WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY,
CANADIAN BRANCH OFFICE
143, Donald Street.

WINNIPEG, Man. April 24th,1919

Dear Brethren:

Greeting!

RE THE HOME COMING OF OUR BRETHREN FROM ATLANTA.

We are pleased to be able to forward to you news items re their reception at Brooklyn, which we believe will be of much interest to one & all.

Immediately they arrived in Brooklyn they were accompanied by a number of friends to the Bethel Home, where between five and six-hundred friends had assembled to welcome them. They were received in the large dining room, and as they entered their eyes fell upon a large banner, containing a cross and crown, and the words "Welcome Home, Brethren.", and the text, "If the Son therefore shall makeyou free, you shall be free indeed." The dear friends who had assembled had provided a very sumptuous banquet; and as all partook of it their hearts rejoiced in anticipation of the great wedding feast and banquet that all the members of the body of Christ will enjoy after the Messiah is complete and all are gathered home. In the course of remarks at this banquet on e of the brethren said, in substance, "There is nothing that so thoroughly humbles a man as to put him in prison, and subject him to the strenuous rules of prison life. There is nothing that brings him so fully to a realization of the blessings of liberty. The one therefore who has in his heart a desire for righteous develops by reason of his incarceration a condition of mind that makes him ready to hear the message of truth, which brings to him the hope of better days.. This illustrates how that men of the world are now being humbled by the trouble and stress that is upon the nations of the earth, and that the Lord is permitting all this to create a heart condition amongst mankind that will make them ready to receive the great Messiah; and who during his reign have the desire for release from bondage and who desire his blessings, will have them and will receive them with joy."

There was great rejoicing amongst all present. Some two hours were spent in the singing of hymns and listening to reports made by our brethren, and all present again expressed their joy that they had some part in making known the message of the Kingdom, and that the imprisonment of our brethren had made such witness possible.

Not one word of regret because of their imprisonment was expressed by any of the eight brethren returned from prison. While we all realise that the incarceration is anything but pleasant to the flesh, yetthe New Creature in Christ Jesus can rejoice, knowing that these light afflictions endure but a moment and work out for those who patiently endure them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Some of them were heard to say that this home-coming reminds them of the resurrection, when friends will bebrought face to face again who have long been separated. All the brethren expressed themselves as thankful to the Lord that theky had been counted worthy by Him to endure some of the afflictions similar to those endured by the apostles and the great Master because of their fait fulness to the truth. They had nothing but expressions of kindness for all. Not one word of resentment fell from any lip.

During the reception the various brethren were heard from asfollows

Brooklyn, N.Y. March, 1919.

REMARKS BY BROTHER RUTHERFORD.

Dear friends: I can't tell you how glad I am to be home. This is the first time in nine months that we have heard any of our hymns, or been permitted to sing them. Here tonight we find ourselves in a romm with no place to sit down. This suggest that we are spiritual, in a way; because spirit beings do not have to sit down.

The Lord has blessed us very wonderfully in the past nine months. that would seem strange to the world; but knowing that we belong to our Father and that He causes all things to work together for our good, then we can truly say that the Lord has abundantly blessed us, and we are thankful to him for all the experiences we have had. We find the Bethel Home practically abandoned, not exactly so - but we have no complaint, of course. Evidently the Lord has permitted this to happen for some good purpose. Let us forget the things behind, and reach forward to those things which are before.

How long we shall be with you, I do not know - it is in the Lord's

hands. Whether we are wholly free, or temporarily free, I do not know, so far as this world's things are concerned; but I DO KNOW that we are free in Christ Jesus. Before I went away I had a little card up on my dresser, and the text was, "If the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." I came back tonight and found that same text was sticking up in the glass.

Now, dear Brethren, I will not attempt to tell you of all the experiences we have had in the past nine months. We have been isolated, of course, from you; but our hearts have been with you every moment, and we know we have had your prayers; and the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. I have been more and more fully convinced in the past few days of the real reason why the Lord permitted us to go to prison. I was as certain today as I ever was that we are absolutely innocent of any violation of the law. The Lord wanted us in that prison. You have joined with other dear friends throughout the country to give a most wonderful witness to the truth - a marvellous witness - calling attention and getting attention of others throughout the country who would never have paid any attention whatsoever. I had that in mind before we had been in prison a month: something to call the attention of the people to this condition.

