

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Also NOTES ON ROMANS, PHILIPPIANS
and 1 TIMOTHY

VOLUME 24.

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"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 24.

JANUARY, 1956.

EDITORIAL.

A new year brings a new subject; and we are happy to see so many of our regular contributors represented: we welcome their papers and invite others to begin and to continue steadfastly.

Our new subject, the book of Deuteronomy, is a book of retrospect and prospect. We too have retrospect and prospect. Our retrospect constrains us to confess, "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us" (1 Samuel 7. 12); and, supreme among the precious things in prospect, there is the coming again of the Lord, that joyful event for which we wait.

This present age is marked by growing ignorance of the Scriptures, in particular of the Old Testament. There is, therefore, the more urgent need for children of God to gather a sound and accurate knowledge of the word of God, and to be able to handle it aright. As to Deuteronomy, we should bear in mind how the Lord Jesus quoted from it, when under temptation by the devil (Luke 4. 4, 8, 12; Deuteronomy 8, 3: 6. 13, 16). Thrice the Lord said, "It is written . . ."; and the devil also said, "It is written . . ."; the Lord's response to which, as in Luke, began with, "It is said" The things written in Deuteronomy are things spoken by God: they are God-breathed, and therefore vital to our spiritual life and suited to our spiritual needs. The Lord's example shows how a sound and intimate knowledge of the Scriptures would enable us to resist the devil so that he must flee from us (James 4. 7). J.B.

DEUTERONOMY IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

The Gospel according to Mark contains much that is reminiscent of Deuteronomy: there are, for example, phrases which seem to be borrowed from Deuteronomy, and there is the incident of the plucking of the standing corn (Mark 2. 23), which was allowed under the law (23. 25).

In the main, Mark's borrowings from Deuteronomy relate to the law. The Sadducees used the law with reference to marriage in tempting the Lord (Mark 12.18-27), and were rebuked by the Lord, for God is the God of the living and not of the dead. The Pharisees, too, came under rebuke, when they raised the matter of divorce (Mark 10. 1-12). Their own words condemned them: "Moses *suffered* to write a bill of divorcement" (24.1-4). A thing to be suffered is usually undesirable, but may be the less of two evils. The Lord put divorce in such a light, and affirmed the binding nature of marriage. Along with these we would join the case of the man of great possessions (Mark 10. 17-22), the Lord's words to whom confirm the ten commandments (with the exception of the literal application of the law of the sabbath) as applying to this dispensation (Mark 10. 19). While the law was given by Moses, and grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, the Lord in no way rescinded the statutes of the moral law.

At a time when the Lord was dealing with some who, in deceit, asked questions of Him, a scribe asked, "What commandment is the first of all?" (Mark 12. 28). The Lord in reply cited Deuteronomy (6. 4, 5), "Hear, O Israel . . ."; the scribe acknowledged this answer in words also closely akin to Deuteronomy (4. 35: 6. 4, 5), and was pronounced not far from the kingdom. The Scriptures never mislead. Both the Lord and the scribe chose their words carefully from the Scriptures. Scriptural teaching is best expressed in Scriptural language.

"Ye have the poor always with you" (Mark 14. 7) recalls God's promise, "There shall be no poor with thee; . . . if only thou diligently hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God," and the result of human failure, "The poor shall never cease out of the land" (15. 4, 5, 11). Failure and shortcoming on our part may lead to spiritual poverty and limitation of divine blessing.

At the trial of the Lord Jesus before the high priest, "many bare false witness against Him, and their witness agreed not together" (Mark 14. 56). On such evidence they asked that the Lord should be condemned and crucified, even though the law required at least two (confirmatory) witnesses, and also decreed that to the false witness should be done "as he had thought to do unto his brother" (17. 6; 19. 15-21). Verily, "by oppression and judgement He was taken away" (Isaiah 53. 8). J. B.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

(Chapters 1, 2, 3).

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

From Barry.—For forty years the people of Israel had been wandering in the wilderness and now had at last reached the borders of the land which God had promised to their fathers. Things then were different from what they had been when they first came out of Egypt. The people, to whom the promise had been confirmed (Exodus 3. 7, 8), had nearly all perished in the wilderness because of unbelief and sin, and now Moses was speaking to a new generation. Thirty-eight years before, the people should have gone in to possess the land, but of all the men who were numbered by Moses and Aaron in the wilderness of Sinai only two remained, Caleb and Joshua, men who believed that God was able to give them that which He had promised. Even Moses, that meek and faithful man, was not allowed to enter, because he had failed to give glory to God at Meribah (Numbers 20. 1-13), and, when he besought God to change His mind, God had to rebuke him (3. 26). Moses, knowing that his time was short, reviewed their journey through the wilderness, and showed the goodness, severity and faithfulness of God who had been with them all the way. For these people had not straggled through the wilderness, but had been led in an orderly manner, each camp in its order and with God as Leader. God delights in order.

Having thus looked back at the way God had led them, Moses sought to encourage them to put their confidence in God (3. 22), and not to be like their fathers, who had failed to enter into their rest because of unbelief (Hebrews 3. 16-19). May we ourselves, as we ponder God's dealings with Israel, be encouraged to strive to enter into His rest (Hebrews 4. 11).

D. H. Butler.

From Bradford, Halifax and Leeds.—Deuteronomy opens with a picture of the great multitude of Israel gathered before Moses, who was rehearsing to them the events of the wilderness journey and repeating the law (as the word "Deuteronomy" indicates) to this company; they were the children of those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. It embraces a period of about five or six weeks of the fortieth year of the journeyings of the children of Israel (1. 3; Joshua 5. 10).

It would appear that the people first asked for the spies to be sent before them (1. 22), and that, when Moses approved of their scheme, God intervened to command the kind of men to be sent: "every one a prince among them" (Numbers 13. 2). Yet the people were readily swayed by the evil report, "We are not able." Had not God said, "I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land" (1. 8, 21; 3. 18)? Despite the height and strength of the mighty giants of the land, God was able to overcome them and give the land to Israel. He had planned the way. Caleb the son of Jephunneh was an outstanding character among this great multitude, for he "wholly followed the LORD" (1. 36). *D.B.R.*

From Greenock.—Canaan speaks of heaven and its rest. To the children of Israel Canaan was the end of their wilderness journey: it was their rest, and was promised to them by God. They did nothing for it. We did nothing to merit a place in God's rest. We also look forward to "a better country, that is, a heavenly." Heaven will be ours wholly because of the work of Christ. Canaan also speaks of God's rest, which is ours to enter through obedience to the word of God. At Kadesh-barnea the LORD said, "Go up, take possession," but the children of Israel would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD their God. "And to whom swear He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief. Let us fear therefore." The carcasses of that generation fell in the wilderness.

There are really two journeys' ends in this portion—at Kadesh-barnea and at the crossing over the brook Zered. From Exodus 12. 2, Exodus 19. 1, Numbers 10. 11, Deuteronomy 1. 2, 6-8, it would appear that it was God's intention that the children of Israel should be instructed in the service of God for about a year in the wilderness, and then enter the land from Kadesh-barnea. But from Kadesh-barnea they wandered for 38 years in the wilderness until they crossed the brook Zered. It is interesting to compare the words used by God at the end of each of these journeys: in the former case, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain (Horeb)," and in the latter, "Ye have compassed this mountain (Seir) long enough." It would appear that the children of Israel were to have gone right into the land without fighting on the first occasion, that the Lord would have fought for them and they would not need to fight, but on the second occasion the terms of the commandment emphasize the fighting rather than the land. [1].

John H. Johnson.

EXTRACTS

From Edinburgh.—Though Moses desired to lead the people into their land, yet for his failure at Meribah he was precluded from doing so. He (and Aaron) failed to sanctify God in the midst of the people, and, in the words of the Psalm, it went ill with Moses for their sakes. The man who as a servant was faithful in all God's house ascended Mount Pisgah, and viewed

the land in every direction : but seeing and entering in are two different things (compare John 3. 3, 5). Instead, he was to hand the reins of leadership over to Joshua, and strengthen him for the task which lay ahead. Aaron and Moses seem to have died the same year (Numbers 33. 38, 39).

It would appear that the two kings, Sihon and Og, were among the strongest against whom Israel fought. In Psalm 135. 10, 11, they are termed "mighty kings," and in Psalm 136. 17, 18, "great kings" and "famous kings": but One infinitely greater and mightier was with Israel, and was able to destroy their strongest foes.

A. M. Hope.

From Melbourne.—The responsibility of the ten spies who turned the people from entering in was very great, and we felt that herein is a lesson for today, for there are many outside who would discourage seekers from linking themselves with the Fellowship. What responsibility is theirs ! It was suggested that the land speaks of the house of God, God's rest, into which it is ours to enter. The land was for a redeemed people, separated from Egypt and ready to obey the Lord. There was to be fighting for the land, and we were reminded that divine truth has had to be fought for, and it is necessary to contend earnestly for the Faith. It was weakness of faith that prevented Israel from entering previously. Only Joshua and Caleb, who reported faithfully and exhorted the people to go in and possess, remained to enter the land.

P. W. A.

From Barrhead and Paisley.—In the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy there is much material that is common to both. The name Deuteronomy means the second law, which probably explains why certain repetitions appear. Certain truths stated in Leviticus are amplified in Deuteronomy, and certain differences can be seen in what are otherwise parallel passages. These differences are probably explained by the fact that the law for the land required certain adjustments from that which pertained to the wilderness. For an example of this see Leviticus 17-34 and Deuteronomy 12-15.

For Joshua and Caleb and the new generation the end was just the beginning, the wandering was over, but the warfare was still ahead.

The journey might well have ended long before it did, if the people had obeyed God. In two years they had arrived at Kadesh-barnea on the border of Canaan, but it was here that the incident of the spies took place. Their subsequent sojourning in the wilderness was a punishment for their wilfulness, the punishment being on the basis of a year for each day the spies were in Canaan.

J. M. Gault.

From Wembley.—The end of the journey was the end of an education and the beginning of its use. It was a time for soldiers to take their places in the front ranks. The little ones (who, they said, would be a prey) were going in to possess the land. They were not to think themselves better than their fathers ; the previous calamity happened to a nation and not just to a generation, and the difference between failure and success was faith in God. A pious feeling that they were good enough to deserve His help would show a lack of understanding of His nature as fatal to their hopes as had been the lack of faith on the part of their fathers.

The end of the journey was the end of Moses' life work. One thing more the old man wanted, and it was denied him in spite of his pleading. The crowning achievement of the long years of patient work was a task reserved

for Joshua. Nobody is indispensable to God. There is pathos in Deuteronomy, in the picture of the old man graciously speaking his hope and love, his doubt and disappointment, without any attempt to conceal his feelings.
L.B.H.

From Crowborough.—Israel's failure to take God at His word and go in to possess the land, when God commanded them through Moses, led to God being wroth with them. Later they were willing to go up and fight; but the Lord was not with them. We must learn to distinguish between faith and presumption. Because of that sin that generation did not enter the promised land. Caleb and Joshua alone had the privilege, because they wholly followed the LORD. TO such men as these the end of the journey must have meant much. As they thought of God's goodness to them in the waste howling wilderness, and the way He had provided for them, their hearts must have been filled with thankfulness for past mercies, and courage for future warfare.
J. Robertson.

From Willington Quay.—Kadesh-barnea should have marked the end of the journey ; but, for the most of the children of Israel, the only fruits of the land they partook of were grapes brought back from God. Eshcol was very patient with them, and suffered their manners in the wilderness, that He might have a people for Himself dwelling in the land. For this He was willing to wait for forty years. Moses would have entered the land, but was unable ; they could but would not enter. Rahab was more confident, as a result of their victories, than they were themselves : she is commended for her faith.

As we read of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, having seen the land suitable for grazing and judging this to be enough, we thought of those who in our own day stop short of the promises. So few seek Zion's Hill; they are content with the outside place.
C.B.

From Southport.—There are people who doubt that Moses wrote the Book of Deuteronomy, yet we have evidence of his authorship in quotations to be found in the New Testament (e.g. Acts 3. 22, 7. 37). The book displays Moses' care for the people, as he earnestly reminded them of all that God had undertaken for them in the past and, in that light, exhorted them to believe God's word and power, so that they might go in and possess the land.

It was observed that, before the Israelites entered the land of Sihon king of Heshbon, they sent messengers with words of peace requesting food and water for money, and a passage through the land in exchange for a promise that they would follow the highway. This was a last minute appeal prior to the king of Heshbon being smitten down. God was offering him a final chance of accepting His offer before it was too late, just as, today, God is offering mercy and forgiveness through belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

Let us take encouragement from God's promise to Israel, " Howbeit there shall be no poor with thee ; (for the LORD will surely bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it " (Deuteronomy 15. 4).
W. S. Holden.

From Wigan.—That the LORD'S words, " This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the peoples . . . who shall hear the report of thee, and shall tremble " (2. 25), were fulfilled is seen in the words of Rahab in Jericho, " For we have heard . . . as soon as we had heard it, our hearts did melt " (Joshua 2. 10, 11). It would seem, from

Moses' reference to " that goodly mountain " (3. 25), that God had revealed to him the ultimate place of the Name, Mount Zion which God loved (Psalm 78. 68). Such phrases as, " The Lord shewed him " (34. 1), " I have caused thee to see it " (34. 4), and " Lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward " (3. 27), suggest that Moses was aided by God in his extensive view of the land. Although the privilege of entering was denied Moses, we see him in the land with Elijah and the Lord Jesus Himself (Matthew 17).
H. Caldwell.

From Glasgow.—The people of Israel added to their sin of unbelief that of presumption, in that, the LORD not being with them, they dared to go forward to fight. There was a complete defeat : the Israelites were driven back by the Amorites like men pursued by swarms of bees (1. 41-44). We need to pray like David, " Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins " (Psalm 19. 13).

After their long wanderings in the wilderness, Moses was directed once more to turn the steps of the people northward. They passed through the border of the Edomites, paying for food and water and taking heed not to contend with them: similarly through the lands of Moab and Ammon. But in the case of Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan, peaceful passage being refused, their cities were attacked and their land taken in possession. The rout of these two kings was particularly pointed out to Joshua as encouragement for the victorious days ahead, with the added encouragement, "The LORD your God, He it is that fighteth for you" (3. 22).

In contrast to this we have the sad record of Moses again being refused entry into " the good land." " Speak no more unto Me of this matter," said the LORD. Moses' sin at Meribah (Numbers 20. 12) was grievous to God, who is jealous as to precious types of His Son.
J.H.P.

From Nottingham.—Moses was not allowed to go over Jordan (3. 27). So, as he faced death, he spoke words of exhortation and remembrance to the people. Our thoughts turned to Acts 20. 17-38 and 2 Timothy 4, where we find the apostle considering the end of his course, and exhorting those who follow on to have the example of his life before them ; and we do well if we too have before us the example of the lives of godly men who have gone on before.

The latter part of chapter 3 causes us to think of Numbers 32, and Moses' question to the children of Gad and Reuben, " Shall your brethren go to the war, and shall ye sit here ? " and their reply (verse 17), "But we ourselves will be ready armed to go before the children of Israel." Although these two tribes and the half tribe of Manasseh were to possess lands east of the Jordan, they too, were to pass over as fighting men before the host of Israel, and return to their possessions when the final battles were over (Joshua 22. 4).
R. Hickling.

From Birkenhead.—We noted the divine principle regarding choice of leaders, no partiality in judgement, and God's way of judgement through plurality of leaders. As in the past, so today the responsibility of leadership and government of God's people is entrusted to the elders who take the lead. Moses as a leader learned to cast himself much upon God. As with Moses, leaders today may be hindered in their work, and may lose some of the joy of their labours, because of the murmuring and failure of those they seek to lead.

We note Moses made, as it were, a final effort to persuade God to allow him to see the goodly land (3. 25). We would judge he had often prayed that God would reverse the sentence passed on him at Meribah. The short-coming of the type is clearly seen : Moses, who represented the law, must give place to the leader Joshua, who would speak of grace. The law cannot bring us into rest, we need the true Joshua, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We also learn that people in high place are not immune from divine judgement. Miriam, Aaron, and Moses were all subject to God's law.

L. Bowman, R. Hyland.

From Brantford.—It is interesting to note that Moses addressed the children of Israel as though they were the same people who left Egypt, as also in Deuteronomy 5.3.

We had a difference of opinion concerning the appointing of men to assist Moses to judge the people (Exodus 18). Some thought that Moses erred in receiving and acting on the advice of Jethro, instead of seeking the LORD'S guidance, which he later had to do (Numbers 11). Others preferred the view that Moses acted quite rightly in taking Jethro's advice, and that what was instituted in Numbers had no bearing on the earlier arrangement, but had to do with rule rather than judgement [2].

R. Robinson, Jr., J.K.

From Liverpool.—Some suggest that Israel's wilderness journey speaks of the believer's life's journey, and the land speaks of our heavenly home. These forty years were years of discipline ; alas, those who were judged never entered the land. Again, there was fighting on the way; the land was gained by fighting, and even in the land itself battles were fought (7. 1, 2 ; Joshua 6. 20, 21). While we would not wholly refuse such views, we considered that in one application of it the land speaks of the "heavens." In Israel's case, possession depended upon faith in God's promise and obedience to His command. Being an earthly people, they had of necessity to fight with carnal weapons against physical enemies, who would contest their entering into the land. When we were born again, the new birth was of heavenly origin ; and we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1. 3, 20 ; 2. 6 ; 3. 10 ; 6. 12). Israel fought against earthly foes, but "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Our weapons and warfare are as presented in 2 Corinthians 10. 3-5. The Amalekites, who gained the victory over Israel when they presumed to go up to the top of the mountain, after they had been warned not to go up (Numbers 14. 41-45), are a type of the flesh in us, against which we must be constantly on our guard.

