

# How a Christian Can Suffer

This letter was written by J. F. RUTHERFORD, President of the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION from his cell in Long Island City jail on the night preceding his removal to the Atlanta Penitentiary to begin his 20 years' sentence for publishing THE FINISHED MYSTERY, a commentary on the Bible prophecies of Revelation and Ezekiel.—Editor.

To the dear Saints in Christ Jesus:

So many of you have written me and my companions in bonds words of love, sympathy and encouragement, and our opportunity for writing is so limited, that we ask all of you to take this as an acknowledgment of your sweet messages. I know that like Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16) you are glad to "refresh us," and that you "are not ashamed of our chains." And we, Beloved, count it a great privilege to suffer with Christ Jesus, our blessed Head, our Lord. Looking back, I praise the Lord for all the sweet privileges I have had of serving you, and the sweet fellowship in Christ I have enjoyed with you.

How wonderfully the Lord is fulfilling his precious promises to us! He bought us with the precious blood of his Beloved One. He guided us and drew us to Jesus, opened the eyes of our understanding, justified us and begat us to the divine nature; and there we became prospective members of the body of Christ. Our dear Lord then made us his ambassadors to represent him in this unfriendly world, to proclaim the message of glad tidings to all who have the hearing ear. What joy has filled our hearts as we have gone forth, conscious of the fact that we were representing our great King! True, the world has not known us, even as it did not know our Master. He said to us: "It is enough for the seryant to be as his Master"; and thankful indeed we are that we have had this privilege. Some have had the hearing ear; and some of you we

book out and to you. Some of you had the opportunity of helping, and did so with gladness of heart. We give thanks to our Father and our Savior Christ Jesus for the privilege of having a part in publishing this, the last of the series of Studies in the Scriptures, which the people in the centuries to come will read with deep interest and profit and will give God the glory.

Brother Russell's last expression concerning the harvest was that it would end in the spring of 1918. We believed this; and believing it, we felt that the Seventh Volume must go out before the harvest closed. My attention was directed to Jeremiah 51:60-64. I understand it to mean that Volume Seven must go to the people; hence the organization to distribute it and the pushing of the work. You, beloved in the Lord, responded to the call and joyfully went forth as living stones tied to the book, and cast it amongst the people—into the waters of the Euphrates; and it sank down and illustrated how Babylon shall fall. Ten million copies of "Fall of Babylon" you distributed with willing hands. The sole thought in the mind of each of us was to do the will of the Lord of the harvest and finish his work before the night should come on. There never was a thought in our minds of interfering with the Government or of violating any law.

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#### Grateful For Past Privileges

On June 2, 1907, one year after my consecration, I entered the Pilgrim service; and on June 2, 1918, I delivered my last discourse before our trial. It was eleven years of blessed service; and how I thank the Lord for this privilege! And now, if I can only see and be with Jesus, how I shall delight to tell him of my deep gratitude to him and of my love for him for all these blessed privileges! I have seen you in distress and have wept with you. I have seen you in joy and rejoiced with you. I have endeavored to be faithful to my Lord; and because of my persistence in telling out the blessed message of the kingdom and the resurrection blessings coming to mankind I am called in question before the ecclesiastical and the civil powers of the world—another blessed favor the Lord has granted to me as his willing slave.

Brother Russell had promised the Seventh Volume. The Scriptures show that it must be published. When without self-seeking, but by the will of God, I was placed in the position of executive of the Society which the Lord had organized for his harvest work, I felt it my sacred duty and privilege from the Lord to see that the Seventh Volume was published. And when the Lord through two of his faithful servants (now my fellow prisoners) produced the manuscript, I felt that he had laid upon me the privilege and duty of seeing that this message went to his people. The book was published at a time of much opposition to the Society and its management. It was born in travail. The adversary has always opposed the progress of the work of the Lord. We are not at all surprised to find the storm raging about us at the time. Almost day and night we labored to get the

message to the people into the waters of the Euphrates; and it sank down and illustrated how Babylon shall fall. Ten million copies of "Fall of Babylon" you distributed with willing hands. The sole thought in the mind of each of us was to do the will of the Lord of the harvest and finish his work before the night should come on. There never was a thought in our minds of interfering with the Government or of violating any law.

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faithfully serving our Master and King. We hope and expect soon to make report to him. His approval alone we desire and crave. We count not our lives dear unto us, only that we may be counted worthy to see the Lord. We feel that we have fought a good fight; and if our work is finished, we await the judgment of our present Lord, whom we love and serve.

A brief history of the trial we have written. We are advised that seven who opposed the Society and its work during the past year attended upon the trial and lent aid to our prosecutors. We warn you, Beloved, against the subtle efforts of some of them to fawn upon you now in an attempt to get hold of the Society. Take heed to St. Paul's admonition in Romans 16: 17, 18. Be gentle and kind, yet firm, with all. We have come to the end of the way. Let us take heed to what we have been taught.