When we were in prison, they asked me, "How long are you here for?"

"I am sentenced for twenty years."

The man didn't like the way I said it very well. He said, "Well, then you are here for twenty years."

I knew I wasn't going to stay twenty years, no matter whether guilty or innocent, because before that time the Lord's Kingdom will be in operation, and all will be free. So then, our duties were not the most pleasant in the world, and we are not going to tell you about them; but I was going to say something about this witness you have been giving. You have been witnessing the truth to governors, rulers and the great men of the land, and they would not have gotten it in any other way. Aren't you glad? Aren't you glad that we have had the opportunity of going to jail, and you have had the opportunity of telling the rulers of the land that there were eight men put in jail for the preaching of the Gospel? We are very happy the Judge said we were sincere.

I would like to tell you how much I love you, but I can't do that. It is absolutely impossible to tell you how much I love each one; and every one who has had a part in this wonderful witness in the past few weeks has received a blessing. Every one who has, through fear, or for any other reason, held back has missed that blessing. I am convinced that this experience we have all gone through is merely to prepare us for more strenuous times. We rejoice if that is true. The message of truth must be carried to the little ones in the Lord who are bound up in Babylon. And what a great blessing it will be to carry that message!

I am going to take occasion, then, to tell you Brethren a little about our experiences in trying to witness for the Lord's cause; but before I do this I will assure you that we are the most fortunate people in the world. Never has a people lived on this earth so fortunate as we. The whole world is turned upside down. Many of their hearts are broken, and all of them must be broken before they are ready for the Lord's blessing. When the are broken, they will be ready for Him. Now I suggest that every one be strong in the Lord. Fear Not: trust in Him;
and see that we go about in a spirit of kindness, calmness and sobriety, tell-the people about the Lord's wonderful love and the blessings coming to them after this trouble is over.

When we reached the prison, of course, we had to be interrogated, and asked our business. When I told the deputy Warden what I had been doing, he said, "No preaching in here. Understand?" I said, "No, Mr. Deputy, don't you fear about that at all. I will never tell a man anything unless he will ask me; and you can depend upon me to keep my word." In the prison we were required to attend chapel on Sunday morning. At that time I thought about the friends all throughout the country, and the feast you were having, and I said, "Oh, Lord, why have we got to be thus tortured by the Seed of the Serpentblaspheming thy dear Name?" After a while I began to see why it was. The chaplain - a very good man; I think he does the best he knows how - the chaplain urged everyone to stay to Sunday School. We thought we had better take the time for a little personal fellowship. We eight formed a class, and

amidst the babble all over the chapel - of course, everybody talking at the same time - we tried to have a little lesson. Some curiosity seekers began to come; and still more come. They could not keep us from talking the truth there, because they invited us to stay. So, we took turns about; one Sunday, one would lead; another Sunday, another.

Well, you know the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES: they didn't want them in the pris on library. I had the privilege of being transferred to the library, and I found three sets of MILLENIAL DAWN. So, as we talked a little truth, some would say, "My, that's good!" Got anything to read?" I would take hime the First Volume, and get him started. In a little while, we had at least seven prisoners and two or three guards, reading the books.

The Sunday School, class kept increasing. One old man in that prison, seventy-two years old - a banker - said to me (everybody down there called me Judge, for short) he said, "Judge, I am seventy-two years old, and I had to get in this prison to find out something about the Bible. I have been asking preachers for fifty-seven years, and never got any questions answered." I sat in the library one afternoon, and he asked me questions for three solid hours. He said "That is the most wonderful thing I have ever heard. I have had all my questions answered satisfactorily." When we left, Brother Macmillan presented him with a full set of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, including THE FINISHED MYSTERY I gave him a Bible; and so, he is well equiped. There is that dear old soul ready for restitution.