A. Horridge.

From Ilford.—God's purpose and desire was that His people Israel should enter into His rest. This is God's desire for His people today (Hebrews 3. 7—4. 3) : as with Israel of old, God desires we should go in and "possess the land." Many Christians today, when they see what God requires of them and the difficulties of the way, shrink back. But God will go before us, if we are prepared to follow. It is a good land, and there are difficulties in the way, but God is able. The centre of the spiritual heritage is God's house.

It was mentioned that some of those that entered into the land did not pass through the Red Sea. Those that left Egypt were redeemed by the shedding of the blood of the pascal lamb, and, typically, were baptised when they passed through the Red Sea. A.J.

From London, S.E.—It was necessary that the fighting men of Israel should engage in warfare. Under God's command they subjugated the nations and took their cities, threescore in number. Moses gave these lands to Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. Their wives and little ones and their cattle were to abide in their cities, which Moses had given them, but the men of valour were to go on until their brethren were given rest by the LORD in the land beyond Jordan. Then were they to return every man to his own possession.

It must have been a great joy to them to see the "land flowing with milk and honey," after so many years of wandering: but to possess it they must engage in warfare. The evil enemy must be overcome, for these nations could not share the inheritance of God's people.

Sin always obstructs the possession of God's promises. Joshua was to be their leader. Israel must be obedient, if they were to overcome and possess. God was gracious: "Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God, He it is that fighteth for you." We are exhorted, having the example of Israel before us, "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God" (Hebrews 3. 12). G. A. Reeve.

From Atherton.—Deuteronomy 1. 13-18 refers to wise and understanding men to whom leadership was delegated. Solemn in the extreme is the charge to such men that they be faithful and do the right. Is there a link between what we have here, and the advice of Jethro to Moses (Exodus 18. 13-27)? From a human point of view, Jethro's advice was sound and necessary, but the difficulty seems to lie in the fact that Moses accepted counsel from a stranger to Israel. It was suggested that Numbers 11. 11-30 gives God's provision in the matter of sharing the burden [3]. It is a divine principle that the cares, burdens, and indeed all responsibility involved in leadership should be shared, and not vested in one man.

That the Levites were not numbered with the rest of the tribes of Israel would account for the entry into the land of such men as Eleazar and Phinehas his son.

God's purpose, that Israel should not possess the lands of Edom, Moab, and of the children of Ammon, reveals His remarkable kindness and mercy to profane Esau and wayward Lot. We note in passing God's wondrous providential care and provision in a future day for the elect of Israel, since these lands have been determined as places of refuge for them in the time of Jacob's trouble (Daniel 11. 41).

God's refusal to permit Moses to enter the land reveals clearly that increased responsibility brings increased judgement when there is failure. Moses, the mediator who had interceded for others (Aaron, Miriam, and the people), and had been heard, was given a decisive "NO", when he besought for himself. G.A.J.

From Cowdenbeath.—From Horeb to Kadesh-barnea was eleven days' journey. Israel journeyed not by way of Mount Seir, but in accordance with God's will they journeyed by the wilderness of Paran. They arrived at Kadesh-barnea towards the end of the second year after the exodus from Egypt (2. 14). At that time the commandment went forth from God, "Send thou men, that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel" (Numbers 13. 2). From Deuteronomy 1. 22 we see that the people desired to send men, and this now had God's sanction (Numbers 13. 2). Ten of the twelve sent out brought back an evil report of the land (Numbers 13. 32), and this report the people believed: "They despised the pleasant land, they believed not His word" (Psalm 106. 24).

When the brook Zered was crossed, the journeyings had all but ended: the land lay ahead. To Sihon, king of Heshbon, a request like that to Edom was made, God's offer to Sihon being one of grace before judgement.; but Sihon refused Israel passage through his land. Israel then made war upon him, claiming thus their first possessions. The land of Og, king of Bashan, was also possessed.

No Ammonite nor Moabite was to be allowed to enter into the assembly of Jehovah, even to the tenth generation, because they met not the children of Israel with bread and water, and because they hired against them Balaam the son of Beor (23. 3, 2. 29, Numbers 22. 5, 6). *Iain T. H. Hunter.*

COMMENTS

[1] (Greenock).—It cannot be deduced from such a word as Deuteronomy 1. 30, that the LORD would have fought for Israel in the land without them fighting at all, a promise made at Kadesh-barnea, for the same thing is said to the children of the men who fell in the wilderness. See Deuteronomy 3. 22; 20. 3, 4.—*J.M.*

[2] (Brantford).—I think, perhaps, our friends have failed to notice the terms of the advice of Jethro, "If thou do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure" (Exodus 18. 23). Moses, I judge, did not act on Jethro's word alone. The appointment of the seventy elders to national leadership with Moses (Numbers 11. 16, 17) is quite another matter.—*J.M.*

[3] (Atherton).—See note in Brantford's paper.—*J.M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Cowdenbeath.—How are we to reconcile the two passages with regard to Israel's dealings with Edom (Numbers 20. 14-21, Deuteronomy 2. 2-7)?

Answer.—Our friends' difficulty is not clear. Perhaps they will explain.—*J.M.*

Question from Ilford.—Is there any counterpart today to the fact that God had allotted a portion to the children of Lot, and that the children of Israel were therefore warned not to vex Moab or Ammon?

Answer.—I cannot see any counterpart today, but the lands of Moab, Ammon and Edom are important as those in which the remnant of God's people shall find a place of safety in the future. See Daniel 11. 41.—*J.M.*

NOTES ON ROMANS.

CHAPTER 15.

Verse 8 : *For I say that Christ hath been made a Minister (Deacon) of the circumcision for the truth of God, that He might confirm the promises given unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy ; as it is written, Therefore will I give praise unto Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy name.*

Christ, who said that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (as a deacon), and to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20. 28), must needs become a Minister of the circumcision (that is, of the Jewish people), to implement divine truth in the promises made to the fathers. Hence " to the Jew first " is ever the order of the Scriptures. What God had said to Israel in the Old Covenant Scriptures could not fail, for the Scripture cannot be broken. The Lord said, " Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished " (Matthew 5. 18). Again, " Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets : I came not to destroy, but to fulfil " (verse 17). Not only was the Jew to be blessed in Christ's coming, but the Gentiles also came within the circle of blessing, as is clear from the song of David, when God delivered him from all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul (Psalm 18. 49) ; Christ would through Gentile hearts and mouths glorify God for His mercy, as it is even now.

Verses 10, 11, 12 : *And again He saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles ; and let all the peoples praise Him. And again, Isaiah saith, There shall be the root of Jesse, and He that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles ; on Him shall the Gentiles hope.*

As far back as Deuteronomy 32. 43 God showed through Moses that the Gentiles would share a common joy with the people Israel. In a small way this took place in the churches of God in the days of the apostles, when Jews and Gentiles found themselves in the Fellowship of God's Son and rejoicing in a Saviour and Lord who was common to both. But this scripture with the two others, from Psalm 117. 1, and Isaiah 11. 10, will have a much greater fulfilment in the Millennium, when peoples of Gentile nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship King Messiah, who is Jehovah of Hosts (Zechariah 14. 9, 16, 17).

Verse 13 : *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Paul desires that the God of hope, who is Himself looking forward to the realization through Christ of the prophecies and promises relative to the blessing of men the world over, and who fills His people with a like hope, would fill the Romans with all joy and peace in believing (blessed cordials to settle troubled and distracted minds). The object of this was, that they might abound (to be in abundance, affluence, overflowing) in hope, the mainspring of this being the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thus Paul brings to a glorious ending this part of the epistle (14. 1—15. 13) on the eating of meats, the bickerings over which, as between Jew and Gentile believers, could have resulted in the greatest discord, instead of being of one accord and glorifying God with one mouth.

Verse 14 : *And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.*

Paul was persuaded himself, whether from information gathered from others or otherwise, that the brethren in Rome were full, replete with goodness, and filled with knowledge. These two things are of the greatest importance in admonition. How poor a shape an ignorant man makes of admonition! Also, how few will take kindly to an admonition when goodness is not the motive in the person who admonishes ! Through the lack of goodness and knowledge admonition often fails in effect. Admonition literally means to place something on the mind. Paul was persuaded that the Romans were able to admonish one another, and this was no flattery on his part when he wrote this. Paul was ever ready to give credit where he thought it was due.

Verses 15,16: *But I write the more boldly unto you in some measure, as putting you again in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God, that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

Paul here refers to the same fact as stated in chapter 1. 5, " Through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all nations, for His name's sake." He was a minister (*Leitourgos*, a public worker or servant) of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles (Romans 11. 13), " ministering in sacrifice " (R.V.M.) as a priest the gospel of God. This word " ministering " here is not used elsewhere in the New Testament of a preacher of the gospel. Indeed the word is used here only. The word gives not the slightest support to would-be priests who minister at a material altar, either the Romish priests who professedly sacrifice bread and wine as the literal body of the Lord, or those who offer the emblems of bread and wine as a eucharist or thanksgiving, as in the churches of episcopacy. Paul ministered as a priest the gospel of God, as a public worker (*Leitourgos*), and the offering or oblation that he offered was not Christ, but Gentiles who have been saved by grace. This is something like that which will yet take place when the nations will bring the sons of Israel to Jerusalem as an offering unto the LORD (Isaiah 66. 20). Here Paul the apostle, a Jew by race, was bringing the Gentiles to God as an offering. Paul's offering of the Gentiles was made holy and acceptable to God by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

Verses 17, 18, 19 : *I have therefore my glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God. For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit; so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ;*

Paul's was no empty boasting or exulting in Christ as to what God had accomplished by his means. He would not dare to speak of God's work through others, but only what Christ had wrought through him for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and work, in the power of signs and wonders, and in the Holy Spirit. How much is packed into those few words of unremitting toil, day and night, of sufferings and privations, and of mighty signs and wonders wrought in the power of the Spirit ! With a wide

sweep of mental vision he sees again the lands through which he passed, bearing the life-giving story of the Cross. Scenes and places and persons stand out before him. He thinks of Jerusalem and round about, Antioch, Caesarea, etc., the centre of early work. Then he passes on to far-off Illyricum on the Adriatic Sea, and in all these he had fully preached the gospel of Christ. The day will declare the sowing and the harvest.

Verses 20, 21 : *Yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; but, as it is written, They shall see, to whom no tidings of Him came, and they who have not heard shall understand.*

Here was a high and glorious ambition, to take the gospel to lands and races where Christ was unknown. His object was not to build on the foundation of some other who had done the hard work of clearing and preparing the ground and laying the foundation of the work of God. Paul would do the heavy and often thankless task of the initial work by the Spirit's power. His purpose was to be a channel to carry the living water to those who had never heard of his Saviour, such as were not even like the Samaritan woman, who told the Lord, " I know that Messiah cometh . . . when He is come, He will declare unto us all things " (John 4. 25). She had heard of Him, but many had never heard.

Verses 22, 23, 24 : *Wherefore also I was hindered these many times from coming to you : but now, having no more any place in these regions, and having these many years a longing to come unto you, whensoever I go unto Spain (for I hope to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first in some measure I shall be satisfied with your company)—*

Here Paul refers again to what he said in chapter 1. 13, " I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto)." He had completed his work in and around Corinth, and says that he has no more place in these parts, and as he said before, " I long to see you " (1. 11). He anticipates going to Spain after he has reached Rome, and to be brought on his way thitherward by the assembly in Rome. It is doubtful if he ever reached Spain ; certainly the Scriptures cast no light on the subject. If he did it must have been between his first and second imprisonment in Rome.

Verses 25, 26: *But now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem.,*

This contribution or fellowship is referred to in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, and the journey to Jerusalem we have followed time and again, in Acts 20 and 21. The warning given to him by Agabus the prophet at Caesarea of what would happen to him in Jerusalem, and the touching scenes at Miletus, Tyre, and Caesarea, did not deter him from completing his journey with the brethren as they brought the gift from the assemblies in Achaia and Macedonia. He said, " What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart ? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus " (Acts 21. 13).

BIBLE STUDIES

•Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with ail readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

Some time ago we remarked on the need for accuracy in quotations and References : we feel we should now make further comment on these matters, because, of late, specially since we began our study of Deuteronomy, there has been a growing tendency in papers to make assertions without producing relevant and adequate Scriptural evidence. It may be that the length of the portions this year induces a tendency to write on generalities, and is therefore partly responsible for this lapse. Nevertheless, in *study* papers this is to be deprecated.

Formerly, certain students of the Scriptures were spoken of as " chapter and verse " men. In *Bible Studies* this " chapter and verse " treatment is appropriate : main points should be supported by references at least, or, -where they would better serve, by quotation and reference. We are fortunate in having a known system of chapters and verses to enable us to make brief and exact reference to particular scriptures, and we should make full use of this provision. " Pin-pointing " a reference was not always so easy. In answering the devil the Lord used the words, " It is written " (Luke 4. 4, 8); in the synagogue He had to find the place in the book of Isaiah (Luke 4. 17); and, in dealing with certain of His opponents, He used the form, " David himself saith in the book of Psalms" (Luke 20. 44). Peter, addressing brethren gathered together before Pentecost, had to use a similar form (Acts 1. 20). The learned Paul, too, had to use like phrases ; for, though in speaking publicly in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia he does refer to " the second psalm," he also refers to " another psalm " (Acts 13. 33, 35). The New Testament epistles provide further evidence that reference was much more difficult in these early days : Paul writes, " But one hath *somewhere* testified" (Hebrews 2. 6), and "He hath said *somewhere* . . . in this place again " (Hebrews 4. 4, 5).

That scripture interprets scripture by quotation, citation, and reference is evident, and it is not necessary to pursue this subject any further to point the exhortation to our fellow-students to cultivate accuracy and precision in quotation and reference, and clarity in citation. Diligent attention to these details should make our joint studies the more profitable, " The soul of the diligent shall be made fat " (Proverbs 13. 4). J.B.

THE TRUE BREAD

The principle disclosed in Deuteronomy 8. 3 has far-reaching lessons in our apprehension of " kingdom truth." In the wilderness, God humbled His people and caused them to hunger in order to teach them their greater need of dependence upon Him. The prospect of ease and plenty was before them, and it was necessary to superimpose on their false ideals of material gain the higher and more objective purpose of life in God, their King.

'The first temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ was an appeal to the material, when Satan referred to bread in the Lord's bodily hunger. The approach was indicative of the false premise that His kingdom could be established on a material basis : the Lord's devastating answer was,

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." During the Lord's ministry the multitude would fain have made Him King because He had fed them, but the Lord could never reign over such.

The same higher aim in life which had been set before Israel in that past day is seen set forth in beautiful simplicity in the words of the Master, "Seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6. 33). These things of which He spoke were those associated with eating, drinking and being clothed. The kingdom of God was to be the sphere in which the Lord's authority was supreme. This He revealed to His disciples in resurrection, when He taught them the things concerning the kingdom of God.

A revolution would be wrought in our lives if we grasped thoroughly the conception of the truth that man is to live by the word of God, and thus conform his life to the divine purpose. The snare of the evil one is to present to man the false ideology, that he is material only. It must be perceived that spiritual life, obtained through faith in Christ, and conformed to the word and will of God is of first importance. In this sphere, "The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life."
L.H.Taylor,

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY
THE LORD HE IS GOD
(Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7.)

From London, Ont.—Jehovah's desire for the children of Israel was that they might realize and know that Jehovah is God, for in so doing His people would live. Moses related before the people of God, how that God had brought them out of Egypt and carried them through the wilderness. Because of God's love for their fathers and love for them, God was present with them in power. God also promised to drive out nations from before them, that they might possess the land which was their inheritance.

God revealed to Moses His mind and will for the children of Israel, and Moses was responsible to God to reveal God's mind and will to the people. The children of Israel received the ordinances at the hand of Moses. They were to hearken to the statutes and judgements, and also to learn them and do them. The commandments are summed up in Deuteronomy 6. 5, "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The Lord Jesus referred to this as the first and great commandment.

By observing the ordinances, the children of Israel would be kept from the sin of the land of which they were to take possession. God forbade them to make a graven image to worship. If the children of Israel did this, much sorrow and affliction was promised them, for as God had said, "The LORD He is God; there is none else beside Him." He also said that He was a jealous God.

The question was asked, "Is there blessing in being obedient?" The answer is, Yes. God, who cannot lie, promised blessing as a reward, for obedience. Israel were to have blessing in the land: they were to be loved of God, blessed also in possessions, and full possession of the land was to be theirs. The nations would be driven out before them, for God would be with them in power. God also promised to preserve them alive, and that righteousness would be theirs.

Jehovah God still desires today that His people should follow Him with their whole heart; He is longing to pour out blessings upon them, both spiritual and material.
B. H. Millson.

From Edinburgh.—There is one God, and in this portion He is spoken of as a merciful God, a great and a terrible God, a consuming fire, and three times He is mentioned as being a jealous God. This is the God with whom we have to do. While we fail fully to comprehend His character, yet, like Israel, we have known His love and mercy. The secret of Israel's greatness lay in the fact that God gave them His law, even although they were the smallest nation. The law which He gave was a perfect law; it was their wisdom, their understanding and their righteousness. When He gave it to them, it was complete and man could not add or subtract one jot or tittle.