#### Weekly Submissive to God's Will

In all this trying experience the Lord has repeatedly shown us that he is bearing us up in his hand. He has permitted seven of us to be sentenced together, for some reason known to him the eighth brother being left behind and not yet sentenced. We spent seven days and nights in the dark cells of Raymond Street jail, Brooklyn. Then we were removed to Long Island City jail, and placed in seven adjoining cells on the corridor. Here for seven days we have had fellowship together, being permitted to assemble in one cell every morning for our Bethel service. We have been treated very kindly here. And now on the seventh night in this prison we are informed that this is to be our last here, and that on the morrow we shall be taken to Atlanta. This journey will begin July 4, when all the allied nations are celebrating the birthday of the American nation.

During our imprisonment the other prisoners have been respectful to us and have treated us with deference. The officers have been kind. We have expected to be governed by the prison rules, and have gladly obeyed them in letter and in spirit. Not a tear of regret or of bitterness has been shed by one of the seven. We have wept for you, Beloved; we have sorrowed because of our separation from you. We have prayed much for you, that the dear Lord will protect you from the wolves and will take you safely into his fold. We know that he loves you more than we can, and that he will care for you where we cannot.

Sorrow not for us, dear Saints; for we are in the Lord's hands. Thus far he has led us, and he will lead us on. Your pathway may be fraught with many trying experiences; but remember his words, "Fear not them that can kill the body, but fear Him who may destroy the soul [new creature];" "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." I know that you are now counted by ecclesiasticism as the off-scourings of the earth; and that you are a gazingstock while you are companions of prisoners. But forget all

means a crown of life; it means to see and be like Jesus; it means to behold the face of the great Jehovah.

#### Longing for the Day

Poor blind world. It is mad. It is drunk with the wine of Babylon. It is staggering now like a drunken man, and is about at its wit's end. (Psalm 107:27-29) Soon the Prince of Peace will speak to the raging waves of the surging masses, and then quietness and calmness will result. Then will follow the desire of all honest people of all nations. If we have withstood the storms and have been faithful to the Lord, we may have a part in blessing those who have used us ill because they did not know us, even as the same class did not know our Master,

The dark night is at hand; but remember that it is darkest just before dawn of the bright day. Soon the Sun of Righteousness will fully arise with healing in his beams; and if we have proven faithful, we shall experience the sweet promise of our Lord, who said: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the brightness of the sun in the kingdom of the Father." (Matthew 13:43) Then will the world know us, not as seditionists, but as true patriots; that we are not enemies but friends, anxious to do all for mankind. The Lord has promised that the world shall know who has been born in Zion. (Psalm 87:5) Will you be born there? I hope you will. I hope I shall see you there. Then will be fully appreciated the words of our dear Brother St. Paul that "these light afflictions endure but a moment, and they are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Corinthians 4:17) Now you are despised and hated of all nations; and now is the time to remember the words of our King: "In patience possess ye your souls"; "He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved."

#### Exhortation to Loyalty

We have beheld the degraded characters in these prisons. We walked by a prisoner who boasted that he had murdered his fellow man. He was sentenced to ten years. Seven men were there who had given their all to help mankind; and they were sentenced to twenty years on four counts, or eighty years each. We have beheld much sorrow and suffering. What joy awaits mankind when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return [from death and degradation] and come to Christ with songs of joy upon their heads!" What joy to have a part in returning and blessing them!

Beloved in the Lord, the history of the ages is behind you; and a sad history it is. The glories of eternity are before you, and its grandeurs are beyond the dreams of man. Long have we hoped and prayed for the coming of God's kingdom of righteousness. We are standing at its very portals now. Let us hold fast a little while, and we shall enter into the presence of our King. Then by his grace we shall see him face to face. Oh, that will be glory for me and for you!

The guard has graciously granted

spising the shame, all that he might do the Father's will. What a blessed privilege, then, to be counted worthy of bearing some of the reproaches that fell upon him! God has favored us and us above the ancient worthies, who endured hardships, sufferings and persecutions far greater than we have endured. He has favored us above the angels of heaven, who desired to look into his plan, but were not permitted. He has favored us by calling us to the heavenly calling far above angels, powers and principalities, setting before us the greatest of all prizes. He tells us that we can have this prize only by passing through much tribulation, and that the feet members must have a goodly part of this persecution. Behold, then, the persecution and the prize; behold the cross and crown! We can have the latter only by gladly taking the former. Shall we then falter or fall back? I am persuaded of you, dear Brethren, that you will not falter; but that when the fiery chariot comes near, you will gladly take to it. It is the greatest privilege ever to get into that chariot. It means a home of glory; it

close. Never have I loved you so much, and never have I desired so much to talk to you.

And now tomorrow, as prisoners for the truth's sake, we go to Atlanta. We go in the strength of the Lord. We seven have learned to love each other with an ever increasing love. We may not again see you in the flesh. We commend you to the gracious and loving arms of our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, how my heart yearns to do something for you! But our dear Lord will do what I cannot. His grace, peace and love be multiplied unto you. Be faithful, be brave, be loyal, be true; and may the Father of mercies and God of all comfort bless, keep and comfort you.

Your brother and bond-slave of our blessed King.