The cla ss kept increasing. There were a number of jews, and we had an opportunity to tell them about the Jewish hopes. We had an opportunity to take the Old Testament promises, and to tell the Jews, and Gentiles too, what was coming. Last Sunday was the last Sunday we had there. Two or three of the deputied came around, and the deputy warden took a seat right by me. One of the guards came and said "Couldn't you come to this side, so we can hear better?" The Deputy sat down there also, and I thought, "Well this is my last time now, and I am going to tell them about the plan. I can do it in a few minutes as briefly as possible, and then give an opportunity to ask questions." Our little class had grown from eight to NINETY. Mark you, there were only one hundred and fourty-five in all the Sunday School. There were six other classes. We had ninety and they had the balance. I don't say this now because I happen to be involved,, but the Deputy Warden went to Brother Juett when we went to leave the other day, while we eight were out in the corridor waiting for the officers to come and take us out, the warden and the Deputy Warden, and a number of the gua rds, came and shook hands with us and told us Goodbye - the Deputy Warden stepped over to Brother Juett and said, "I heard Rutherfor last Sunday; the most wonderful thing I have ever heard, to know that the Lord has such a great plan as that!" so we left them in there; and all of them said, "Judge, we hope you won't have to come back."

There was one very brilliant young man in our Sunday School Class, and he always came, every Sunday, and sat right next to the leader. He would meet us in the yard and talk to us, and time and again, he said"Oh, I am so sorry to se e these men go, and when they go I don't know what we will do for a class; but I am going to try and lead it myself." The other night - the last night we were there - he sent down to me a note. To give you an idea of what kind of young man he is, I am going to ask Brother Wise to read that. I call you attention to this, dear friends, because it gives you an idea that there are some good young men, and some good old men, in prison. And I believe ther are more, in proportion to the number there - I would rather take my chances, a thousand to one, with those men than I would with the preache rs.

(The letter from the young man read about as follows:)

"My dear Judge Rutherford:

To you and everyone with you, I send this parting message. Somehow,when I'm near you or with you I cannot express myself. I seem such an atom, hardly worthy of so wonderful a friendship as yours. I want you to know that you have left with me a desire to be a better, bigger man, if such can emerge from a carcase so soiled and world-worn as mine. You have taught me the meaning of the word 'love' as used between men. You have taught me that there are things in this world far more precious that rubies; and if He who is supreme desires that I never see again I shall be satisfied, knowing that at least I have had the first gleanings of a beautiful knowledge, the friendship of you wonderful men, and the opportunity to help myself if only I can and will remain strong. I'm weak, very weak, no one knows this better than I, but I'll try and I'll fight with myself if necessary, to achieve the full fruits from this seed you have planted, so I may help not only myself but those about me.

"This may all sound odd, coming from such as I, but deep, way deep in my heart I mean it, every word. Perhaps some day , I shall come to you and

say, 'Now, I'm a man'; and when I do you will know that all was not in vain. I may slip - life is a funny proposition - and if I do, I'll pick up the remnants and start anew.

"May I thank you, every one of you, again and again; and wish you God-speed, and His blessing and guidance in this most wonderful future.

Devotedly,

Mac.

Now, dear Brethren, I called you attention to that letter for this reason There is nothing in the world with which I have had experience that so thoroughly humbles men, breakes their heart, as to put them in prison; without any hope; many years before them; not knowing whether they are going to live or die; knowing that they must observe certain rules, and if they fail to keep those rules they go into the dungeon, Everything, in a measure, to discourage them, unless they had something to which to look forward. Then I saw many of those men take kindly to the message of hope that was help out to them in our feeble way. They looked upon us as honest men. The meanest things in a prison is one prisoner who is disloyal to another. One was heard to say to another, "Those Russellites are all right. They wouldn't turn up a man for anything." The y had confidence in us, and that is the reason they would listen. This great trouble that is on the earth is breaking the hearts of the people, and when thetrouble grows, their hearts will be so thoroughly humbled that every on e in the land who has the message of the Lord in his heart, in his mind, and upon his lips, will have the chance to go forth and comfort some sad hearts. We have a wonderful illustration. We know there is much trouble ahead; but greater are the wonderful things before us. If we are faithful unto the end, it means we are going to have some part in the restitution work and the reconstruction of all mankind.