We have a strong three-fold cord here, namely, the commandments, the covenant, and the voice of the LORD God. This would bring home to Israel their obligation to keep, to obey and to hear. Many wrongly assert that there is only a negative path for the disciple to walk in, that he is not to do this and that. This is not borne out in these four chapters, for the words—hearken, fear, love, serve, do, keep, observe and teach (sharpen by repetition: Newberry) are positive: the negatives are tempt not, forget not, add not, and go not after other gods. "Thou shalt" seems to have occurred more frequently than "Thou shalt not" in God's commandments to His people, although in the Decalogue eight commandments were in the negative, while two commandments (commencing with the words "remember" and "honour") were the only positive ones.

God's greatness is seen in His perfect law, and His terrible wrath in the solemn judgement which followed disobedience to it, which also manifests His jealousy, His care for His word, and His jealousy of its integrity. His mercy is seen in His keeping and maintaining this small people. We too acknowledge our God as a God of mercy (Psalm 62. 12).

W. Muirhead.

From Paisley and Barrhead.—Israel were enjoined to look back and consider the great power of Jehovah in deliverance, and, in looking forward, they were to consider that the same power was promised to them to drive out the nations before them (4. 35-39). They were to lay it to heart that Jehovah (the covenant-keeping God) is God, as against the gods of the nations.

We referred to the incident of Elijah on Mount Carmel, when he challenged the prophets of Baal: the outcome was that Israel fell upon their faces, confessing, "the LORD, He is God."

In Deuteronomy 6. 4, 5 the first and great commandment, as stated by the Lord (Matthew 22. 37), is brought before us. It was suggested that this is in order of importance, rather than in the numerical order of the ten commandments. We read of the first commandment *with promise*, which is the fifth commandment of the ten. It was pointed out that the ten commandments were not the only ones enunciated by God. There is, for example, the commandment, "Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; and Him shalt thou serve, and shalt swear by His Name" (6. 13). "To swear," or to "seven oneself," probably means to have God constantly in remembrance by repetition. In this dispensation of grace, where love operates, this should be no longer necessary. Today the scriptural teaching seems to be plain, "Swear not at all; . . . But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay."

God in His works is orderly and systematic. He did not bring His people out of Egypt to blackness and darkness. He brought them out that He might bring them in. This is a divine principle of great importance (Deuteronomy 6. 23). God does not call His people out to a separated position, merely to be different from other people, but that they should render to Him service of the highest possible order.

The hornet (7/20) was the insignia of the Pharaohs who preceded the Israelites in raids on Canaan [1]. God planned to cast out the nations little by little, "lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee." *W. Terrell, Jr.*

EXTRACTS

From Wembley.—The first of the commandments given by God to Israel commenced with "I am the LORD thy God": and Israel had committed themselves to keep the commandments. Moses, however, understood the people; he knew their proneness to disobey, and, in particular, their proclivity towards other gods: hence he gave warnings against idolatry.

God had chosen Israel for His people, but they were slow to learn about God and His purposes with them. Many of them were unable to break away from the idea of a material object of worship.

Moses must have been saddened at the thought that after his death the people would utterly corrupt themselves, and evil would befall them (Deuteronomy 31). Moses further prophesied that, because of their idolatry, they would be scattered among the nations; but, when they should repent, God would be merciful to them. This admonition against idolatry cannot be dismissed as not relevant to the present day, for besides the crude and senseless worship of images, we are warned against covetousness which is idolatry (Colossians 3.5). *A.D.M.*

From Greenock.—There seem to be three settings for our subject—Egypt, Mount Sinai, and the land.

The LORD took Israel "from the midst of another nation, . . . by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors . . . that thou mightest know that the LORD He is God; there is none else beside Him" (4.34,35). Here the LORD is presented to the people as the One who delivered them out of the iron furnace. No other was able to do so, and no one could "stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"

As to Mount Sinai, Moses said, "Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He might instruct thee" (4. 36). "Know therefore this day, and lay it to thine heart, that the LORD He is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath: there is none else" (4. 39).

In the land enemies had to be dealt with. "Thou shalt utterly destroy them": no compromise in any way was to be made in this matter. Their graven images were to be dealt with in like manner. "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God." *John H. Johnson.*

From Glasgow.—In the portion before us this month the words of the LORD through Moses were such as to make their mark on the hearts and minds of the children of Israel, who were diligently to teach them to their children, so that in times to come they would ask, "What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgements, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?" It was God's will that the Israelites should reply, "We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt: and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: . . . and the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, . . . it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as He hath commanded us." To the godly Israelite there was great joy in meditating day and night in this law, and in the keeping of it there was great reward (7. 12-15).

From Southport.—By His covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17. 7) the LORD was the God of Israel and of each Israelite. Through Moses He renewed His covenant, saying, "I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Exodus 6. 7).

At the end of their wanderings Moses reminded the people that the LORD had brought them forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be the people of His inheritance (4. 20). The term "the iron furnace," in reference to their wretched condition in Egypt, implies great misery; it is repeated by Solomon (1 Kings 8. 51) and by Jeremiah (11. 4). It was foolish of them to turn back in heart, as they did so often, to the land of their affliction, and, in spite of all their past trials to be ready to entangle themselves again with the yoke of bondage. *Thomas Brown.*

From Atherton.—The law finds its excelling counterpart in the Faith, once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Indeed the ten words are for the most part embodied in the commandments of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and in Romans 8. 4 we read, "That the ordinance (requirement, R.V.M.) of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

The ten commandments (three Godward and seven manward) tell what God required of Israel Godward and manward. Worship is involved in the first two, and regard for one's neighbour is seen in the later commands.

There seems to be a clear change in the command to observe the sabbath: the Lord's day is the day of the Lord's resurrection. The Holy Spirit makes significant use of these two days of the week in Luke 23. 56, 24. 1. Pentecost, the great initial day in the divine outworking of the purpose of God in churches of God, was on the first day of the week, the Lord's day. Acts 20. 7 provides an example of disciples gathered together to break bread on the first day of the week. John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (Revelation 1. 10). The Lord's day responsibility, obligations and privileges are of the highest order; and it is desirable that we should avoid the use of the Lord's day for work or pleasure, an increasing practice in the world today. We should observe the Lord's day as unto the Lord, a day set apart specially for His service. *J. K. Southern, G.A.J.*

From Birkenhead.—The statutes of God are here viewed as permanent, as it were engraved in stone, while the judgements express divine deliberation, a verdict judicially pronounced. Moses encouraged the nation to become great, subject of course to their observance of the will of God. The greatness of any nation lies in part in its statutes and judgements.

In these chapters we have a repetition of the law. It was first given (Exodus 20) early in their journeyings, but here it is repeated in the fortieth year of their sojourn in the wilderness. The law was no vain thing, it was their life. The apostle Paul argued that through the law cometh the knowledge of sin (Romans 3. 20), and again "I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7. 7). The law was also our tutor to bring us to Christ. God's desire was that His people might fear Him and keep His commandments.

Israel were told of seven nations greater and mightier than themselves, who would be delivered into their hand to be utterly destroyed. God was jealous lest Israel should make covenant with other nations, and expressed in no uncertain way His mind in relation to their sons and daughters making marriages with the sons and daughters of these nations. The question of

mixed marriages has not changed with the passage of time : God's will regarding His people today is expressed in the words of the apostle, they should marry " only in the Lord." *L. Bowman, R. Hyland.*

From Crowborough.—The children of Israel were asked to remember that they had heard God's voice, but had not seen His form. This was opposite to idols, which had form but no voice. The LORD was a jealous God, and would not tolerate idolatry.

God remembered the covenants He had made with this people, and would keep true to His promises. He required that His people should do the same, and give to Him their heart, soul and might. Israel knew that their God was a triune God, of three Persons, but one in nature and attributes. They were instructed to teach their children, speak of their God in the home, and as they walked by the way. God asked much of this people, but He promised great blessings, if they would obey. *S.S.*

From Willington Quay. Idolatry and forgetfulness were temptations against which Moses sought to warn Israel. At Horeb they had seen no form, when they heard the LORD'S voice ; and, lest they be tempted to worship and serve that which they could see with their eyes, graven images and the like were not to be found amongst them. The antidote for forgetfulness was a continual remembrance of the words of the LORD (6. 6-9). Israel failed in both of these matters, bringing sorrow to themselves and also grieving God's heart; we can learn from their experience.

Whilst it was essential that Israel should always remember that the LORD was their God, they were also reminded of what they were unto Him. They were an holy people unto the LORD, a peculiar people unto Himself. Such a privileged position was not owing to any merit on their part, but because the LORD loved them, and chose them. Similarly, Peter reminded those who had once been no people of the blessed position to which they had been brought, " a people for God's own possession " (1 Peter 2.9). *K.R.*

From St. Helens.—In chapter 4 we find Moses speaking as a teacher. By reference to the written law and God's former acts, he set God's statutes and judgements before the people and the men chosen to lead them into the land. The threefold picture is of a wonderful God, a great nation, and a lovely land. Chapter 5 makes plain that Moses was teaching not new doctrines, but the old covenant of Sinai, with its vital lessons as to the holiness and goodness of God, and their own sinfulness and weakness.

Chapter 6 contains the great commandment : " Hear, O Israel : the LORD our God is one LORD : and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." To be whole-hearted and undivided in soul, and mighty in their love to God was to possess and exercise the highest quality of love. Furthermore, this would be an undying theme to teach to their children. Moses warned them of the danger of forgetting God in the peace and prosperity promised to them : he reminded them that the LORD is the faithful God (7.9). *P. Howarth.*

From Nottingham.—We noted that God particularly directed that Israel must not add to, or take away from, His word. A similar warning is repeated in Proverbs and in the book of the Revelation : thus we have the matter mentioned in the early Scriptures, in the middle and at the end of the Bible. Here is a lesson for us today. God would have us be careful not to add to, or subtract from, His word, but cleave to it as it stands. There

are some who tamper with the word of God and wrest it to suit their own purposes, but God's people must obey His law as He has given it. We should remember the conditional aspect of the house of God ; we must hold fast—" Whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness " (Hebrews 3.6).

R. Hickling.

From Barry.—Moses said of God, " the LORD is one LORD " (6. 4), and He is a devouring fire, and a jealous God (4. 24). While great and terrible, yet He is merciful (4. 31), one who loves, and a faithful God (7. 8, 9).

Wonder of wonders ! that this great God should seek out this rebellious and stiffnecked people Israel. David exulted, saying, " Thy gentleness hath made me great " (Psalm 18. 35).

God, knowing full well man's heart, spoke many times against graven images and yet Aaron fashioned a golden calf for the people to worship (Exodus 32. 4). Later in Israel's experience, they burnt incense to the brazen serpent which Moses had made, and which Hezekiah called Nehushtan and brake it in pieces (2 Kings 18.4). In the Lord Jesus, God was manifest in flesh, and today some worship images supposed to be likenesses of the Man Jesus, and others of His human mother. Such is the tendency of the flesh.

E.S.T.

From Ilford.—Moses had had a revelation of God, as the " I AM," and He was anxious that the people whom he had led should acknowledge the same One as their God, as the margin and alternative renderings to verse 4 clearly indicate.

That God is a jealous God is repeated (5. 9, 6. 15). God will not allow His honour to be given to another. Satan desired that the Lord Jesus should bow down and worship him ; in so doing he was seeking to usurp the honour due to God alone.

In chapter 7, besides being referred to repeatedly as the LORD their God, the LORD is brought before them by Moses as the faithful God (7. 9), the covenant keeping God (7. 12), the delivering God (7. 16), and a great God and a terrible (7. 21).

S. J. Jarvis.

From Kingston-on-Thames.—Israel knew God as Jehovah, the self-existing One, eternal Almighty God. " God " here is " Elohim," the plural of the root word " Eloah," the object of worship. There seems to be a compelling instinct in man which drives him to worship something. The nations in the land of Canaan had their own gods. The LORD through Moses warned the people against worshipping graven images (4. 15-17), and reminded them that they saw no form in Horeb (4. 12, 15). God cannot be described by human imagination. He is " the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God " (1 Timothy 1.17).

W. Dawn.

From Portstewart.—The name by which God was known to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was *El Shaddai*, and He said, " By My Name JEHOVAH I was not known to them (Exodus 6. 3). The name Jehovah means the same as " I AM THAT I AM," the name God told Moses to give to Pharaoh as the name of the God of Israel. God did not reveal Himself as Jehovah until the people of Israel had been redeemed from Egypt, and had shown themselves to the nations around as a people gathered together unto Him and desiring to worship Him [2].

We noticed that when God sealed the covenant of the land with Abram (Genesis 15. 17), a flaming torch passed between the separated pieces of

the sacrifice. Also when God gave Moses the promise of the redemption of Israel from Egypt, it was from the midst of a bush clothed with non-consuming fire [3]. Further, when God gave the law to Israel, the mountain from which He spoke was clothed with fire.

A. T. Gault.

From Liverpool.—The expression "The LORD He is God" occurs thrice in our portion (4. 35, 39 ; 7.9). It was vital that the people should realize that Jehovah (He who is) is Elohim (the object of all worship). They worshipped none other than the great I AM. They were indeed privileged (4. 7). The people realized that they were privileged above all peoples, for God had spoken to them out of the fire, and they lived (5. 26). God knew their thoughts, and desired that they would always fear and obey Him (5. 29). The repetition of such expressions as "the LORD thy God" reminded us that He was the God of the people, and yet Moses spoke of Him as "my God" (4. 5), a God of individuals, who blessed those who clave unto Him (4. 4).

"Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah" (6. 4)—One LORD, yet still the triune God ! (Genesis 1. 26). Jehovah was ever in their midst (6. 15), and their righteousness was to be in keeping all His commandments (6. 25). They were commanded to be separate ; and would be blessed, if they remained faithful to God.

God's faithfulness, mercy and love extend to us today (7. 9). He redeemed His ancient people by blood, and He has redeemed us by the blood of His own Son. Jehovah brought His ancient people out, that He might bring them in (6. 23). So God today graciously saves men from sin and from the world, that He might bring them unto Himself and to His house.

A. P. Sands,

From Cowdenbeath.—Israel could not see God, but they could hear Him (4. 12). Howbeit, they declined to hear the voice of God from the midst of the fire (4. 33), and chose rather that Moses should mediate for them (5. 27). Moses possessed an intimate (though limited) knowledge of God (3. 24). Consequently he spoke correctly and intelligently about God, revealing in what he said something of the character of the One with whom Israel had to do. We should imitate Moses in this important matter, and seek to acquire a true knowledge of God, a knowledge founded upon His word. We can know progress in acquiring this knowledge to which there is no finality (1 Corinthians 15. 34, Colossians 1. 10, 2 Peter 3. 18, Ephesians 2. 7).

It was necessary for the people to hearken to the voice of God (4. 1 ; 5. 1 ; 6.3) and to obey. Obedience is what God asks, and springs from the fear of the LORD (5. 29). In the life of the believer the fear of the LORD is no less important today (1 Peter 1. 17).

The importance of God's word was also stressed to Israel, and God desired that it should occupy an important place in their lives : theirs was the responsibility to disseminate the knowledge of God by the teaching of their children (4. 9-10 ; 6. 20). As then so now, responsibility is placed on us to pass on the word of God (2 Timothy 3. 15 ; 2. 2).

A warning is also given of the danger that in their prosperity they would forget God (6. 10-12). Let us beware that times of material prosperity do not become with us days of spiritual poverty. Israel's possession of the land was to be gradual (7. 22); it is so with ourselves ; we gain our inheritance little by little (Acts 14.22; 20.32). Obedience to the word of God gains us our present inheritance.

Robert Ross.

THE END OF THE JOURNEY.

(Chapters 1, 2, 3.)

From Toronto, Ont.—We had some discussion over the typical teaching of the wilderness and the land as representing the experiences of the people of God today. The wilderness is the place of learning. It was here that legislation was given them for their guidance in the land. It was here also that God was revealed to them as their Provider, their Defender. Then, on their entrance into the land, they came to the sphere of their warfare, which was subsequently to become the place of their rest. Their warfare to obtain their inheritance is typical of our wrestling against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Both the wilderness experience and the wrestling in the heavenly places may be ours simultaneously, though they were consecutive experiences to the people of Israel.

In reference to the choosing of spies, Numbers tells us that Jehovah told Moses to send men that they may spy out the land (Numbers 13. 2), while Deuteronomy 1. 22 says that the people themselves suggested sending the spies. It is probable that these two passages are complementary. There is a kindred situation when the people asked for a king.

D. M. Seath, S. K. Seath.

COMMENTS.

[1] (Paisley and Barrhead).—It may be as our friends say, that the hornet was the insignia of the Pharaohs, but the hornet mentioned in Deuteronomy 7. 20 and elsewhere is that vicious variety of wasp whose sting needs to be felt to be understood. By these the LORD was going to drive the nations out of Canaan.—*J.M.*

[2] (Portstewart).—The name LORD (Jehovah) is frequently used in Genesis, from chapter 2 onward. It is last used by Jacob when he was dying, in the words, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD" (Genesis 49. 18). What God meant by not being known as Jehovah to the patriarchs was that that was not His covenant name. His covenant name to them was *El Shaddai*.—*J.M.*

[3] (Portstewart).—See Jeremiah 34. 18, 19 as to the meaning of the furnace and the flaming torch passing between the pieces of the covenant sacrifices. Connect Hebrews 9. 16-18; the significance is that those who entered into covenants passed figuratively through death. This the Lord passed through in awful reality, hence the new covenant is now effective and in operation in all its conditions, conditions both unchangeable and conditional.—*J.M.*

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

Question from Kingston-on-Thames.—In 5. 9 we read that God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, but in Ezekiel 18. 20 that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither the father the iniquity of the son. How can these be reconciled?