J. F. RUTHERFORD.

P. S. We, associate prisoners of our dear Brother Rutherford, desire to express our hearty concurrence in the above message of love and admonition.

W. E. Van Amburgh, A. H. Macmillan, Geo. H. Fisher, Clayton J. Woodworth, R. J. Martin, F. H. Robison.  
July 3, 1918. Long Island City, N. Y.

## Are These Men Criminals?

(The following letter from the wife of one of the eight Bible Students sentenced to 20 years in the Atlanta Penitentiary, was published in THE WATCH TOWER, the official church paper of the International Bible Students Association, recently. We reproduce it here as it gives a remarkable insight into the character of these men who have been kept behind prison bars without even the privilege of giving bail pending the appeal of their case.—Editor.)

Dear Brethren Everywhere:

Since our brethren in prison cannot write all the dear friends, in their behalf I wish to express the great gratitude they feel to each and every one of the dear brethren who sent them some remembrance for Christmas, and this without regard to intrinsic value of the gift.

Many of their presents were packages of good, substantial and wholesome food. Since receiving it they have much improved physically. The oranges and grapefruit have been specially beneficial and probably have saved them from much sickness and suffering. The other foods have built them up physically, and each one is feeling much better. They are very grateful to the Lord for these temporal blessings and are very desirous of expressing their thankfulness and gratitude to the dear ones sending the gifts. Especially do they desire to express their thankfulness and appreciation of the great love that prompted the gifts. They were very much touched by the sweet messages accompanying the remembrances. One dear sister wrote, "Sugar was scarce, and we did without several days to save sugar to make some goodies for you."

Of course the brethren had to shed some tears for such love; and all they could say was: "God bless them for their loving kindness!" Never this side the veil, dear friends, will you know how much good you did and how much joy you brought to these ambassadors who are prisoners for Christ's sake.

More than 150 prisoners in the Castle had nothing for Christmas, and so our brethren got a list of them from the officers, and out of their own abundance made up a little Christmas package for each of the unfortunates; and by this many were made happy. Even the officers were so pleased that they were heard to say, "Never was anything like that done at this place before." And so we can truly say, the Lord was in the prison that Christmas. I knew each of you would be glad to know these things, because each of you had a part in them.

Our brethren wish me to say for them that they love you one and all very much—every one of the Lord's dear little ones—and if it be his will they greatly desire to come to you and serve you and make known their love unto you.

Your sister by his grace,

HARRIET B. FISHER.—Ga.

Taken from:

*The Labor Tribune* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), dated March 27, 1919:

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How wonderfully the Lord is fulfilling his precious promises to us! He bought us with the precious blood of his Beloved One. He guided us and drew us to Jesus, opened the eyes of our understanding, justified us and begat us to the divine nature; and there we became prospective members of the body of Christ. Our dear Lord then made us his ambassadors to represent him in this unfriendly world, to proclaim the message of glad tidings to all who have the hearing ear. What joy has filled our hearts as we have gone forth, conscious of the fact that, we were representing our great King! True, the world has not known us, even as it did not know our Master. He said to us: "It is enough for the servant to be as his Master"; and thankful indeed we are that we have had this privilege. Some have had the hearing ear; and some of you we have had the privilege of showing the pathway that leads to life. I am rejoicing to see you standing steadfast in the faith.

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### Meekly Submissive to God's Will

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### Longing for the Day

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### Exhortation to Loyalty

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Dear Brethren Everywhere:

Since our brethren in prison cannot write all the dear friends, in their behalf I wish to express the great gratitude they feel to each and every one of the dear brethren who sent them some remembrance for Christmas, and this without regard to intrinsic value of the gift.

Many of their presents were packages of good, substantial and wholesome food. Since receiving it they have much improved physically. The oranges and grapefruit have been specially beneficial and probably have saved them from much sickness and suffering. The other foods have built them up physically, and each one is feeling much better. They are very grateful to the Lord for these temporal blessings and are very desirous of expressing their thankfulness and gratitude to the dear ones sending the gifts. Especially do they desire to express their thankfulness and appreciation of the great love that prompted the gifts. They were very much touched by the sweet messages accompanying the remembrances. One dear sister wrote, "Sugar was scarce, and we did without several days to save sugar to make some goodies for you."

Of course the brethren had to shed some tears for such love; and all they could say was: "God bless them for their loving kindness!" Never this side the veil, dear friends, will you know how much good you did and how much joy you brought to these ambassadors who are prisoners for Christ's sake.

More than 150 prisoners in the Castle had nothing for Christmas, and so our brethren got a list of them from the officers, and out of their own abundance made up a little Christmas package for each of the unfortunates; and by this many were made happy. Even the officers were so pleased that they were heard to say, "Never was anything like that done at this place before." And so we can truly say, the Lord was in the prison that Christmas. I knew each of you would be glad to know these things, because each of you had a part in them.

Our brethren wish me to say for them that they love you one and all very much—every one of the Lord's dear little ones—and if it be his will they greatly desire to come to you and serve you and make known their love unto you.

Your sister by his grace,

HARRIET B. FISHER -- Ga.