I was thinking tonight as I stood down there and ate chicken, and looked up and down the rows of smiling faces - everybody so happy, everybody looking so glad and rejoicing - I thought: It is worth staying in jail nine months to have this experience. Now, dear friends, if this is a joy to us, what a wonderful joy is set before us when we shall see the Lord, the Lord Jesus, the Heavenly Father; and then be privileged to bind up the broken hearts and comfort those that mourn. We will be glad of all the experiences we have ever had. I thank you again and again that you have been so faithful and so loyal to the Lord. Your fight has not been to get your brethren out of prison. That was merely a side issue - a secondary thing. The Lord has been moving to please him. Your business and my business is to witness to the TRUTH, and whatever position the Lord puts us in , that is what we want to do. So the fight you have been making has been for the purpose of witnessing for the Truth and those who have done it have received a wonderful blessing. The Lord bless you all.

BROTHER VAN AMBURGH.

I want to greet you all as fellow prisoners; because, although we, so faras the body is concerned, have been in prison, yet I think that every member of the Church has been in prison with us. I think that many of the prisoners outside the walls have really suffered more than the few inside. Now the Judge has told you a little about himself, so I will simply say that everyone in the walls knew him as the Judge. They knew me as "Dad". Back and forth, among the prisoners, we had our nicknames. At first, our experiences were very trying; because it seemed almost like taking us out of heaven and putting us in the very dungeon. But we thought like this: It is the Lord's work and we gave ourselves to him, and it is for Him to say. It was very dark for a long time, because we could not get a word out, and not much in.

I have had - I could not tell you just how many - particular answers to prayer. I will just tell you one instance. We were privileged to write one letter a week, and on anly one sheet of paper. I formed the habit of making the individual letters as small as I could, so as to get as much as possible on a sheet. Sister Van Amburgh and I thought pretty much of each other. Her birthday came along, and Iforgot to mention it in my letter. Now it is a very little thing, and some of you many laugh. I took it to the Lord, and I though about it. I was in the hospital at that time. I said "I wonder how I can fix it".It was a reprehensible act,and one which was punishable by immediate dismissal, for the guard to take any message whatever out from any prisoner. The doctor came around every morning, and I thought, "I wonder if I can get the doctor to send a little message over the phone when he goes out." I wrote out the address and 'phone number, and the message of greeting, on Wednesday. The Deputy Warden hardly ever came to the hospital. I saw the assistant doctor about it, and he said, "Well, I don't know. That would be rather aserious matter, but I will ask the chief physician and let you know." we get ourmail

about 5 o'clock, and that afternoon I got a letter from Sister Van Amburgh. She said she had talked to the deputy about some mottoes that I wanted to get into the institution. When the Deputy came in, I said, "Oh, she tells me how nicely you trested her the other day." I read to him what she wrote. It seemed to please him. I was so interested in the letter that when we passed out I didn't think of my note. I went after him and said, "Would it be possible for you to phone a message for my wife." "Surely" he said. "Give me that note." Now to my mind, that was simply the method that the Lord used to say, "I have my hand over you, and I am looking out for you, even in the little details like that."

Another time I was feeling somewhat depressed, and pretty poor physically The assistant doctor came up, put his hand over my shoulder, laid a beautiful rosebud in front of me, and walked off. The Lord's hand was revealed in these little ways.

The thing that struck us was the broken hearts down there. I would like to have you know to some extent how much those poor men thought of Brother Rutherford. The called him The Judge, and they meant it. I want to tell you what an inspiration he is and has been to us. I want to tell you, he is really a man of God. He just braced every one of us, and truly the Lord is using him in a wonderful way. I want to tell you how your prayers helped us; to think how many of the friends were praying for us and were down here with us. Th Lord has blessed us, and is blessing us, and now has some future work for us. If any of the rest of you go to prison, the Lord will take care of you in prison just as well as he will anywhere else. The Lord bless you.