Answer.—In the case of Ezekiel 18. 20 and contiguous verses, no sinner dies and is eternally lost because his father was a sinner before him. Each will suffer his own punishment for his own sin. But in regard to Deuteronomy 5. 9, it is a fact that many people in this life suffer through the wrong-doing of others. The men of Israel who entered Canaan might have been in the land 38 years before but for the rebellion of their parents. See Numbers 14. 33. Daniel, one of the most faithful of God's servants, spent his days in Babylon away from the place of the Name, and suffered much because of the sin of others. One might multiply instances of others who suffered through their fathers' sins. See that we each leave a goodly heritage behind and not one of sorrow.—*J.M.*

NOTES ON ROMANS

Verses 27, 28, 29 : *Yea, it hath been their good pleasure ; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by you unto Spain. And I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.*

He again refers to the contribution of Achaia and Macedonia. He views it as the discharging of a debt, for it was from Jerusalem that the gospel issued forth to the Gentile world. As they were partakers of the regenerated Jews' spiritual things, it was fitting that they should minister to their carnal needs. He again alludes to his purpose to visit Spain, but little did he know how he would come to Rome, that it would be as Rome's prisoner to stand trial before Caesar. One thing he did know, that when he came he would come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ, even as he said, to " impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (1. 11).

Verses 30, 31, 32 : *Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I maybe delivered from them that are disobedient in Judaea, and that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints ; that I may come unto you in joy through the will of God, and together with you find rest.*

The love of the Spirit is viewed by some as equivalent to the love of God shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5.5). It is a unique statement, but it seems to me that the words of the hymn convey the truth:—

" Love of Father ! Love of Son !
Love of Aye-abiding One ! "

For as the Father is Love, so the Son is Love, and so also the Spirit is Love, for " God is Love." The love of the Spirit is not simply God's love diffused by Him in the hearts of saints, but, as I see it, it is the personal love of the Spirit. Paul greatly valued the prayers of the saints, and here he asks them to strive with him in prayer that he might be delivered from them that were disobedient in Judaea. He may have had the Jewish people in general in mind, but I am disposed to the thought that they were the disobedient that were in the churches of God in Judaea, for he adds " that my ministration . . . may be acceptable to the saints." He was not certain evidently what the reaction would be by certain Jewish believers in view of their suspicions about Paul's teaching amongst the Gentiles. Indeed we learn from Acts 21. 20, 21, that his trouble began with the Jews that believed, whom James said, " were all zealous for the law." In order to placate these believers who had not appreciated fully the change from law to grace, and who still clung to the temple ritual, Paul, on the advice of James and the elders, submitted to legal purification, and was found in the temple. Though what he did may have been simple enough in itself, as attesting that the reports about his teaching were not true, and that he walked orderly keeping the law, yet what emerged from it had dire results. See the whole of the narrative in Acts 21. 17-36. The condition of things may have worsened in Jerusalem since the time of the council of the apostles and elders, in Acts 15. At any rate Paul was apprehensive of how things were in Judaea, and he had need to be. From the Judaizers the most of his troubles arose. Paul passed through storms both spiritual and literal before he reached Rome. But like a wearied warrior, he thought of coming to Rome with joy and finding rest with the saints there.

Verse 33 : *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

Many things arose in Paul's day, and arise also in ours, to destroy harmony, but if the God of peace is with us He can and will pour oil on troubled waters in assembly life and give that peaceful concord that leads to that which is both good and pleasant—brethren dwelling together in unity (Psalm 133). Amen.

CHAPTER 16.

Verses 1, 2 : *I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is in Cenchreæ : that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need of you: for she herself also hath been a succourer of many, and of mine own self.*

Here is the only specimen letter of commendation in the New Testament for saints moving from assembly to assembly. Reference is made to the practice of saints bearing letters of commendation as they moved about, in 2 Corinthians 3.1. It is generally thought that Phoebe was the bearer of Paul's letter to Rome, and this can be understood to have been the case, seeing that her commendation is part of the epistle. She was a *deacon* (*Diakonos*) of the church in Cenchreæ; Cenchreæ was five to ten miles east of Corinth, on the other side of the isthmus of Corinth. Many have asked what the work of a female deacon is. The passage supplies the answer. "She . . . hath been a succourer of many." As she had succoured many, now, as she is coming to Rome, a stranger in the great imperial city, she is to be assisted in whatsoever matter she may be in need. She was to be received worthily in the Lord, being herself subject to Him, by those who were also subject to Him.

Verses 3, 4, 5 : *Salute Prisca and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks ; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles : and salute the church that is in their house. Salute Epaenetus my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.*

This worthy pair who come into view in the Scriptures, in Acts 18. 1-3, in Corinth, in whose house Paul abode, because he and Aquila were of the same trade and wrought together as tentmakers, moved with Paul to Ephesus, and there he left them (Acts 18. 18-21). In 1 Corinthians 16. 19 we find a church meeting at their house. Now they are back in Rome, though they had been expelled with the Jews from Rome by Claudius, and we find that also in Rome a church (part no doubt of the church of God in Rome) is meeting at their house. Where was it that they exposed their throat or neck to the executioner on behalf of Paul? The Scriptures do not reveal where this noble act was done. Like so many other acts of self-sacrifice, it awaits the day when the Lord will reward His saints for what they have done for His Name's sake. Here is the only case in the New Testament where thanks are given to saints. Paul and the churches of the Gentiles gave thanks to this worthy pair, not for them. They were to be saluted, and also the church at their house, by the saints at Rome. The saints were also to salute Epaenetus, whom Paul calls "my beloved," who was the first of the Asian (the Roman province of Asia) converts to be reached by the gospel, perhaps at the time of Acts 18.19.

Verses 6,7 : *Salute Mary, who bestowed much labour on you. Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me.*

. Here is another of the Marys of Scripture, and she was, like the rest, a devoted woman to the Lord. She laboured much, toiled hard, for the Roman saints. Andronicus and Junias were Paul's blood-relations, and they were also his fellow-prisoners, taken prisoner with him when the battle had raged fiercely somewhere, where we know not. These kinsmen were of note among the apostles, though they were not apostles. There is something very precious in the fact that the gospel had been fruitful among Paul's relations, and that these men were in Christ, that is, they were saved before Paul. No doubt in his mad, saint-hunting days, he would have cast them into prison as well as any other, if they had come in his way. Now all this is changed.

Verses 8, 9, 10 : *Salute Ampliatus my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbanus our fellow-worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles the approved in Christ. Salute them which are of the household of Aristobulus.*

What was it that caused Paul to make such differences, as "my beloved in the Lord," my "fellow-worker in Christ," "my beloved," "the approved (or tested) in Christ"? We shall not know until the day of reward, perchance, but no doubt as these men's names were read out the differences were understood in the church in Rome. Who was Aristobulus, mentioned only here in the New Testament? It has been suggested that he was a grandson of Herod the great, a prince who lived and died in Rome. There is no Scriptural authority for this. Was he a subject of grace as was Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod the tetrach? (Acts 13. 1). We cannot tell. His household, or certain of them, were in the church in Rome.

Verses 11,12,13 : *Salute Herodion my kinsman. Salute them of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute Persis the beloved, which laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus the chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.*

Here is another of Paul's relations, Herodion, but he remarks nothing about him. Some have thought that Narcissus was a well-known and powerful freedman of Claudius, who was put to death by Nero, but it has been pointed out that this might not be, because he was put to death three years before the writing of this epistle to Rome. Whether this was that freedman or not, there were those of the household of a Narcissus in the Lord. Then we have references to two women (possibly) who labour in the Lord, and to a sister, Persis the (not "my") beloved, who laboured much in the Lord. Then we have the touching remark concerning Rufus, the chosen in the Lord, about "his mother and mine." Was this Rufus the son of Simon of Cyrene, who was compelled to bear the cross of Jesus? (Mark 15. 21). If he was, what memories he would have of his father's deed! The mother of Rufus was also in Rome. His mother was "my mother" too, says Paul, a mother without a name who had mothered Paul as her own son, and for whom Paul had the greatest affection.

J.M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

Caleb the son of Jephunneh, a prince of the tribe of Judah (Numbers 13. 2, 3, 6; 34. 18, 19), faithful spy, and warrior unto his old age (Joshua 14.10,11), is mentioned once only in Deuteronomy (1. 36). Caleb indicates "forceful," and Jephunneh "preparedness" (Strong). These two characteristics are manifested in the history of this worthy man, who, depending on strength from the LORD, was forceful in his assurance that Israel were well able to possess the land (Numbers 13. 30), and who appears to have been in a state of readiness for immediate assault upon the nations in Canaan. Also, forty-five years after the promise had been given, he was forthright in claiming the right to take by force the possession he prized as from the LORD. God was with His faithful servant and gave him victory. Caleb did not wait passively for his inheritance to be taken in the general victory of Israel over the Canaanites, but fought in person to take possession of that which the LORD had promised him.

Though the Lord Jesus Christ promised that the people of God in this dispensation should be led by the Holy Spirit into all the truth (John 16.13), this promise does not condone passivity, indolence, indifference or self-complacency. We must, Caleb-like, be forceful and active in taking possession: we can only hope for full blessing where we "spy out" and take by dint of close study of the Scriptures for ourselves. While we should learn all we can from those who go before us in the Lord, we must go over the ground for ourselves. Learning the will of God takes definite, purposeful, persistent effort and involves careful close study of the Scriptures by every generation of the Lord's people, and much prayerful meditation. The use of commentaries, and the reading of sound periodicals like *Needed Truth* and *Bible Studies*, are helpful, but they cannot take the place of first-hand reading of the Scriptures themselves. We would encourage our fellow-students of the Scriptures to be attentive in their reading of the Scriptures (1 Timothy 4. 13), to be active like Caleb, and to continue so doing as long as it shall please God to give the necessary strength. We may not be favoured to be fighting-fit to eighty-five years of age, as Caleb was, but we can at least buy up the present opportunity (Ephesians 5. 16, Mg.). Caleb fought for Hebron, that it should be an inheritance for his children for ever (Numbers 14. 9), and we should bear in mind that our labour of today may be to the blessing of those that shall follow. J.B.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY ALL THE COMMANDMENTS (Chapters 8, 9, 10).

From Wigan.—The law was first spoken by God then written, for God said, "Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel" (Exodus 34. 27). We are reminded of our own solemn obligation to heed the things that were heard (Hebrews 2. 1, 2).

The ten commandments written on two tables of stone, called the tables of the covenant (Deuteronomy 9.9), were the grounds on which Israel could be accepted by God in their peculiar relationship to Himself (Exodus 19. 5, 6). They were the tables of the testimony (Exodus 32. 15, 16), testifying to the righteousness of God. If Israel had kept their side of the agreement, theirs would have been a good testimony in the sight of all the peoples, a threefold testimony (4. 6-8). The commandments were to govern their whole life, the first three to govern their attitude towards God, and the remaining seven their attitude towards their fellows. The Lord said to the Pharisee, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law" (Matthew 22. 37-40).

It must have been sad for Moses to recall the incident of the golden calf, when the first commandment was broken before Israel had received the tables of the covenant. Some question the action of Moses in throwing down and breaking the tables of stone: others, thinking it was in keeping with what had taken place at the bottom of the mount, look for some further significance [1]. God's instructions to Moses, "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first," and the writing according to the first writing (10. 1, 4), would shew that there could be no question of a different covenant or different commandments. The placing of the unbroken tables of the covenant in the ark would remind us of Him, who loved the Jaw of His God, of whom we read, "The law of His God is in His heart" (Psalm 37. 31), also of the new covenant being written on Israel's heart (Hebrews 8. 10).
J.H.

From Liverpool.—The importance of the obligations confronting Israel are clearly brought before the people by Moses, who reminds them that possession of the land and blessing therein are dependent upon their observance of all the commandments. The solemnity of this occasion, after nearly forty years in the wilderness, must have been clearly understood. No doubt, many would turn back in thought over the years to Sinai, where those who had perished in the wilderness had promised, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do" (Exodus 19. 8, 24. 3) ". . . and be obedient" (24. 7). A former generation having failed, the experience of the wilderness, its proving, humbling, chastening experience, was God's corrective. Having known God's power and ability to keep them, His care for them, His gracious provision during the wilderness journey, Moses lays before the people the richness of the land, and gives a solemn word of warning, "Beware lest thou forget the LORD."

Israel was set aside because of their wickedness in rejecting the word of God and the Christ of God: we need to beware lest we should fall away from the living God. We too through stubbornness and rebellion can cease to be God's people (Hebrews 4).

The tables of stone upon which God's finger had written the ten commandments were to be carried by the priests. No doubt stone, a heavy commodity, was used to remind them of the weighty and solemn issues in God's law [2]. Many today accept salvation, but God's commandments are too "heavy" for them, too restricting. Love to the Lord can only be shown by the keeping of His commandments (John 14. 15, 23; 15. 14). Sad it is that many children of God are being ensnared in the systems of Christendom.

Levi had no portion nor inheritance. How then were the Levites to be cared for? The answer is in the same verse, "the LORD is his inheritance" [3]. This would teach us that we have an obligation in bringing our

" tithes " to supply, under God, those " out in the work " today, who answer in some measure to Levi of old.

Ken Home, A.H.

From Atherton.—Three of God's purposes in leading Israel through the wilderness were (1) to teach them humility, a constant and lifelong lesson, (2) to prove, or put them to the test, and (3) to see the response of their hearts, obedience being the grand and final objective (8. 3). The recounting of the whole wilderness journey reminds us of the judgement-seat of Christ, at which we shall be enabled to view the guiding hand of the Almighty since the day we were redeemed. If here and now we fail to appreciate His all-wise plan, whether in adversity or prosperity, in suffering or joy, in sickness or health, we shall undoubtedly realize in that day the need for these things, and the unerring skill that has so planned. Meanwhile the chastening hand of our God upon us is calculated to lead us nearer to the accomplishment of His good and acceptable and perfect will; that having passed through the vale of experience, and learned sobering lessons accordingly, we may go on from strength to strength with increased yearnings and deeper desires after God and His dwelling place (Psalm 84. 4-7).

Again Israel's experiences find their counterpart in ours as we traverse this desert scene. 1 Corinthians 10.1-13 is helpful here. Before they entered Canaan, Jordan must be crossed. As Jordan speaks of death and judgement, we see typically presented (1) the pilgrim's life on the earth, a wilderness experience, (2) Jordan, death, and (3) Canaan, heaven. Thus, in this sense, Canaan is a type of heaven ; but we submit that it is also a type of the Fellowship [4]. The blessings of 8. 7-9 would tell of spiritual blessings, the fulness of which is alone realised as we bow our hearts to the will of God.

A divine principle is clearly seen in 8. 10, that praise and thanksgiving should ever flow from thankful hearts, because of God's gracious blessings to us. "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Psalm 103).

E. Birchall, G.A.J.

EXTRACTS.

From London, S.E.—God gave incentive to His people by describing to them the glorious resources of the land which they were to possess, " Thou shalt eat and be full " (8.10). There is great reward in the doing of the will of God. The intensely solemn warning, "Beware lest thou forget the LORD thy God" (8. 11-14), reminds us that it is easy in times of prosperity to become self-satisfied and turn from God's will and teaching ; our thoughts turned to Hebrews 2.1-3, " Lest haply we drift away." "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God" (8. 18). All our blessings and possessions as the Lord's people come from Him. This knowledge should ever keep us in a condition of humble obedience to our God.

In 9. 25, 26, there is a beautiful revelation of love, compassion, concern and yearning for the restoration and blessing of God's people in the prayer of Moses. He is here a type of our great Intercessor who feels so poignantly for the failings of His people in the present day. Let us not grieve Him who loves us with such an intense and heavenly love, but let us fulfil the complete purpose of our God in delivering us from so great a thralldom and bringing us in to such limitless and inexhaustible spiritual possessions and blessings.

Geo. S. Pain.

From Glasgow.—God called upon His people to remember the past, lest they should fall into the same pitfalls as did their fathers. These forty years are described in Scripture as "long years" in which God suffered their manners. In sharp contrast to their behaviour, there stands out the faithfulness of God. Day by day they were supported by manna from heaven,

and water from the rock. As they are about to enter upon their inheritance, and in view of the different character of living in the land, God would have them keep in remembrance the wilderness experience, lest when they should be full with the blessings of the land, their hearts should be forgetful of the LORD their God, who brought them out of the bondage of Egypt, and through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and wherein was no water. These were their " schooldays," in which God chastened them to see what was in their hearts. He humbled them, and their remembrance of it would tend to keep their hearts from pride. The God who brought them through the desert was alone able to give them power to inherit the goodly land. No haughty spirit was to be in them, as God dispossessed the nations of the land before them, lest, forgetting the LORD their God, they should also perish as the inhabitants of the land did.

R. Shaw.

From Crowborough.—The Lord had miraculously sustained and nourished His people for forty years. " Man doth not live by bread only " (8. 3) : Moses was sustained by God for two periods of forty days each. Some felt this was God's way of bringing this truth home to their hearts. Self righteousness was to be abhorred by God's people (9. 4, 5). In the commandments emphasis is on the words "for your good." We wondered how many really ever appreciated this.

B. V.F.

From Edinburgh.—" Remember and forget not " can be written in large letters over chapters 8, 9 and 10. The people were not to forget that they were once strangers in Egypt; they were to remember all the blessings they had received and all the way of their journey. In looking back over the way they could now see that many afflictions had really been blessings in disguise. Under the mighty hand of God they were humbled, they were suffered to hunger, they were fed with manna ; humbled, that they might be emptied of self and filled with His goodness ; suffered to hunger that they might hunger and thirst after righteousness. All such things came upon them that they might walk in separation, wholly dependent upon God who led them.

Let us look to ourselves. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. It is the same Person who commands His people today to walk in humility, to hunger and thirst after righteousness that they might be filled, and to feed on the spiritual food of heaven.

James Paterson.

