Zondo there will very shortly be a church. No wonder Mrs. Mellish says, "You cannot imagine our joy! We felt like shouting, 'Praise the Lord, from whom all blessings flow', and this we did."

A Business Meeting of the Church at Geah-Bar-Zondo.

Much prayer has been made that the missionaries' helper, Mr. Lafayette Payne, should see the truth of baptism and obey the Lord's command regarding it. Lafayette has been the Head Boy of the Mission for some six months. He was a Christian when he came to the Mission, but had not been baptized in the Scriptural manner. It was another cause for rejoicing and an answer to prayer when he voluntarily, and with every evidence of deep conviction concerning the matter, made application for baptism and church membership. The missionaries were satisfied that he had had a real experience, and was definitely trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for his salvation, but an examination of the candidate by the church was necessary, and a business meeting was called.

"I wish you could have seen the Christians and could have heard them as they questioned Lafayette. The joy that it gave us while we listened was worth a whole year's work. The questions were sensible, logical and to the point. These men cannot read or write, but they have been taught by the Holy Spirit, and know whom they have believed."

It seems that on our Mission Stations the candidate for baptism gives his reasons for wanting to be baptized, and then he is questioned. Mrs. Mellish tells us that such questions as why, when he had been sprinkled, should he ask for baptism, were put, and that they were answered very satisfactorily. "It was indeed a pleasing sight to see Gawdua sitting beside Lafayette and questioning him like one who had long been a Deacon," says the letter.

On Sunday, June 5th, Lafayette Payne was buried in the waters of baptism, witnessing thereby that he had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and was his disciple.

Many Other Applicants.

"This week", Mrs. Mellish further states, "eight children came and asked for baptism. Most of these boys are around sixteen, seventeen and eighteen years of age, and they expressed themselves as wanting to follow the Lord. They are boys who have been at school for more than a year, and it is no sudden decision. They all said that it was on the Mission that they had given their hearts to the Lord. We had a lovely talk with them, and told them that we would watch their lives for one month.

At the end of that time, if they had walked as Christians should, the church would consider them. Should the church be satisfied with them, they will be put on probation for another period that they may have plenty of time to think things through and prove their sincerity."

"We are very happy about their coming, and pray that it may be that the Lord will lay His hand upon them for our future evangelists," continues Mrs. Mellish's letter.

Language Study.

Again the home folk are asked to remember the missionaries as they endeavor to master that difficult Bassa. They are working hard with the language, and Mrs. Mellish has been encouraged by the words of the children, "Mrs. know too much Bassa". During the rice season, the missionaries spend much time on the farms with the people. On one occasion at Dabbo's farm, a group composed of the missionaries, Dabbo, Mary and Gawdua, could have been seen kneeling under a little bit of shelter, praying earnestly that they might all be more like Jesus. No wonder the missionary writes, "I cannot tell you how happy we are here, so happy that we have the privilege of working among this people."

Happenings at New Cess.

An interesting letter, dated June 19th, has been received from Mrs. Hancox. She writes while her husband is enjoying a copy of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. How much the paper means to them in Liberia! Seldom a letter is received which fails to express appreciation of it. "How interested we are in the Doctor's sermons", says Mrs. Hancox in this one; "we wish him every blessing."

The Morning Service.

On Sunday morning, June 19th, there was a nice service at the church in spite of the fact that the folks all seemed to be late for their respective classes. By eleven, however, all had arrived, and the Word was preached in simplicity and earnestness.

The missionaries long to report conversions, but there have been none just recently, and so they continue to sow the Seed, leaving the rest with Him who giveth the increase. There seems to be a real interest in the services, and Mrs. Hancox tells us that, even though it is farming time, that they are not too badly attended. The people at New Cess, however, are much the same as the people here in Canada, they are indifferent and reluctant to forsake their sins. "In the days to come, if the Lord tarry, I believe His Word will bear precious fruit, and we will have many jewels for His Kingdom, plucked as brands from the burning," is a sentence from Mrs. Hancox's latest report.

The Cruel Drivers.

Just when life on the Mission Station seems a series of duties that follow day after day in monotonous routine, when

there seems little encouragement and the workers are weary, something exciting invariably happens. So it was on the occasion of the visit of the cruel driver ants. Mrs. Hancox writes: "The watchman had just arrived the other night. Ed. was getting ready for his Bible Class when we heard the call, 'Mammy, Mammy'. We looked out the window and called to the watchman, asking what was the matter, and the answer we got was 'Newy, drivers'. The children were all over at evening prayers, so we hurried to give the alarm. I ran to tell Miss Lane, for the drivers were in the chicken run. Our children responded bravely. The big boys worked well, standing in the midst of the drivers in order to rescue the hens. The poor boys were covered with the things and bitten badly, and what a pitiful sight the hens were as they were handed out to us, and we set to work to get the ants off them. There were millions of ants. One little chicken was handed to me, and we worked hard to get the miserable things off it, but it was so badly bitten it died. We do praise God that all the big hens were saved."