.....

BROTHER MACMILLAN.

Dear Friends, Now you have heard from convicts No. 8633 and No. 8634.Now you will hear from No. 8639. Brother Rutherford was the first, and I was the last - 8633 and 8639. Brother Van Amburgh was telling some of the wonderful experiences he had, showing the Lord's leadings while in prison. I am sure we could all tell ours if we could all remember. The night we entered there, there were eight of us - seven in our party, and one other convict (Brother De Cecca)was not there then). The other prisoner's number was 8640, and he came next to me as we were lined up, on the wall to go to our cells. I looked him over, looked myself over, and said, "Goodness, have I got to go and live with that specimen of depravity?" I waited patiently to see what would happe They called them off; so many this way, so many that way; and I found myself laid up with this scoundrel. As we were about to go to the cell, the guard called out, "8638 goes with you!" That was Brother Woodworth. We walked up to our cell, and when we got in we threw our arms around oneanother and have bee together ever since.

He is not a prisoner any more; but he is inside the walls. So from early morning to nine o'clock at night, Brother Woodworth can go any place he wants except outside the prison walls. But here is the striking thing ab out it: the person that can get that position down there thinks it is the next to getting out. When Brother Woodworth made a request to the Deputy Warden to let him leave his freedom with the other three clerks and go back into that small cell - eight by ten - and be locked up in the evening and be locked up in the evening, they said, "There is something wrong with Woodworth's head." I said, "No, it is all in his heart." So that little experience was a remarkable thing, when you think of it. I was assigned to go with that fello and if I had gone with him I would have been dead by this time.

Brother Rutherford was telling about the Sunday school class. I am not going to let him get away with all the honors of that. Brother Van Amburgh and I were away when that was organized. There were some Jews down there, and they said, "We would like to have one of you men come over." I went over for four or six successive Sundays, and I noticed the Deputy Warden came over and listened. I told them about the teachings of the Old Testament, and showed how the Jews could not be blessed until the Messiah was shown. Then, I said: As you have been blessed by him, you will wake up some fine morning and find that you are two thousand years late. I saw it would be folly for me to keep those Jews alone in the class, so I said: I guess I told them about all they were interested to hear from me, and if they want to hear any more they will come to our class.

The Deputy told ma a story afterwards. He said a man came to him two days before, when he learned we were going away. The man came in and said, "Deputy, I would like to have the job down there that those two Israelites are going to give up." The Deputy did not know whom he meant. "Those two Israelites who came with the big Judge." "Those are not Israelites; those are Russellites."

I said, "Deputy, he had it right; we are Israelites indeed." So we had a wonderful time. Those Jews that were in the class began to be interested.

There was a work started among those men that is remarkable. I was walking up the other day, and a young fellow came running along, and said, "Just a moment, Mac, I want to walk up with you. I always like to walk with you fellows because you always have a pleasant smile and a happy word." I wondered why this was - not because we are better than the rest. There were many good, noble men in there; but still they were not able to create an influence that seemed to be specially helpful. The other day, an old, hardened sinner - a man that kept barrooms and sold dope, etc. - became very friendly to us, and stepped into the cell one day. He sat down, talking to me. He said, "I want to tell you that you men have done a wonderful amount of work here, and everybody you came in contact with was benefited and influenced by your influ ence." I thought: Now why is this? I found out it was not because we were any better, but because we have a better view of life, and life's troubles, difficulties, joys and sorrows. If you meet a man there for five minutes, he says, "Partner, how long have you got?" We always had a happy, hopeful word for them, and that is what got their attention - because of the broad, hopeful and cheerful view that we were able to take of our own incarceration. The day we left, many prisoners hastened away when they said, "Goodbye," because there was a big lump coming up. Taking a retrospective view of it, it was wonderful! And, I suppose, a year from now, we will be thinking more of that experience; and a hundred years from now, I tell you, it will seem real good.

.....

BROTHER WOODWORTH.