From Bradford, Halifax and Leeds.—Through observing God's commandments there was great blessing for Israel. These laws were not burdensome, as the scribes and Pharisees made them, but as the Lord Himself said, " Ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light " (Matthew 11. 29, 30).

It was not their own righteousness that had brought them through, for had not God nearly given them up, but through the pleading of Moses, and because of the covenant with Abraham, Israel was preserved. " Yet they are Thy people and Thine inheritance, which Thou broughtest out by Thy great power and Thy stretched out arm " (9. 29). The greatness, might, majesty and power of God (10. 17) are manifest from the fact that throughout all the journey Israel's clothing waxed not old, neither did their feet swell. In wondrous grace, God continued to bless them : nothing but the hand of God could have caused this people, whose fathers went down to Egypt as seventy persons, to return as a multitude of about three million.

D.B.R.

From Nottingham.—God did not fail Israel in the wilderness. Two examples of this are given in the manna and in the matter of their clothing. Let us not be over anxious about the morrow (Philippians 4.6). The manna in the wilderness should have had a humiliating effect on Israel.

Chapter 9 opens with a call of triumph. The land was about to be entered. It was something which they could now appreciate more fully ; it was the end of a long journey, rich, in experience of the leading of God. Was not something of a similar nature in the feelings of men, who last century began to see from God's word His truth for His people of this dispensation, and who in turn began to give effect to it ? To Israel, Canaan was a land much to be prized. Let us today appreciate and value the truth we have, and hold it till the Lord shall come.

K. Holmes, R. Hickling.

From Willington Quay.—Israel were to fear, love and serve the LORD, and also walk in all His ways (10. 12). The importance of this was clearly understood by the godly in Israel; witness the many references in the Psalms to fearing, loving and serving the LORD. In Psalm 119 the psalmist tells repeatedly of the blessing which results from observing His statutes, keeping His testimonies, respecting His commandments and walking in His ways.

Israel were not only to keep the rite of physical circumcision, but were also enjoined to circumcise their hearts. Whilst carrying out the first aspect with diligence, they gave little regard to the second, insomuch that God speaks of all the house of Israel as being uncircumcised in heart (Jeremiah 9. 26). Again, Stephen in his address described them as " stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears " (Acts 7.51). Had Israel realised that " Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter " (Romans 2. 29), they would not have drifted away from the LORD on so many occasions.

K.R.

From Portstewart.—At the first giving of the law, Moses broke the two tables of stone, on seeing the disobedience of Israel. At the second giving of the law, in the stead of a united Israel there stood the sons of Levi, who had come out in answer to the call of Moses. If at the first the people had unitedly received the law, then all Israel would have served before God in the holy and royal priesthoods, but through disobedience they failed, and God chose Levi to serve Him, and unto Levi was given the whole law, every ordinance and statute, to keep, uphold and obey [5].

A. T. Gault.

From Birkenhead.—It is interesting to note that in allowing Israel to hunger and giving them the manna, it was God's purpose to teach them that " Man shall not live by bread only." We would learn from this that the word of God is more than our necessary food. The account of the land is a glowing one, everything that tended toward material prosperity was soon to be their possession. How timely was the warning (8. 11), "Beware lest thou forget." In such surroundings they might forget God and pride themselves on their wonderful achievement (8.17). Serious consequences would follow if they forgot God.

Chapter 10 is one of many details; a new generation had arisen; Moses, Joshua and Caleb remained. The tables of stone were placed in the ark and served as a constant reminder to Israel. Although Levi was one of Jacob's sons, Levi was not reckoned amongst the tribes but was separated by God.

Because of their condition of heart Moses calls upon Israel to be no longer stiffnecked. Their notice was directed to the law and the testimonies. Today it is our responsibility to teach the truth of God. The LORD required of Israel complete obedience, to fear Him, to walk in His ways, to love Him

and to serve Him with an whole heart. God's purpose in saving men today is that they may serve Him, and pass on the truth to others.

L. Bowman, R. Hyland.

From Southport.—In connexion with the commandments, Israel's life and ability to possess the land depended on their obedience to them. Hence the constant exhortations to remember (8. 2, Ephesians 2. 11), to consider (8. 5, 2 Timothy 2. 7), to keep (8. 6, John 14.15). God goes before an obedient people (9. 3, Matthew 28. 20). The dual purpose of God is seen in destroying the wicked nations and keeping His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The broken tables are perhaps symbolical of the failure of God's people under the law. The second tables, placed in the ark, seem to foreshadow the Lord who kept God's law and through whom God's purposes will ultimately be fulfilled. Israel was a theocracy (a people governed by God). God dwelt among them, and gave them their laws, commandments and statutes. As they obeyed Him, so He manifested Himself to them in power (Matthew 28.18-20).

T. Rylance.

From Cowdenbeath.—Moses gave Israel a forward look into the land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land abounding in vegetable and mineral wealth: prosperity and plenty were within their reach. With the promise of the land came also a word of warning (8. 11); prosperity brings the danger of forgetting God, and there is a greater need for observing God's word. In chapter 9 Moses spoke to the people concerning the danger of becoming puffed up, when they had entered the land. Material prosperity often brings with it self-gratification and spiritual poverty.

Moses reminded them that though the Canaanites were expelled for their wickedness, it did not follow that the Israelites were to be established in their room on account of Israel's righteousness. On the contrary, they had shown themselves to be a rebellious people, witness their two outstanding sins, the golden calf (9. 16), and their failure to go in and possess the land at Kadesh-barnea (9. 23). Not the Israelites' righteousness, but the wickedness of its inhabitants and the promise of God to their fathers were the reasons for their obtaining Canaan: we today are also in a place of divine favour, not on the basis of our righteousness but according to God's grace and mercy.

What God required of His people in a past day, He requires today, namely, " Fear the LORD thy God, . . ." (10. 12).

D. McLelland.

From Kingston-on-Thames.—The last paragraph of chapter 10 strikes a very human note and reminds us most vividly of Christ's own teaching, this human quality being characteristic of the whole book of Deuteronomy. "Love ye therefore the stranger" (10. 19) expresses the same attitude as 1 John 4. 20, " If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." Later in the book of Deuteronomy we read such words as these : " Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother " ; and instructions are given concerning the humane treatment of women and children in time of war. These references should make it clear that the apparently small things are of great importance in our lives as Christians, and also that they are important to God. The passage in chapter 10 from verse 12-22, is very Christian in tone, with its emphasis on sympathy and fellow-feeling, and no Old Testament book insists more constantly on the truth that a lively faith will show itself in good works, and in love for our neighbour.

Moses told the people to circumcise their hearts (10. 16). Physical circumcision was the visible sign of a covenant between God and Israel,

but the circumcision of the heart would involve a decision made by each individual before God alone. In the New Testament Stephen uses the same phrase when making his defence. We shall do well if we see to it that we do not resist the Spirit, and that we bear the covenant terms in our own hearts.

D. G. Evans.

THE LORD HE IS GOD

(Chapter 4, 5, 6, 7).

From Hamilton, Ont.—The experience of Israel at Mount Horeb is brought before us prominently in these chapters : God spoke to them on that occasion out of the midst of the fire. The man Moses, who was now speaking to Israel, had himself had an experience with fire at the burning bush. On that occasion he came to know in a special way that, " The LORD He is God." He too saw miracles performed in connexion with the rod and the leprous hand, and came to know God as the great " I AM." We also have had personal dealing with God, who has given us His promises, and we are warned that " Our God is a consuming fire " (Hebrews 12. 29).

It is sad to think that despite all the warnings given to Israel concerning the keeping of the law and commandments of the LORD, their evident awareness of God's presence, and the solemn warning not to serve other gods, yet their subsequent history shows they failed in this very thing.

Some time was spent discussing Deuteronomy 6.4, " The LORD our God is one LORD." Newberry points out that all such references to God are in the plural, whereas the Jews and others use this very verse to attempt to disprove the Trinity.

N. MacKay.

COMMENTS

[1] (Wigan).—It may be easy enough for us now to criticize the action of Moses in throwing down and breaking the tables of the covenant, but, if we bear in mind what God had just said to Moses about destroying Israel, it may temper our criticism of his action. At the same time, it is no justification for anyone to break laws and covenants because others may so act, nor yet are we justified in acting improperly, especially in the things of God, because our spirit is heated by the wrong doing of others.—*J.M.*

[2] (Liverpool).—Writing on stone gives permanency to what is written.—*J.M.*

[3] (Liverpool).—God made provision for the care of the Levites in giving to them cities with suburbs, and giving them the tithe of all Israel's increase.—*J.M.*

[4] (Atherton).—No doubt many typical lessons may be learned from the crossing of the Jordan and " the land " beyond, but whilst the Fellowship describes in our day the fact of a people dwelling and sharing together, this is a different shade of meaning from the Spirit-given application of " the land " as God's rest in Hebrews 3 and 4. We should be careful in interpretation, lest we lump things together and fail to appreciate the fine shades of thought the Spirit brings before our minds in the interpretation of facts in the Old Testament in their spiritual application in the New.—*J.M.*

[5] (Portstewart).—Such a view, that God took the tribe of Levi instead of the twelve tribes, cannot be sustained by facts. What God did was to take the tribe of Levi instead of the firstborn sons of Israel, as Numbers 3. 44-51 clearly shows. Exodus 13. 2, 11-16 shows that the first-

born sons of Israel who were saved by the blood of the paschal lamb were to be set apart to the LORD, undoubtedly, I think, for the service which the Levites afterwards performed. They, being the most responsible men in Israel, grievously offended the LORD by leading their families in the idolatry of the golden calf. Levi gained a blessing by separating themselves at the call of Moses (Exodus 32). God spoke of refusing to go up in the midst of Israel, in Exodus 33, but through the pleading of Moses He agreed to continue what He had purposed, to go up and to dwell in the midst of Israel. There is no such thing as the giving of the law to the Levites as distinct from Israel. Note Malachi 4. 4. The law which was given at Sinai (Exodus 20. 3-17) was repeated in Deuteronomy 5. 7-21 to the children of the men who heard it at Sinai. The conditions of the covenant terms were identical, and it was given in both instances for all Israel.—*J.M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Cowdenbeath.—What is the significance of Moses having to provide the second two tables of stone ?

Answer.—It is said prophetically of the Lord, in Psalm 69. 4, " Then I restored that which I took not away." He did for others what they could not do for themselves. Moses may have had to learn the lesson, that, though he was greatly provoked by the sin of Israel, he could not treat divine things as he did in casting down and breaking the tables of the law. No doubt he learned such a lesson in the labour of making other tables]—*J.M.*

Question from Liverpool.—Is there any indication that the law of sacrifices was given at the time of Israel's sin in the matter of the golden calf ? or was this law not given until the Tabernacle was erected ?

Answer.—The fact that the children of Israel were instructed to offer their burnt and peace offerings in the place where God would record His name clearly implies that such sacrifices were envisaged at the time of the giving of the moral law (Exodus 20), but the details relative to sacrifices were not given until the Tabernacle had been erected. Note how Leviticus begins, "And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tent of meeting saying." Then follow God's commands relative to the burnt, meal, peace, sin and trespass offerings, and so forth.—*J.M.*

Questions from Kingston-on-Thames.—(1) How do verses 6 to 9 fit in with the rest of chapter 10 ? (2) To what time does the phrase " at that time " (10. 8) refer ?

Answer.—These four verses in brackets form a parenthesis in Moses' account of the giving of the law at Sinai. Verse 6 refers to the time of Aaron's death (Numbers 20. 22-29), and verse 8 " at that time " to the carrying out of the LORD'S command (Numbers 3. 44-51) relative to the taking of the tribe of Levi instead of the firstborn sons of Israel. See comment [5] on Portstewart's paper. Though the command regarding the Levites was, I would understand, given at Sinai, yet it would seem, if we follow the brackets of the R.V., that the people of Israel were well on their journey ere the command was carried out. It may be, however, that the brackets of the R.V. are not correct. The A.V. has no brackets. I see, on consulting a Jewish translation, that it makes a break at the end of verse 5, at the end of verse 7, and at the end of verse 9. Mr. Darby brackets verses 6 and 7 only, so this would mean that " at that time," of verse 8, goes back to Sinai where the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark, etc. This seems to me to give the correct view of the passage.—*J.M.*

NOTES ON ROMANS

CHAPTER 16.

Verses 14, 15, 16: *Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren that are with them. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints that are with them. Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ salute you.*

Whilst we read in Paul's epistles of "the church of God," and "the churches of God," we never read of "the church of Christ," and only once of "the churches of Christ," as here. We also read of "the churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14. 33), but never of "the church of the saints." The churches of Christ and of the saints indicate the various churches which met at the houses of the saints, which comprised the church of God in such cities as Corinth, Rome, etc. We have in Rome the church which met at the house of Prisca and Aquila (verses 3, 4). Then we have the brethren that were with Asyncritus and Phlegon, etc., and the saints who were with Philologus and Julia, etc., showing different groups of saints, forming churches of the saints or of Christ in different parts of the imperial city. All such churches in Corinth formed the Church of God in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1.2), and similarly in Rome. A commentator says of the names which are found in this chapter: "A place of burial on the Appian Way, devoted to the ashes of imperial freedmen and slaves, and other similar receptacles, all to be dated with practical certainty about the middle period of the first century, yield the following names, Amplias, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Rufus, Hermes, Philologus, Julius, Nereis; a name which might be denoted the sister (see verse 15) of a man Nereus. Of course such facts must be used with due reserve in inference." Whether or no these engravings of the names of the dead denote the names in this chapter, we know that those whose names are in Romans 16 are amongst the vast congregation whose names are written in heaven, and whose works have followed with them.

Verses 17, 18: *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.*

As in Philippians the saints were to mark those who were examples of good living (3. 17), so here they were to mark and keep a watchful eye upon such as were causing divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine that they had learned. Separations may be necessary when evil doctrine invades assemblies, as we learn from 2 Timothy 2. 16-26, but here the Roman saints were to avoid or shun such evil workers. They served their own belly, but at the same time were men of smooth and fair speech and the innocent were deceived by them. Whether these were Judaizers who ever opposed Paul and his doctrine of grace and faith, or others who sowed discord with their heretical views, the passage does not reveal.

Verses 19, 20. *For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I rejoice therefore over you : but I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

Saints would be continually moving to and from Rome in those days, and would bring the good report of the obedience of the saints in Rome to many lands. In this Paul rejoiced. But he said that he would have them wise to the good and simple to the evil. It is not necessary that we should know the evil doctrines and practices of men to appreciate the good. To know the evil which men have wrought may even have a harmful effect on the lives of saints. Paul's dictum was wise and right: be " wise unto that which is good." The present struggle against evil has one issue : " The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." When ? not while the battle lasts, which will continue during our lifetime. But the end of the battle will come, as it did in the case of the Lord, who fatally bruised the old serpent at Calvary (Genesis 3. 15 ; Hebrews 2. 14). Satan will, I judge, be bruised beneath the feet of saints subsequent to the Lord's coming, and before he is cast to the earth by Michael and his angels (Revelations 12. 7-12). What a sight to see at last our enemy defeated and bruised, against whom we shall never again need to wage many a hard-won and hardly won battle ! Paul adds his cipher, his token in every epistle of his—" The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

Verses 21, 22, 23 : *Timothy my fellow-worker saluteth you ; and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen. I Tertius, who write the epistle, salute you in the Lord, Gaius my host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the treasurer of the city saluteth you, and Quartus the brother.*

Timothy is well known to us all, the beloved and true child in faith of Paul, of whom Paul said, that he had no man like minded (Philippians 2. 20). Then follow the names of other three of Paul's kinsmen, Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, who with Andronicus, Junias and Herodion make six of Paul's relatives mentioned in this chapter, a remarkable sidelight of Scripture as to the working of grace among relations. When God brings back his people to Zion, He will bring them one of a city, and two of a family, twice as many of a family as of a city (Jeremiah 3. 14). How wonderfully grace has wrought in some families ! Tertius, who wrote the epistle, sent his salutation also. Gaius (the same Gaius as in 1 Corinthian 1. 14, but there were other men who had a similar name, Gaius of Macedonia, Acts 19. 29 ; Gaius of Derbe in Galatia, Acts 20. 4 ; and Gaius the beloved to whom John wrote, who might have been one of the others) with whom Paul resided in Corinth, and who was the host of the whole church, sent his salutation. Then Erastus (was he the same as in the Erastus of Acts 19. 22, and 2 Timothy 4. 20 ?) also sent his salutation. He was a man of standing in Corinth, being the treasurer of the city. The last name to be appended of those who were with Paul and sent their greeting was Quartus the brother. Why " the " brother and not " our " brother ?

Verses 25, 26, 27 : *Now to Him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith : to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.*

Paul closes this wonderful epistle with the words of a glorious and God-glorifying Doxology, to Him who is the only wise God who was able to stablish or strengthen them. This establishment was according to the theme of this epistle—the gospel, which he calls " my gospel." Paul's gospel was the same as that which is found in the Old Testament, even the gospel which was preached to Abraham (Galatians 3. 8); the simple and profound statement of it then was, " In thee shall all the nations be blessed." This gospel in the bud had opened out to full flower in Paul's time, for there had been added " the revelation of the mystery which had been kept in silence through times eternal." See also Ephesians 3. 4-11 : Colossians 1. 26. Paul is the sole exponent of this phase of the gospel among New Testament writers. He also claims that the mystery is manifested through the prophetic Scriptures. These Scriptures, I judge, can mean none other than the writings of the Old Testament. Can it be doubted that the mystery of the Church which is His (Christ's) Body is hidden in the story of Adam and Eve, when we read what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5. 22-33? To men and angels the story of Adam and Eve was the story of the first man and woman, but under the Spirit's light we see, standing gloriously behind that pair, Christ and the Church, His Bride. This gospel was made known to the nations " unto the obedience of faith," not " obedience to the faith," faith being the one thing necessary and allowed by God whereby the inestimable blessing of the forgiveness of sin and justification becomes the possession of every believing sinner. See chapter 1.5. " To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ . . . be the glory for ever. Amen."