And of this experience Miss Lane also writes: "If you could have seen us taking the chickens from the boys as they ran in and out of the coop, and our trying to free them, I am afraid you would have laughed. We had to stamp our feet to keep as many of the ants as we could off ourselves, yet every time we took the chickens by the legs, the drivers would run up our arms and all over us. Drivers know how to bite, so we learned to do some fancy steps in an endeavor to keep them off." Miss Lane tells us, too, that she has seen the drivers kill as many as sixteen of Mrs. Davey's chickens at one time.

After the Drivers, Snakes.

While the work was going on to save the chickens, the watchman called frantically to Miss Lane, and she moved just in time to avoid a cassava snake. In the dusk she had not noticed it.

Mr. Hancox also had a recent encounter with a snake. He was having a game of hide and seek with the children one evening, and was just about to enter a hiding place when he saw the snake. Before it moved it hissed at him, but he saw it in time to avoid danger. The children were called from their hiding places, and although darkness was falling, they soon made short work of the intruder with stones. No one knew who really killed the snake, so all the children had to be rewarded the next day with a peanut scramble.

Something of That Routine.

"The blankets are getting washed and ready for the children on their return from holidays. One of the boys washed twenty-four. It was certainly a big job. Then some of the girls begged to be allowed to wash some for some beads I had. The longing for beads was contagious, and before long, big girls and little girls were into the school tubs stamping the blankets and scrubbing away at them merrily. In some cases the beads had to be threaded, but now the girls are all proud possessors of a string or more, according to the number

of blankets they did. After the washing, there is the patching and mending to be attended to. The patches I pinned on, and Miss Lane kindly sewed them by her machine. Some of the blankets, however, are past repair and cannot be used again." (This paragraph from Mrs. Hancox's letter.)

Liberian Styles Described.

The amusing side of a missionary's life can be appreciated when we read a little paragraph telling of the satisfaction which some of the people have in donning the clothes which they obtain in one way or another. In must be funny to see a black lady sailing into church with all the airs befitting the occasion, decked out in a crinkly bed-spread, or to see a chap almost bursting with pride because he has secured a mouldy overcoat which the missionary has discarded. The heat would never interfere with his wearing it. Indeed, the coat to him is a thing of beauty and a joy forever. Another chap has been fortunate enough to find some place a pair of socks and a pair of shoes. The shoes are much too large for him and have many holes, but he wears them, no doubt enjoying immensely every bit of the flapping noise they make.

Attendants from the Gre-gre Bush.

Anyone who has made the slightest study of Africa knows a little of what the Gre-gre Bush stands for. The Liberian customs are much the same as those to be found in other parts of Africa, and the Gre-gre Bush is an institution. The awfulness of the ceremonies which take place there; the training which is given the children, cannot be described, but one of the Head Women has brought her little grandchild to the Mellishes. The missionaries are of the opinion that this Old Woman of the Gre-gre Bush is so disgusted with it that she wishes to save her little grandchild from its demands. Another strange thing is that two of the girls from the Bush regularly attend the Station services, the Bible Class and Enquirers' Class. One cannot understand how this has come about, but the missionaries pray, and surely the home folk join them, that there may be a turning to the Light by the old woman and by these girls whom she has heretofore schooled in the terrible heathen customs.

Are Our Missionaries Busy?

When the temptation comes to those in the Homeland to plead that they are too busy to write to the missionaries who are representing them in Liberia, West Africa, it might be well for them to review the missionaries' schedule, remembering that one cannot eliminate interruptions and that the numbers who come to a missionary for help and consolation cannot be turned away; that African ceremonial requires deliberation, for the native knows nothing of the necessity for speed in the ordinary affairs of life.

On Sundays, the lady missionaries must supervise the preparations of the large school family. There is Bible School at ten o'clock; the church service at eleven; the Enquirers' Class at twelve o'clock. The evening service is held in a neighboring village.

The Programme at Geah-Bar-Zondo.

From Monday until Friday, each morning there is school from nine until noon. There is Bible study and language study with Lafayette each morning before school. In the afternoons Mrs. Mellish and Miss Stacey often visit villages near the Station, and in their endeavor to give the people the Gospel are greatly helped from a standpoint of getting the vernacular of the people.

A Bible Class is held on Monday evenings for the school children and town people, and there is a class on Friday evenings for Bible study, for church members and other interested ones.

At 6 o'clock each morning from Monday to Friday, Miss Stacey has a class for the teaching of Christians to read their Bibles. There is a prayer meeting at 6.30 a.m., and the Head Boy conducts prayers with the children at 5.45 each morning. The missionaries have prayer with the children each evening, and very often in the evening services are held in different villages.