Before we reached Brooklyn, we agreed amongst ourselves that we would have nothing to say about our prison experiences. So I will follow the example that has been set me by the others.

The thing that impresses me most in connection with the experiences of the past nine months is the depth, and the sweetness, and the genuineness of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, as amongst his brethren. I want to tell you, dear brothers and sisters, what you already know: that there isn't a single bit of yellow in any of those brethren that went down to Atlanta - not a bit. They have faced everything they have had to face with a smile, and that has brought its own reward, as it always did in the past and always will in the future. There are no people on earth that can face the worst that civilization, so called, has to offer, with as good a spirit; or gain so many favours; or receive so many blessings in connection with their experiences, as the people in Present Truth - because their hearts are fortified for these things. We have been looking forward to the time when it should be our privilege, in some public way, to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his Body's sake, which is the Church. If any of you have read this book which has recently been so widely advertised (I refer to the FINISHED MYSTERY), you know it was no surprise to any of the brethren -although absolutely innocent of the things they were charged with - it was no surprise to any of them that an experience such as we have had has come to them. Nor can we be sure that these experiences are finished. But, in any event, we can look forward with joy, because we know that we belong to the Lord. That has been our recourse in everything. When we have had one disappointment after another about getting our liberty, even temporarily, the thing we have fallen back on all the time is, "Well, what difference does it make? The Lord is on the job. We blong to the Lord. This is His business. Let Him take care of us as he sees fit."

There is one brother in this room who did an exceptionally interesting thing in the way of brotherly love. I though I would mention it here. He was not one of the eight. It is just as well that a little glory goes to some of the others, who are just as honorable in the Lord's sight, just as worthy of these special favours, privileges and blessings we have enjoyed. This brother wrote to our attorney, just after sentence had been passed upon us, and inquired if there was not some way that he could break into jail and take the place of one of us. He wanted to take my place in the prison. What do you think of a brother that would propose to undertake a twenty-year sentence? That is brotherly love.

Had you been in Atlanta the last nine months, I think you would see the full illustration of the truth: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." At the hour when some exercise was allowed, we would always find the Lord's brethren together, by twos or threes, and sometimes by sixes, travelling together. While we were down there, I remember one thing trahspired that showed how willing these brethren were to suffer for what they believed to be right. Some brother (I shall call him a

brother, although it seems difficult to think of a brother who would do a thing like this) from Brooklynm sent a type written communication to each one of us eight brethren, intimating that we were in prison because of the FINISHED MYSTERY, which every one seems to admit was the ostensible reason we were put there. He called upon us, and everybody else, to repudiate the Seventh Volume of Studies in the Scriptures, and he said if we would do this would get our liberty. Not one of us replied. It was not worthy of a reply. We stand for the Lord and His truth, and EVERY BIT of His Word. God had some purpose in writing the book of Revelation. What that purpose is seems to get clearer to me now. It was his purpose specially to advertise the Truth far and wide, to the remotest corners of the earth. Nearly everybody in the country now wonders what is contained in that book.

One of the interesting features down there was the remarkable fondness that the Itailians all over the place got to have for us. Now this you would hardly look for; but when they saw the love we all manifested toward Brother DeCecca, you know it just warmed their hearts; and I think that amongst our very best friends in that place were the scores of Italians found there. You couldn't find an Italian there but what thinks well of us.

.....

BROTHER FISHER.

Now I feel, like Brother DeCecca, that the past nine months, in many respects, was the most precious experience of my whole life, and I am glad I went to the penitentiary. I know when we stepped into the front hall that night - it was late at night, and dark - a big man came to us and he said, "Stand up!" We stood up. He said, "Your number is 8637, and never forget that you are a prisoner." And we never did. It wouldn't pay. But when we got our numbers, we said to each other, "We are numbered with the transgressors." Iam glad my number is 8637. You can go to college and high school, and learn to be a doctor, or something else; but there are some things you can't learn without going to the penitentiary - and they are good things, too. Friends, you will never find a place where men love one another the way they do there. You wouldn't believe it, would you?

.....