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE EPISTLE.

The Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Romans has never been in doubt. The similarity of the epistle to that of the Galatians, supposed to have been written about the same time, has frequently been remarked upon. Both declare that man is justified by faith apart from works of law or any human works whatsoever. It is remarkable that the epistle was written to the saints in the church of God in Rome, and that from that very city, from papal Rome, has issued a curse upon any who teach that a man is justified from sin by faith in Christ alone. Papal Rome's teaching is the complete negation of the teaching of Paul in the Romans.

The epistle is divided into three main sections (1) chapters 1—8 (2) 9-11, (3) 12-16. Number (1) reveals the state of mankind and God's provision in the work of Christ to meet his need, consummating in that glorious chapter 8, wherein we see the believer completely justified on the ground of faith alone, and for ever united in life and love to Christ. In number (2) we have the profound subject of election dealt with, and in it we also see God's governmental dealings with the Jewish people in setting them aside nationally for the present, and His dealing in this dispensation of grace with mankind on the ground of sinnership. Here is a time of unique privilege for the Gentiles such as they never experienced before. Then in number (3) we have many matters of Christian behaviour touched upon, behaviour which

is comely and proper for such as have become the subjects of God's grace. This begins with the apostle's pleading words, " I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God (both his electing and saving mercies), to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service " (chapter 12. 1).

These main sections may be further divided, (a) In chapter 1. 1-17 we have the introduction to the epistle. (b) In chapter 1. 18-32 we have a description of the Gentiles, not simply by the master-hand of Paul, who well knew the deep depravity of the Gentiles from experience, but this is an account of how God saw them. Then in chapter 2. 17—3. 8 Paul tears the mask of religion from the Jew and lets him see himself in the mirror of the word of God which Paul wrote. The Jew was naturally a hypocrite, and the Pharisees proverbially so. (c) Chapter 2. 1-16 outlines the justice of God, who will deal with the Jew as a man under law, and the Gentile who had no law will be judged on the ground of the law of his own conscience. (d) In chapter 3. 9—5. 21 we have the charge laid against all men, that all are under sin, and God's provision in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus to meet the need of all, the sole and only condition being that each shall believe in Christ the Redeemer. (e) Chapters 6 and 7 deal with the fact that Christ died unto sin, and that we also died with Christ, our old man being crucified with Him. Therefore, being freed by death from bondage to sin, we are now to present our members, which were once used as servants to sin, as instruments of righteousness unto God. Death also freed the Jew from the dominion of the law, so that he might be joined in life to the Lord, who was raised from the dead to bring forth fruit unto God. Then in 7. 7-35 we have the complete answer to the question, " Is the law sin ? " and the disclosure that the fault is not in the law but in man himself.

(f) Then follows chapter 8, the chapter on the work of the Spirit which brings to fruition the work of Christ in His death and resurrection. Here the believer is declared to be no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit; no longer in sin but in righteousness ; groaners indeed, but yet children of God with a glorious hope, being joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Here we look and wonder and worship at the vast panorama—foreordained, called, justified, glorified. Who can say anything to such things ? Finally, such is the security of the believer that nothing can separate him from the love of Christ or from God's love in Christ Jesus.

(g) In Romans 9 we have the truth of election dealt with in a manner nowhere else found in the Scriptures. In chapter 10 we have the Jew's bigoted adherence to the rags of his own legal righteousness, whilst God is handing out freely to all who will believe the glorious garment of salvation. To whosoever will is the world-wide message of the gospel, as far flung as " the swift-winged arrows of light." In chapter 11 we have God's governmental dealings in the casting off of the unbelieving Jew and the bringing in of " the fulness of the Gentiles."

(h) Chapters 12 to 15 are hortatory; in them is much instruction as to behaviour, often given in the fewest words.

(i) Finally chapter 16 brings this magnificent epistle to a close with a letter of commendation, words of greeting, exhortation to withdraw from trouble makers, and a doxology to the only wise God through Jesus Christ.

—J.M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with ail readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

The final instalment of Mr. John Miller's "Notes on the Epistle to the Romans" appeared in the March issue of *Bible Studies*, but lack of space prevented comment. There is evidence that many have enjoyed the "Notes" and benefited from them; readers may, therefore, be interested to learn that the "Notes" may yet be published separately. It should be understood that they are not intended as an exhaustive treatment of the Epistle to the Romans: the purpose is to provide food for thought, to stimulate interest, and to encourage private study of the Romans. We trust our readers, using them in this way, will find them helpful.

We are now in the happy position of being able to announce that Mr. Miller has completed similar notes on Philippians, of which the first instalment appears in this issue. Further instalments will appear (God willing) in the coming months. We feel sure that all interested in *Bible Studies* appreciate highly the work of our brother on our behalf.

May we ask the co-operation of contributors in the matter of *Question and Answer*? Questions are very welcome (they indicate enquiring minds and thoughtful study, and perhaps also a certain amount of healthy clash of opinion), but some questions submitted are very verbose and very indefinite, and we have had to edit them considerably. The danger is that, in doing so, we may not have produced quite the same question. It should provide a good *study* exercise, if our correspondents would work at their difficulty until the issue is narrow. There might then result a clear and direct question capable of equally clear and direct answer. This might avoid disappointment to our contributors; and it would be to the improvement of *Bible Studies*, if some attention were given to this matter. Please co-operate: in any case, continue asking questions. J.B.

IDOLATRY AS SEEN IN DEUTERONOMY

The word "idolatry" does not occur in Deuteronomy, and "idols" occurs once only (29. 17), but graven images are mentioned several times and the book is replete with teaching against idolatry.

Idolatry is expressly forbidden by commandment (5. 7-10). This commandment is associated with God's deliverance of His people from bondage in Egypt. The worship of false gods is, therefore, an act of disobedience and also sets a light value on divine deliverance, and this dishonours God. The redeemed of the Lord today should beware of departure from God arising from coldness of heart, and should bear constantly in mind that God is honoured by the obedience of His people.

We may include under idolatry all forms of worship of visible things and of false gods that certain races have associated with natural phenomena: Deuteronomy cites several forms, worship of images representing animals, birds, or creatures of the sea (4. 16-18), or worship of the sun, moon and stars (4. 19), all of them being alike abhorrent to the LORD. Some nations

had (and have) their own characteristic forms of idolatry, both as to type of image and as to ritual, the images being often grotesque representations of such animals as the bull or the lion, and the rituals most degrading. In Israel there were to be no such abominations or images. Images already in the land, together with the high places associated with them, were to be utterly destroyed (7. 5, 25 ; 12. 2, 3), and the children of Israel were to make none for themselves (5.8). Neither were they to worship the gods their fathers had served beyond the River Euphrates (Joshua 24. 14), nor were they to serve the gods of Egypt, from which they had been delivered (29. 16 ; Joshua 24. 14), nor again the gods of the nations round about (6. 14, 15 ; 12. 29, 30). Further, nothing of an idolatrous nature was to be added to the pure worship of the LORD : there was to be no Asherah, or tree, or pillar beside the altar of the LORD (16. 21, 22).

We are similarly placed : we must not have in our lives or in our worship anything that is not contained in the doctrines of the Lord, whether it derives from things practised (in ignorance, perhaps) by past generations, or be practised today in the sectarian religious world. The LORD'S command is, " Take heed to thyself . . . that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How do these nations serve their gods ? " (12. 30). There is grave danger to saints in the house of God, if they attend services of sectarian bodies, even if only to gather first-hand knowledge of their ways : it is easy to become ensnared. We have been saved from these, and should keep ourselves separate from all that is foreign to the pure doctrine : truth and error do not mix. " What communion hath light with darkness ? . . . And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols ? " (2 Corinthians 6. 14-18).

J.B

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE (Chapters 11. 26-32, 27. 9-26, 28, 29, 30)

From Cowdenbeath.—It was essential that the blessing and the curse should be clearly set before Israel at this juncture in their history ; it was also necessary to repeat them, when Israel entered into the land (11. 29). The principle remains today ; it is not sufficient to hear the word of God once. We need to be continually put in remembrance (2 Peter 1. 12-15).

The detailed pronouncements of chapter 27. 15-26 mainly affect the individual. " Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of all this law to do them." Such an edict brought all who were under the law under the curse. Christ alone fully kept God's holy law. He was free from its curse, yet to redeem us from the curse He became " a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree " (Galatians 3. 13).

The way in which the blessing and the curse would operate is shown in chapter 28, which shows (verse 9) that, through collective obedience to the word of God, Israel became the people of God, and only in obedience could they continue as such. Obedient Israel would be blessed in the home, the field, and the city, with health, prosperity, and fruitfulness. In conflict with their enemies they would be victorious, and among the nations they would occupy the premier place. In disobedience the curse would overtake them in those selfsame spheres. Disease, drought, and defeat, would be their portion : the heavens above like brass, earth beneath as iron.

The prophecy of what their experience would be in disobedience makes sad reading (28. 15-68), but to us with our present knowledge it reads like

a historical account: they proved disobedient and God brought upon them the curse concerning which they had been solemnly warned.

In chapter 29 there is a call to remember the wilderness experience ; the goodness of God throughout, and the early victories enjoyed, all of which should have encouraged Israel to keep the covenant. The chapter deals mainly with the covenant with the new generation. Warning is also given to the individual in Israel whose heart "turneth away from the LORD." Note the similarity of 29. 18 and Hebrews 12. 15.

Israel's past history was black; their future is brighter. There will be a restored Israel. This will be brought about by repentance and will be the result of the cross-work of Christ. Chapter 30 deals not only with the past but also projects our minds into the future to that glad millennial day, when Israel will return and obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments.

In all these things there are lessons for us today. Divine principles do not alter. Israel's God is our God, and changeth not. The people of God today become and remain such on the basis of obedience (1 Peter 1.2). Obedience still brings blessing. Israel's blessings were material, ours are spiritual. God may bless with material things obedient ones today, but He has not pledged Himself to do this. There are blessings beyond this scene, for "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." A day is coming when service and faithfulness will be assessed. In that day some will suffer loss, and some will have reward.

James K. D. Johnston.

From Nottingham.—The message was very clear, hearken, obey and receive blessing and possession, or reject, disobey and receive the curse and dispersion (11. 26-28). Israel's blessing was to be conditional on their attitude to God's expressed will. The house of God today is a conditional thing, depending on our obedience to God's revealed will. The "if" of Hebrews 3. 6 is vital. Compare also 2 Timothy 1. 13, 14: Timothy is exhorted to "hold the pattern of sound words" and to guard the good thing committed unto him. Think, too, of the Lord's words, "or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent" (Revelation 2.5). Our position depends upon our condition, which will be collectively what we are individually.

Israel enjoyed prosperity in the days of Solomon, and much of it was due to God-fearing David who went before. So prosperity was known when the people obeyed, led and encouraged by their king.

Note the words "other gods, which ye have not known" (11. 28). Earlier, Moses had been impressing upon the people how clearly God had displayed His hand in His dealings with them (chapter 8), manifestation of divine favour. Why then, should they seek after other gods? Why, too, should we in the spiritual house of this dispensation seek those places outside in which God has no pleasure? Let us remember that God has given us a free will to choose, and ours is the responsibility to observe to do what is commanded.

God's Word was fulfilled to the letter, "the LORD shall scatter thee" (28. 64) and "among these nations shalt thou find no ease" (28. 65). Have we not seen these very words being fulfilled in our own day and time? It was felt that although Deuteronomy 30. 1-10 probably saw a "shadow" fulfilment in the return from captivity, as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, the real fulfilment is yet future, in that glad day when Israel will return to their own land, and eventually their King will come, who was once the despised Man of Calvary.

David Berresford, R. Hickling.

EXTRACTS.

From Wembley.—Throughout the ages God has dealt with individual men and women, such as Abel, Noah, Job, etc. God has also dealt with peoples and nations, such as Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim (29. 23). Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. Other cities perished under God's judgement. With Israel God dealt bountifully. He set His love upon them, redeemed them out of the house of bondage, bare them on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself.

God chose two mountains, Gerizim, the name meaning "waste places," and Ebal, the name meaning "bare." From these mountains the blessing and the curse were to be proclaimed. We wondered what we could learn from this. It is interesting to read in Joshua 8 how God's command was carried out. Joshua's voice would echo loud and clear between the mountains, and as the people gazed upwards to the waste places and the bare heights, they would be reminded that their help must come from the LORD who made heaven and earth (Psalm 121). God was able to cause the waste places to bring forth in abundance, and the bare heights to be green with verdure. God would work for His people, if only their hearts were set to do His holy will. God can and will work for us, if only we set our hearts to be obedient to His commands.

We serve not in fear and trembling as did Israel of old. We are not under law, but under grace. The law could only condemn, but what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, has been done for us by our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8). How happy we should be, not in looking up to the hills, but to the Lord Jesus at God's right hand! and in looking off unto Jesus, to draw strength from above to enable us to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart to do His holy will.

J. A. Hobley.

From Birkenhead.—Moses' commands (27. 11-14) were carried out by Joshua (Joshua 8. 31-35). This would be an impressive sight, which would remain in the minds of the children of Israel all their days upon earth. The altar built on Mount Ebal can be viewed as a type of Him who became a curse for us. There were twelve blessings and the same number of curses, to each blessing a corresponding curse affecting national, business, and family life. The Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11. 28).

We note the warning (29. 18), "lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood." The New Testament counterpart is seen in Hebrews 3. 12, 12. 15, where the apostle Paul warns the saints that the root of bitterness in one can affect the many. Moses pointed out to the people that the commandments were not hard, and not far away, yea, they were very nigh them, in their mouth and in their heart, that they might do them (30. 11-14). The apostle wrote similar words in relation to salvation (Romans 10. 8). It is well to note that while the secret things belong to God, the revealed things belong to the people of God (29. 29). The apostle Paul wrote of something similar in 1 Corinthians 3. 9, 10

L. Bowman, R. Hyland.

From Barry.—As a people hearkening diligently unto the voice of the LORD their God, observing to do all His commandments, the LORD'S blessings would be Israel's, who would be established as a holy people unto the Lord. They would be blessed in all that they put their hand to, the LORD opening unto them His good treasury to give the rain in its season, if they would not turn aside from His commandments to the left hand or to the right, or go after other gods.

As a people not hearkening unto the voice of God, they would know the curse. They would be smitten before their enemies and tossed to and fro among the nations of the earth, and would become a proverb (byword) among other peoples. How different would have been the history of the children of Israel if they had obeyed the voice of the LORD their God ! As God's people today we should learn from their failures. God requires obedience to His Word today as He did in that past day. *C.J.*

From Glasgow.—On two mountains, of which Moses gave the exact location, would rest the blessing and the curse, on Mount Gerizim the blessing and on mount Ebal the curse. Towering high in the midst of the land of Canaan, these would be a constant reminder to the nation of Israel. An altar of unhewn stones had to be reared up, and on the stones were to be written very plainly all the words of this law (27. 4-8).

It must have been a very impressive sight, as the assembled people listened to the blessing and the curse. The blessings, conditional upon their keeping the law of God, were reiterated. As the curse was spoken in their ears, there was the solemn "Amen" said by the people to every part (27. 11-26; 28. 1-14).

Moses was a prophet and spake to Israel of their turning away from God and from the covenant they had made with Him. Israel has known the blessings spoken by Moses ; but they have also known and endured the curse. What bitterness must fill their hearts, as they read in the word of God concerning what they once were, the head of the nations : they are now the tail, and will continue so, until they repent and turn their eyes heavenward to call on the name of the LORD. *J.R.*

From Wigan.—" Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse. The blessing, if ye shall hearken . . . and the curse, if ye shall not hearken " (11. 26-28). Thus spake Moses, the man of God. " I watch over My word to perform it," was God's assurance to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1.12): so it has been and ever will be. As long as the word of God was adhered to, blessing followed, but departure from the commandments brought the terrible afflictions embodied in the curse, e.g., " Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and gather little in " (28. 38). This was experienced at certain times (Haggai 1. 6, 2. 16). Compare the sad period of declension in Israel's history, when the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the children of the east covered the land like locusts, and the people of God were living in fear and want in caves and dens of the mountains (28. 43, Judges 6. 2, 3).

Deuteronomy 28. 57 brings before us the dread effects and extremities associated with famine (2 Kings 6. 28-29). In Elijah's day we see a fulfilment of the blessing, in that the much needed rain was sent immediately after Israel had turned from idolatry and confessed, " The LORD, He is God " (1 Kings 18). When the ten tribes were carried away into Assyria, and the land was peopled by five other nations, a rival place of worship was set up on Mount Gerizim. It was to this mountain that the woman referred, setting it in opposition to the place of the Name (John 4. 20).

H. Caldwell.

From Crowborough.—When Israel had passed over Jordan, they were to write all the words of the law on the plaistered stones, that they might go in unto the land (27. 3). In Joshua 8 we read how this was done ; but not immediately after passing over Jordan: they first took Jericho and Ai, and dealt with Achan's sin.

On Mount Ebal the written law and the altar are associated with one another : the law brought the curse, and the altar with its sacrifices represented the One who bore the curse on our behalf (27. 15-26).