A Peep in on Miss Lane.

At New Cess Station there is a demanding programme also. A family of ninety-six children needs a great deal of supervising, and then there is the medical work.

From Miss Lane's letter, we gather that she usually rises at 5.30 a.m., and that her day is crammed full. On Sunday there is first of all the prayer time with the children; then breakfast and the giving out of the clothes to the boys and girls that they may be dressed in their best for church. Since the epidemic of mumps on the Station, there are more than the usual number who are ill, and these need to be attended to. Then there is the little one that Miss Lane looks upon as her own girlie to be looked after; the house needs to be tidied, and the babies need to be made ready for Sunday School. At 9.30 a.m. there is the Young People's Class; at 10.30 the Women's Class, and at 11 o'clock the church service. After church there are those who have come to the church service and need medicines. At times it seems as if a whole hospital is at the door. After all have been attended to, and things have quieted down once more, it is time indeed for the missionary to think of dinner. It is well along into the afternoon before she can have it, and we must remember that she has been busy since 5.30 in the morning.

It has just happened that Mr. Mellish and Miss Lane have in their recent letters given a little outline concerning the systematizing of the work, and we are passing it on. We can assure the readers of the *Union Baptist Witness* that Mr. and Mrs. Hancox's schedule is just as interesting a one.

The pioneer missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. Davey, who so valiantly laid the good foundation of the work and worked alone on the field for so many months, are now in the homeland. The few weeks of rest that they have had since their return has already been helpful to them, and they are looking much improved. Remember Mr. Davey in prayer, as he serves during the month of August in his home church, Calvary Baptist Church, Ottawa.

MRS. ROBERTSON'S LETTER.

(Continued from page 7)

was not this very "time of Jacob's trouble" of Jeremiah's prophecy, then what was it? Why push the fulfilment of this prophecy forward over two milleniums when just such a tribulation was then impending?

And, likewise, why push forward the "great tribulation" which the Lord Jesus prophesied, when He Himself said it was to fall upon the generation then living. (cf. Mt. 23:31-36). And which Paul testifies in 1 Thess. 2:14-16 did fall upon his own generation. Or why place a parenthesis of nearly two milleniums between "the acceptable year of the Lord," and "the day of vengeance of our God," when the Lord Jesus Himself proclaimed them both as the prophecy demands. The latter He proclaimed at the opening of His ministry. (cf. Lk. 4:16-21). The latter He proclaimed as due to fall upon that generation at the close of His ministry. (cf. Lk. 21:20-24). "For these be the days of vengeance," He declared.

The Lord truly declared that the "gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Mt. 24:14) And Israel's end time could not close until this should be fulfilled; and Rome's hands were tied by it. But upon the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost this "witness unto all the nations" was begun, for "there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven," and these heard Peter preach the "gospel of the kingdom" that day, and many of them were beyond question, in the purposes of God, among that nearly "three thousand souls" of Acts 2:41.

Then again in Acts 8:1-4 we learn of those who had been "scattered abroad" because of persecution, that they "went every where preaching the word." And Paul bears testimony in his letter to the Colossians, written about 64 A.D., that the gospel had indeed been preached "in all the world," and "to every creature which is under heaven." (cf. Col. 1:6, 23).

I was struck with certain words quoted in this morning's (July 14) San Francisco *Chronicle* from the most recent Agreement signed by Britain and France, for it seems to me such an agreement is just what we Bible students and teachers need today, viz., to "exchange views with complete candor." We have an advantage which may not pertain to the political leaders of today, and that greatest of all advantages is that we may have the Holy Spirit in our midst to "lead us into all truth." He must be more anxious than we possibly can be to bring us to one mind as concerns the interpretation of God's Word which He Himself indited, at least insofar as that is possible before "that which is perfect is come." For as yet, like Paul, we must say: "Now I know (only) in part."

This is a much longer letter than I anticipated writing, but my heart is very full, and longs for conference with other sincere Bible students like yourself, Dr. Shields, and others like you.

I count it a great privilege, not only to have seen and heard you, but to have had the more personal touch of our short

visit together in my car as we went together after your hand bag. I took that little meeting as planned of the Lord, for neither of us planned it. May it accomplish all that is in His will through it for both of us.

God bless you Dr. _____

Yours and His,
JESSIE SAGE ROBERTSON.

THE THURSDAY LECTURES.

We omit the publication of last week's lecture from this issue in order to give space to other matters. At the outset we stated the Lectures might not be published in unbroken continuity. Our readers may rest assured, however, that every Lecture will be published in order ultimately, so that there may be no break in the study of the important subject with which they deal. Meanwhile we hope our readers will continue their study of the subject independently. They will thus be better fitted to agree with us when we are right, and to correct us when we are wrong.

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