

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON

Secret Service Theologian



Letter To E.W.Bullinger

Dr. Bullinger had a large circle of friends. Two prominent men who were very close to him were **Sir Robert Anderson** and Rev. Sholto Douglas. Both shared his strong stand on Protestantism and interest in prophetic studies; both had been among the original trustees of Things to Come. They were also personal friends of his and frequently spent time with him on weekends and holidays.

Sir Robert Anderson was born in Ireland in 1841. His father was the Crown Solicitor for Dublin, his mother a member of the peerage. Though Sir Robert was called to the Irish Bar in 1863 and the English Bar in 1870, he never practised law, but rather became involved in public service. He rose to the position of Assistant Commissioner of Police and head of the Criminal Investigation Department in London and retired in 1901 after a distinguished career.

Following his retirement, Sir Robert devoted himself to writing and teaching, principally on Biblical subjects with particular emphasis on prophecy. Anderson was a frequent speaker at the Mildmay Conferences and the Prophecy Investigation Society; he also chaired and spoke at Annual Meetings of the Trinitarian Bible Society. (Although not personally active in the work of the Society, Anderson gave his time and lent his prestige to their Annual Meetings out of respect for its secretary. As he said at one Annual Meeting, "As a prefatory word, I may say that any dislike I feel to being in the chair is overborne by the pleasure of standing beside my friend **Dr. Bullinger**, and of doing anything, no matter how little, to help him in the great work in which he is engaged." Sir Robert was one of the earliest members of the National Club, a private social club in London founded by men holding strongly Evangelical views, of which Dr. Bullinger was an honorary member.

Of Sir Robert's literary efforts it was said:

The quality in Sir Robert Anderson's books, as well as in his numerous other writings, which appealed with special force to many people, was the strength and certainty of his own (Bullinger's) beliefs and the clearness of their expression.... 'Your writings are specially helpful to me', wrote a very old friend... 'there is always in every chapter that which you must either accept or reject. You must stop and think, and not pass on unheeding.'

Dr. Bullinger said of one of Sir Robert's books:

I feel I have a fuller, better and deeper knowledge of "my Lord and my God", and praise Him and bless you for it?"

The two men did not always agree on Biblical matters, as can be seen by the following letter:

Dear Bullinger,

I am deeply touched by the graciousness and cordiality of your notice of "Forgotten Truths". I know well how unreservedly you sympathise with very much there is in it, and your praise of that element is not stinted.

But I am fully aware that on certain matters respecting which you feel strongly I have gone counter to you. But on whatever side is the truth -yours or mine - there is no doubt on which side is the grace!

R.Anderson