The twelve definite curses seem to be summed up in verse 26, " Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them." *J.H.B.*

From Edinburgh.—When the tribes stood before the two mountains, Joshua read in their ears all the words of Moses, and as each curse was pronounced all the people answered and said, "Amen." That day there were set before them life and death, and they chose life. We noted that the covenant was binding not only on those present, but also on any that were absent. No forgiveness was shown to the one who deliberately turned aside : he was wholly cast upon God's mercy. David experienced this in his day, and we also have our warning today (Hebrews 10. 26, 27).

This covenant was not too wonderful, or too distant, but was nigh unto them, even in their mouth and in their heart. The word of faith which we preach today is nigh unto him that heareth, and the covenant unto eternal life is to him that believeth (Romans 10). *Thos. Hope.*

From Greenock.—As the Levites pronounced each curse all the people were to say, "Amen." There is no mention of a list of blessings being similarly pronounced and assented to by all the people. Is this because the blessings of God are unmerited ? [1]. The blessing and the curse applied to the people of God in the land (11. 29 ; 27. 9, 10, 12 ; 28. 9 ; 29. 13). This was the second occasion on which God made a covenant with the children of Israel [2]. As a result of it they became the people of God. The first covenant was made in Horeb with their fathers, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness on account of disobedience (29. 1). *John H. Johnson.*

From Lerwick.—For the last time Moses was being used of God to set before Israel His word of blessing for obedience and curse for disobedience. So vital was God's word in their lives that whether they obeyed or not was a matter of life or death (31. 19, 20). God did not desire a cold compelled obedience, but rather as the fruit of love out of a glad and joyful heart: we of the present dispensation should yield such loving obedience (John 14. 23).

Although Moses was faithfully exhorting the people to obey and to pursue the course of blessing, he knew that after his departure Israel would turn aside from God and fall under the curse (31. 29). It has been given to us to know the extent of their departure, and that God, after much pleading and long suffering, concluded, for the time being, His dealings with them by pronouncing them as " cursed with the curse " (Malachi 2. 2, 3. 9). *D.S.*

From Liverpool.—Chapter 10. 12 sums up that which was required of Israel as they stood on the threshold of the promised land (30. 15-20). Almost a lifetime earlier, their forbears had the same opportunity, and the divine record is conclusive as to why they entered not in : " they were not able to enter in because of unbelief " (Hebrews 3.19).

Israel was confronted with solemn issues. Clearly and plainly Jehovah through Moses revealed to them the grounds of the blessing and the curse. This would remind them, no doubt, of a former day concerning which their parents may well have told them, when the former generation had stood on the border of the land, with the experience of God's mighty deliverance

from Egypt's bondage fresh in their minds. It had been with their fathers then as it was now with them : blessing would be theirs on the grounds of obedience. That the people saw clearly the issues involved in the curse is indicated by the twelve amens (27. 15-26).

We considered Jordan to speak of separation, and the Red Sea of baptism [3].
A. Fairhurst, A. H.

From Willington Quay.—The alternatives were put very clearly before the nation by their faithful leader, Moses ; he painted a vivid picture that was meant to draw them after God to give their hearts to Him, that He might bless them nationally and as individuals. All depended upon the little word, " if "—" if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God." God can bless a man even in the smallest things, if only he will honour Him in his life.

We thought of one upon whom came all the outward signs of the curse : his would-be advisers implied that this was due to his being out of touch with God, but it was incorrect to assume that God's dealings with Job were in punishment.

It is sad to see how the pronouncements made in these chapters have become a reality. The name of the Jew is hated everywhere, and Jews have often been humiliated and ill-treated. Not only have they wandered far from their God, but have brought further disfavour upon themselves by refusing His Son, having said in effect, " This is the heir ; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance " (Matthew 21. 38).
C.B.

From London, S.E.—The first enunciation of the blessing and the curse was by Moses in the desert. Jehovah, knowing the nature of human promises, demanded a reiteration of the blessing and the curse in the land. Two prominent twin peaks lying centrally in the land, divided by a natural arena, were selected as the site. On the one, Gerizim, six tribes stood for the blessing and on the other, Ebal, the other six tribes stood for the curse. This must have been an impressive occasion. Ever after, the sight of these peaks would remind the Israelites of their solemn promise to Jehovah, and of the blessing and curse associated therewith.

What better example could be found of the result of loyalty to Jehovah by the nation than the story recorded in Joshua ? Apart from the Achan incident, it is one of victory, prosperity and joy which continued far beyond the death of the leader at 110 years old. Sad to say, examples of Ebal behaviour are only too many. The story of the kings of Judah and Israel after Solomon, with the exception of such kings as Hezekiah and Josiah, is one of successively greater degrees of disloyalty to Jehovah, ending in the extreme penalty of the curse, deportation to other lands. Gerizim means " cutting down " and Ebal means " stony." If we, as God's people are to continue as such, there must be a cutting down, or humbling, of our hearts before Him. As long as our hearts are stony with self-will, we can never remain together to the glory of God.
C. L. Prasher.

From Atherton.—We visualize with deepest solemnity, the execution of the extreme penalty imposed upon individuals who had violated God's law. They were to hang upon a tree, accursed of God (21. 23, R.V.M.). We but faintly realize what our blessed Master became (Galatians 3.13,14), that blessing might flow out to us unworthy Gentiles (Ephesians 1.3): Paul speaks of " the fulness of the blessing of Christ " (Romans 15. 29). Is it possible to trace why God's voice was to be heard from two separate

mountains ? We considered that the following helps. Ebal lies in the north and Gerizim in the south. The north would speak of that which is cold and bleak, hence the curse was heard from Ebal. Gerizim, lying in the south, would suggest warmth and calm. The Song of Songs refers to both the north and south winds (Song of Songs 4. 16). In Psalm 126. 4-6 we read of " the streams in the South," and blessing is associated therewith [4].

It is instructive to notice the six tribes chosen to symbolize the blessing (27. 12), Simeon, meaning to hear ; Levi, to be joined ; Judah, to praise ; Issachar, to reward ; Joseph, to increase ; and Benjamin, to exalt. Who can tell the unparalleled blessing that has arisen, and may yet arise even today, when these delightful features are manifested collectively : " There the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore " (Psalm 133) [5].

Our children should ever be before us since they are ever before Him, who yearns " that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever " (5. 29). Hannah's outstanding example is recorded for parents to follow (Samuel 1). Parents cannot start too early, if they would please the Lord, in seeking to nurture their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6.4). Can we regain in our homes the regular feature of bygone days, the family altar? Further, children should be regularly at all the assembly gatherings : the Remembrance, witnessed by children, may well be the voice that shall speak most powerfully and effectively (1 Corinthians 14. 23-25).

E. Birchall, G.A.J.

ALL THE COMMANDMENTS

(Chapters 8, 9, 10.)

From Hamilton, Ont.—God promised to go before Israel and drive out the inhabitants of the land (Deuteronomy 9), not because of the righteousness of Israel, but because of the wickedness of these nations. God wanted a separated people, and there was no room for these nations with their ways and their gods. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" Concerning the sons of the Anakim, the giants that dwelt in the land, God was going to destroy them, but we find that there were some left in Gath (Joshua 11. 22). Perhaps Goliath and his defiance of Israel in the time of David were the result of Israel's failure to carry out the whole command of God.

Israel had experienced the wrath of God, when they made and worshipped the golden calf, and through the intercession of Moses and the mercy of God they were not all destroyed, including Aaron the high priest. We think of our High Priest who faileth not; and it is by the mercies of God that we are not consumed. We see the grace of God, as He again gave them the tables of the covenant which were placed in the ark.

P. Thomas.

COMMENTS

[1] (Greenock).—It is clear from Deuteronomy 27 that the plaistered stones on which the law was written were set up in mount Ebal and there they also built the altar. The Levites spake the words of the twelve curses, to which the people of Israel were to say, "Amen," by which they would bring the curse upon themselves and their children after them if they broke the law. There is no mention in Deuteronomy 27 of the Levites pronouncing blessing upon Israel for their obedience, but we are told in Joshua 8. 33, that they blessed Israel first.—*J.M.*

[2] (Greenock).—Would it not be better to say that the covenant was renewing on similar conditions ?—*J.M.*

[3] (Liverpool).—The river Jordan speaks of death. Israel, had they not sinned at Kadesh-barnea, would have gone into the land without passing through Jordan. Their sin brought death, for the wages of sin is ever death. The fighting men of Israel from 20 years upward died in the wilderness, save Josuha and Caleb, but the fathers brought death upon their children, and so the nation had to pass through death in a figure, that is, through the Jordan, the river of death.—*J.M.*

[4] (Atherton).—Have our brethren considered that there are only 7 or 8 miles, according to the measurement of one map, between these two mountains, and only 268 feet difference in height. We cannot see that there is any cause to speak of the bleak north and the warm south. Imagination is a good thing when it is disciplined.—*J.M.*

[5] (Atherton).—Could something good not be made out of the names of the tribes upon Ebal ?—*J.M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions from Edinburgh.—(1) What is the significance of the fact that the LORD provided the first tables of stone, but Moses had to hew out the second ones (10. 3) ? (2) Did God actually write the commandments on the second occasion (10. 2, 4, Exodus 34. 28) ? (3) Is the ark (10. 3) the same as the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25. 10) ?

Answers.—(1) See answer to Cowdenbeath. (2) Yes, the LORD wrote the ten commandments on the two sets of tables (Deuteronomy 10. 4) (3) Yes, Deuteronomy 10. 5 makes it quite clear, that when Moses was speaking in the land of Moab the tables were in the ark which he made.—*J.M.*

Question from Nottingham.—What is the significance of the allocation of particular tribes to each of the two mountains (27. 11-14) ?

Answer.—The choice was God's, I cannot say why. He chose for mount Ebal the eldest and youngest of the sons of Leah, and the sons of the handmaids of Leah and Rachel.—*J.M.*

Question from Greenock.—What was the significance of setting the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on mount Ebal ? Were the tribes on Gerizim more favoured than those on Ebal ?

Answer.—The command of Moses in Deuteronomy 27 should be read in the light of what happened in the time of Joshua, in Joshua 8. 30-35. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to say why God chose 4 of Leah's sons and 2 of Rachel's sons to stand on or in front of Gerizim, and Leah's eldest and youngest sons and the sons of Leah's and Rachel's handmaids before Ebal. As to which were the more favoured tribes, it is like asking which is the more favoured aspect of preaching—repentance toward God or faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ? The blessings and the curses were complementary in the declaration of the word of God.—*J.M.*

Question from Liverpool.—What does Canaan typify ? our heavenly rest ? the heavenlies ? God's rest ?

Answer.—Canaan has been quite correctly used in hymns and otherwise as showing the end of life's journey and our entrance of our heavenly country. It is typical of the "heavenlies," the place of our blessings in Christ, and of our warfare, as in Ephesians. It is also God's rest, as in Hebrews 3 and 4, indicative of the place wherein we may serve God, that place is God's house, as expressed in Psalm 132. 14, "This is My resting place for ever : Here will I dwell; for I have desired it." See also Acts 7. 49.—*J.M.*

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

CHAPTER 1.

Verse 1 : *Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons :*

Paul does not here describe himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus, as in 2 Corinthians 1.1, where he links Timothy with himself in addressing the Corinthians. In both epistles to the Corinthians he has to defend his claim to being an apostle (1 Corinthians 9.1,2; 2 Corinthians 11. 1-33). Here in Philippians he describes himself and Timothy as bondservants or slaves, bought slaves (1 Corinthians 6. 20). "To all the saints," saints are "holy ones," such as are "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints" (1 Corinthians 1.2), that is, saints by effectual calling, they having responded to the call in the gospel. "God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth : whereunto He called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2. 13, 14). Though all believers in Christ are saints, not all, alas, are saintly in their behaviour.

Bishops : a bishop (*Episkopos*) means an overseer or guardian, "a superintendent in the apostolic age and equal to *Presbuteros* (an elder) in the New Testament." It conveys the thought of one who watches over others.

Deacons : a deacon (*Diakanos*) is a servant or waiting man. The bishop or overseer is one who is responsible to rule over and care for God's saints and His work ; the deacon or minister is one whose business is to be engaged in the Lord's work in the ministry of His word and to attend faithfully thereon, and thereby to gain "a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3. 13). Overseers and deacons are saints, but not all saints are deacons, and not all deacons are overseers. See 1 Timothy 3. 1-13 ; Titus 1. 5-9.

Verse 2 : *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul's salutation to the Romans and the Corinthians is similar to this here. Peace was the salutation of the Hebrews of the Old Testament and grace is the salutation of the New.

Verses 3,4 : *I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy.*

To Paul the memory of God's work in the saints in Philippi was ever sweet. Deep appreciation of God's grace to them filled his heart with thanksgiving as he made his supplication on their behalf—"making my supplication with joy," he said. It may not be that we can say this about all for whom we pray, that we make our supplication with joy.

Verse 5 : *For your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now;*

Paul writes of "all my remembrance of you," as he thinks of the course they had followed, which no other church had, for only they ministered to his needs in Thessalonica; when he departed from Macedonia, they ministered to him (Philippians 4. 15, 16). He could not forget these tokens of their love and fellowship. How unlike they were to the gifted and selfish Corinthians! (2 Corinthians 11. 7-10; 1 Corinthians 1. 4-7). Sad it is when gift and greed meet in the same persons ; the latter destroys the lustre of the former.

Verse 6 : *Being confident of this very thing, that He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

The good work in the Philippians started with Lydia and the jailor from the time that God's grace reached their hearts. Both took Paul into their houses and cared for him. Lydia said, " If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." And the jailor washed Paul's stripes and brought him up to his house and set meat before him. It is poor Christianity that says to the needy, " Go in peace, be warmed and filled ; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body ; what doth it profit ? " (James 2. 16). The actions of the Philippians from the first were far otherwise than this. Many years had passed from those early days and they were still maintaining the same good works toward the apostle, and Paul was confident that this would continue. Paul wrote in such wise as believing that the Lord's coming would take place while he and the saints were yet alive, but we know that they have been at rest for long centuries and the Lord has not come yet, but we hope for His coming while we are alive. " The sky, not the grave, is our goal."

Verse 7 : *Even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace.*

Paul had the saints in his heart as a fond parent, and it was right for him to wish that God's good work in them would be perfected until the Lord's coming. Paul joins bonds with the defence and confirmation of the gospel in his account of his many sufferings for Christ's and the gospel's sake ; in 2 Corinthians 11. 16-33, he speaks of "in prisons more abundantly." Such was the cost to the gospel preachers in the days of the apostles, and of this the Lord forewarned them. In the present we live in a time of freedom from violent persecution, bought for us by the blood of martyrs of former days, but days of violent persecution will come again. That splendid declaration of the apostle Paul makes us all feel very small: " The Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20. 23, 24). The Philippians were partakers of grace which ever has supported the suffering witnesses of Christ.

Verse 8 : *For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus.*

The tender mercies or bowels of Christ Jesus tell of the most intense tenderness, such as a mother's love for her babe ; it reveals a yearning and longing that cannot be measured. Only God could see down into the inner, secret parts of Paul's being, and bear witness to the reality of what he says.

Verses 9,10 : *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent (or prove the things that differ);*

The word here for love (*Agape*), we are told, " expresses a more reasoning attachment (than *Philein* to love), of choice and selection . . . from a seeing in the object upon whom it is bestowed that which is worthy of regard " (Trench). Here love is to abound " in knowledge and all discernment," not simply to love (*Philein*) instinctively, with a love arising from

feelings or natural affection. The consequence of love (*Agape*) working in knowledge and discernment is that the saint may prove the things that differ (see Romans 2. 18), so that points of difference in divine things may be proved and approved. In the study of the word of God there is too much lumping of things together on the part of the ignorant, with the result that there is failure to see the excellence there is in the things wherein God has made a difference. Hence so many wander about in ways displeasing to the Lord and do so, ignorant of the will of God.

Verses 10, 11 : *That ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

Here we have the result of love abounding in knowledge and discernment, that we may be sincere, which means, in the Greek, to be examined in the sun's light and warmth and found to be genuine, unmixed and pure ; and void of offence, not stumbling or turning aside from the path of obedience and virtue unto the day of Christ; that is, the day of His coming for the saints of this dispensation, when they will appear before the judgement seat of Christ to receive the things done through the body, whether they be good or bad (2 Corinthians 5. 9, 10). The day of Christ should be distinguished from the day of the Lord, which commences with the Lord's return to earth in judgement, for the punishment of the wicked and the deliverance of His suffering people. It is more than a thousand years in extent. Note the words of 2 Peter 3. 10 : " The day of the Lord will come as a thief, *in the which* the heavens shall pass away with a great noise," and so forth. This is at the time of the judgement of the Great White Throne. See Revelation 20.11,12.

How pleasant it is to contemplate enlightened saints being filled with the fruits (Greek, fruit, R.V.M.) of righteousness ! Such fruit is to the glory of God and to His praise through Jesus Christ, being the fruit of His Spirit (Galatians 5. 22, 23), and the fruit of the light (Ephesians 5. 9). The righteousness we have in Christ through faith is not the righteous acts of the saints (Revelation 19. 8).

Verses 12, 13 : *Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest;*

The Greek word for " progress " (*Prokopē*, *Pro* = before, *koptō* = to strike or cut) is thought to be borrowed from the practice of armies which cut away obstacles which impeded their progress. In the apostle's case what seemed to be barriers to the spread of the gospel were turned by God as means of spreading it, for each soldier of the Imperial guard to whom Paul was bound from day to day learned that he was a prisoner in the Lord (Ephesians 4. 1) and from him also of the glorious message of the gospel. He was one who was chosen to bear the name of Christ " before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel " (Acts 9. 15), to publish the statute, " Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," a statute which is the very core of the gospel. How many hardened warriors of Rome heard the divine message of love and mercy from Paul and believed it, the day of Christ will reveal. That there were some we cannot doubt, for Paul speaks of the progress of the gospel.

J.M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

Generation succeeds generation, and the children may forget, or value lightly, things that were precious to their fathers. It was so in Israel after the time of Joshua, under whom Israel served the LORD all his days. Such was his example that Israel remained faithful to the LORD all the days of the elders that outlived him (Joshua 24. 31, Judges 2. 7). Joshua and these elders had in person witnessed the work of the LORD on behalf of Israel; personal experience may make lasting impression and may determine a man's manner of life. After them there arose another generation, "which knew not the LORD, nor yet the work which He had wrought for Israel" (Judges 2. 10). The instruction of their fathers, too, seems not to have had due weight with them, for "they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers" (Judges 2.12). And what of the Fellowship today? There remain but few of those who separated themselves at the inception of the present testimony, and many of the next generation have been called home. Will history repeat itself? Is there to arise a new generation without a true understanding of our separated position and of "the one thing for God," of which we used to hear so much? Ministry on these is as much needed today as ever.

As a result of the form of *Bible Studies*, our readers are not in a position to know how frequently our contributors used the phrase "the one thing for God," and kindred phrases. We were much refreshed, and we rejoiced, to observe the frequent recurrence of these phrases. If our studies on "The Chosen Place" have done no more than underline these basic principles, they will have been worth the effort. J.B.

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

(Deuteronomy 7. 6, 7.)

In Deuteronomy there are mentioned both the people whom God chose and the place which God chose. In all God's dealings with mankind, He has exercised the supreme and sovereign right of choice for the outworking of His purposes, and He may choose anyone, any thing, any people and any place.

Among the days which stand out in the calendar of God is the day when He chose Israel (Ezekiel 20. 5). This choice of the people of Israel was based on (1) love, (2) His choice of Abraham, and (3) the covenant which He made with him and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob. They were the smallest nation upon the earth, yet the greatest because of the law that God gave unto them.

God's call and God's choice go together (e.g., see Isaiah 41. 8, 9, 1 Corinthians 1. 26). God called His people from Egypt because He chose them, and, despite their failures, their ups and downs, His choice of them has never altered.

Today God's people are the Israel of God. We too have heard the call and have been chosen in Him. More than that, our obedience to His will and word has brought us together as an elect race (a *chosen* generation, A.V.) to show forth the excellencies of Him who *called* us . . . (1 Peter 2. 9, 10), and the secret of our greatness lies not in largeness or fewness of numbers, but in the truth which God has revealed unto us. We stand a privileged people in a privileged place. To keep that place, to be among the people of God, is still a matter which depends on our obedience and, we would add, our holding fast. We have known somewhat of the Psalmist's words : " Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD ; the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance" (Psalm 33. 12). *Alex. M. Hope.*

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

THE CHOSEN PLACE

(Deuteronomy 12, 14. 22-27.)

From Brantford, Ont.—Having chosen Israel and redeemed them out of Egypt with the purpose that they might serve Him, and that He might dwell among them, the Lord now indicated that when they came to the land that He had chosen and promised, He would make known the Place which He had chosen. In this favoured place His Name and Presence would abide, if they would walk in His ways. Thither the tribes of Israel were commanded to go up that they might serve God as He had commanded. The manner of their worship and service, too, was of the LORD'S choosing, for He had given to Moses detailed instructions covering all that they were to observe. Thus we see that they were a chosen people who were to gather in a chosen place to serve their God in His own chosen way.

God's people of the present dispensation were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, redeemed to serve in the place of His choice, called into the Fellowship of His Son (1 Corinthians 1. 9), to continue stedfastly in whatsoever the Lord has commanded. Thus it is equally true in the present day that we are a chosen people, called to the chosen place to serve our God in the manner that He has chosen.

The things that God commanded to be destroyed were to be eliminated completely : if any of them were left, the possibility of the hearts of the Israelites being drawn away from the LORD to serve these vain things would be increased. The ebb and flow of Israel's history shows that the closer they walked with the LORD the more they overcame the snare of these idolatrous things. This is borne out in the case of some of the kings of Judah, who endeavoured to walk more closely with the LORD. For example, Jotham (2 Kings 15.33,34) did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah : howbeit, the high places were not taken away. If Israel had obeyed the voice of God, as given in Deuteronomy 12. 2,3, they would have been spared many a sad day. God's people of any dispensation cannot condone things God has commanded to be destroyed, and not expect to reap terrible results.

During the days of the Lord Jesus there were within the temple money-changers and also those who sold sheep and oxen. This no doubt has a connexion with Deuteronomy 14. 24-26 ; but it would appear that in the Lord's day there were some in authority who controlled to their own advantage the selling of these things : so much so, that the Lord said they had made His Father's house a place of merchandise, a den of robbers. It is thus that instructions given by God may lose their divine significance and become traditions of men.

R.D., J.B.

From Ilford.—We noticed four points of importance.

The exhortation to rejoice before the LORD, mentioned four times, is a strong reminder to us who have every cause to rejoice in His presence.

To diminish from or to add to the words and commandments of the LORD is always serious. His commandments should be kept meticulously today (Revelation 22. 18, 19).

God chose a particular place to put His name there. God still has such a place. The people of God today, who are such by reason of their obedience to all the Lord commands, are builded together into an habitation of God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2. 22). God's will is that all His children should be fully obedient, and be able to offer spiritual sacrifices to Him in the chosen place today, His house. It is sad that many Christians are seeking to offer such sacrifices in other places.

God expected a rejoicing people, bringing to Him an abundance of offerings in the place He should choose. Let us not rob God of his full due while we are in His presence, but rather let us bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, though it may have (as it properly should) cost us much.

John A. Lightfoot.

From Bradford, Halifax and Leeds.—Worship was the most vital aspect of Israel's national life : they were not to worship Jehovah as the nations around worshipped their gods, but at one central sanctuary. Later there were exceptions to this under special circumstances, e.g., Gideon's altar in Manasseh (Judges 6. 26), and the altar of the LORD which Elijah re-built and used (1 Kings 18. 30); but that did not alter the fact that the people of God's choice were to worship Him at the place of His choice and not of their own desire.

All killing of animals eligible for sacrifice had previously been a holy rite (Leviticus 17. 3-7), but now meat killed for consumption was exempted from ritual requirements, and the participants need no longer be ceremonially clean (12. 15). This is a necessary re-adjustment of the law for the new conditions into which the people were about to move.

The tithe when collected was to be consumed by the worshippers at a feast at the central sanctuary, presumably at the feast of tabernacles (16. 13-15), from which the Levite was not to be excluded [1]: but every third year it was to be stored in the villages and used for the Levites and for the relief of poverty (14. 22-29). Whereas in Numbers (18. 21-32) the whole tithe is to be given to the Levites "for an inheritance," in Deuteronomy we read only of the firstfruits (evidently a token gift, a basketful, 26. 2) being given to the priests and of the tithe of the third year being open to the Levites (14. 28, 29). Jewish tradition surmounts this difficulty by calling the Deuteronomy tithe a "second tithe," but there seems no other evidence for this, so' it must be an adjustment of the law or remain a difficulty.

M.G.H.

EXTRACTS.

From Willington Quay.—After their entry into the land the children of Israel set up the tent of meeting at Shiloh (Joshua 18. 1), and later the LORD referred to "My place which was in Shiloh, where I caused My Name to dwell at the first" (Jeremiah 7. 12). In Elkanah we have an example of an Israelite seeking to be well pleasing unto the LORD by obeying the injunctions of Deuteronomy 12, for he went up out of his city from year to year to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh (1 Samuel 1. 3)

The action of the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh in building an altar by Jordan (Joshua 22. 9-34) would not appear so praiseworthy. The reason they gave for having built the altar satisfied Phinehas the priest and the princes of the congregation, but their action was surely a contravention of the commandment of the LORD [3].

The eventual building in Jerusalem of a house for His name was the fulfilment of God's desire, and coincided with a period of rich blessing for Israel. As a result of Solomon's sin the LORD divided the kingdom, but it was still His will that His house in Jerusalem should be the place of service. For only a short period did the LORD have the joy of seeing His people serve Him thus, for Jeroboam's sin had the effect of drawing the people away from Jerusalem (1 Kings 12. 25-33).

The finding of the book of the law in the house of the LORD during the reign of Josiah, and Josiah's action in seeking to put matters right, brought about something of a halt in the declension that had taken place. Notwithstanding this, the LORD eventually said, " I will cast off this city which I have chosen, even Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there " (2 Kings 23. 27) [4].

K. R.

From Barry.—The question was asked, " Where was the chosen place?" We referred to Genesis 22. 1, 2, 4, 9, making special reference to the words "the place." Bethel was God's chosen place (Genesis 28. 10, 11, 19-22). The place and the house go together. In Joshua 18. 1 we see that the Tabernacle was set up in Shiloh, and to Shiloh must the tribes go with their sacrifices. Later, however, God revealed to David that He had in mind another place ; and so we read, " Moreover He refused the tent of Joseph, . . . but chose . . . Mount Zion which He loved " (Psalm 78. 67-69). The reason for this change is found in Jeremiah 7.11-15 ; 26. 6-9. The following scriptures were also referred to with regard to God's choice of Mount Zion, 2 Samuel 24.15-25, 1 Chronicles 21.28—22. 1, 2 Chronicles 3.1, 6.20. It is abundantly clear from these scriptures that God never had more than one place at any given time. It was asked, "Did God accept worship from individuals ? " Malachi 1. 10-13 and Romans 10. 20 were referred to as indicating that God did accept the worship of individuals who worshipped according to the light they had. It was emphasized, however, that God has legislated that collective worship should be made in His house, and in the present day that means those who are subject to the all-authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

K. Jones, D. H. Butler.

From Kingston-on-Thames.—No doubt some of the images to be destroyed would be beautiful and some of the people may have felt regret at their destruction : nevertheless they were displeasing to God. There is a possibility of saved ones worshipping " idols " in our day, and we are exhorted to guard ourselves from idols (1 John 5. 21).

It was definitely enjoined upon Israel by God that they should not offer burnt offerings in every place that they should see (Deuteronomy 12. 13), there is one God, one altar, one place. The psalmist, fully aware of this, said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the LORD " (Psalm 122. 1).

Today the truth of the one place is clearly taught in the New Testament Scriptures, for the house of God is brought before us as a " spiritual house " composed of " living stones," where spiritual sacrifices are offered up by a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2. 5), whose privilege it is to show forth the

excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2. 9).
W. H. Humphris.

From Cowdenbeath.—The children of Israel were commanded to destroy all the places where the nations served their gods. Correspondingly, we are exhorted to cast down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10. 3-5), not the physical destruction of present-day places of worship. God's instructions embraced all Israel: "thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates" (12.18). It is a remarkable thing that all the gods created by men "demand" but give nothing, but our God, the only true God, gives, and of what He gives we may give.

Special provision was made for the Levites: they were to receive the tenth portion, the tithe of the children of Israel, offered as a heave offering unto the LORD. This was for their service at the tent of meeting (Numbers 18. 21-24). Eating speaks of communion (12. 17); but blood was not to be eaten (12. 23). This applies at the present time (Acts 15. 20).

H.G.C.

From Wembley.—The children of Israel were told that they might eat any meat they wished in their own homes, provided they ate no blood. The question of the tithes was a different matter: they must be taken to the place of the Name and eaten before the LORD. The Levite, living among them, must have a portion, for he had no inheritance of his own (Numbers 18. 23, 24). One tithe was already assigned to the Levite, so we assume that the tithe which is to be eaten before the LORD is a second one [5].

A solemn warning is issued towards the end of chapter 12: the people must not become interested in the idols which the previous occupants of the land worshipped, for these were an abomination to the LORD. *C.A.B.*

From Edinburgh.—Just as Abraham's tent and altar went together, thereby revealing a link between walk and worship, so also would there be a link between the worship of other gods and the walking after them. The first commandment should always have been before Israel: "none other gods before Me." Hence no worship of these gods, and no walking after them.

If the distance was too far for the people to bring their offerings, then the offerings were to be exchanged for money, which was to be carefully brought to the place of the Name, and exchanged for offerings. Hence the money-changers and those that sold cattle had an important part to perform, but not within the temple precincts. *Alex. M. Hope.*

From Lerwick.—The nations which had previously possessed the land had served their gods in a number of places, but now the living God was to put His name in one place, and the pillars and the altars of the past were all to be destroyed, hewn down, and burned. Nothing was to be left or converted into places of service for Israel's God. It is ever God's desire that His people should make a clean break from the world and the past, and be found without distraction in the place of His choice: the traditions of men should never be brought forward for the pleasure of God. No agreement is possible between the temple of God and idols (2 Corinthians 6. 16).
D.S.

From Southport.—Moses, the man of God, knew something of the chosen place, having heard the words, "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 3.5). Jacob at Bethel reminds us of the truth of the house of God (Genesis 28) : Bethel means "The House of God," a place of sacrifice and obedience, something glorious for the Lord on earth. 1 Timothy 3. 15 speaks of one place only; and men who stand in this holy place must do so in full obedience to God's holy and revealed will. *J.G.H.*

From Crowborough.—God, being a jealous God, could not share His glory with another : therefore the places where the nations of the land had served their gods must be utterly demolished, and their name destroyed out of that place. When believers are added to God's house today, there must be a complete break with all past associations with the sects and systems.

The burnt offering could only be offered in the place of God's choice (12.13,14). If we wish to serve God as a holy priesthood today, we can only do so in association with His house, where we can offer up our spiritual sacrifices of praise. *J. Robertson.*

From Birkenhead.—Collective worship by God's people can only be associated with God's house. To preserve the national unity of Israel, the house of God was the focal point. One of the greatest causes for disunity lies in men doing that which is right in their own eyes. The unity of the people of God is involved in the house of God.

Those who are in the mind of the Lord find the chosen place. This was true of David. After the rebellion of Absalom, God answered him out of His holy hill, and brought him again to Jerusalem, where in the days of the plague he found that the threshing-floor of Oman the Jebusite was the chosen place (1 Chronicles 22. 1). *R. Hyland, L. Bowman.*

From Atherton.—It would appear that the oft repeated command, "Not in any place, but in the place which I shall choose," indicates the location, that is, the place of God's choice. We read of "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Corinthians 1. 2). Israel, dwelling in one land, must come to the one place ; but today, the people of God dwelling in many lands must, because of such conditions, meet in different cities or towns, but the same principle applies, one house, one people.

Sectarianism is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5. 19, 20). The word "heresies" here means "sect," and sects are contrary to God's will. It is delightful to contemplate the one thing for God with one practice in each place and everywhere. *J. Bullock, G.A.J.*

From Nottingham.—We hear today of "places of worship," a title attached by men to buildings of brick or stone. This is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. When we on the Lord's day morning draw nigh to offer our worship to God, we enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10. 19). This is the true place of worship.

We note that Israel were commanded to be active in two ways : they were to break down the things that were not of God, and to build up that which was of God. It is suggested that this applies to our work today : we should seek to uphold the testimony of the truth of the house of God, and this will expose the errors of those who reject the truth.

R. Hickling.

From Cardiff.—" O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth " (Psalm 8). " Holy and reverend is His name " (Psalm 111. 9). This is the name that dwelt in the chosen place, the place to which the erring, stubborn sons of Jacob were called, being brought out of Egypt by the outstretched hand of Jehovah of Hosts. The place in itself was no better than Dan or Bethel; it was the Name there that made the difference.

E.S.T.

From Greenock.—Offerings offered to God (12. 6, 11, 17, 26) could be offered only in the place of God's choice. The words, " thy holy things " (12. 26), spoken in connexion with offerings at the place of God's choice, together with the words spoken of those things which could be eaten within their gates—"the unclean and the clean may eat thereof" (12. 15, 22)—seem to show that the things which could be eaten within their gates were not regarded by God as holy things.

God's people were to rejoice (12. 7, 12, 18) when they came before Him with their offerings.

John H. Johnson.

From Wigan.—In contradistinction to altars being found anywhere and everywhere, there was to be one place for the LORD. The inhabitants of the land had chosen their places for worship, but God chose His own place. The pillars, Asherim, and altars were places of sorrow, but in His place Israel should eat before the LORD their God and should rejoice (12. 7).

Acts 2 has in its first and last verses the Greek phrase, *epi-to-auto*, translated in the R.V. respectively " in one place " (Acts 2. 1), " (added) to them " (Acts 2. 47). In the former the word " together " signifies more than " place " or " locality," and *epi-to-auto* suggests that they were one, in one purpose, on one common ground. So today God has one Community, which, although it is not in one locality, is governed by the same principles and follows the apostles' doctrine. This we believe to be the Fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Corinthians 1.9).

N.M.

From Liverpool.—Moses, the man of God, had a grasp of the divine purposes concerning the place of the Name, for the song of Moses reveals not only the triumph of Jehovah over His enemies, but also the purpose behind His great work : " Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them *in* the mountain of Thine inheritance, the place, O LORD, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in " (Exodus 15. 17). God's people were to be subject to His will. Our attention was directed to the fact that seemingly four different places (in name) are mentioned as places of sacrifice : Mount Zion, Mount Moriah, the threshing floor of Oman the Jebusite, and the place upon which Jacob lighted [6]. We noted that Shiloh was a temporary place only (Jeremiah 26. 6, 9; 7. 12; Psalm 78. 60). Psalm 78. 68 reveals, we thought, a definite connexion between the place and the tribe of Judah.

A.H.

From Glasgow.—For a clear picture of God's intentions it is necessary to go back to the principles seen in the garden of Eden, where God, the Creator of the whole earth, chose Himself a garden of specified size and with clear boundaries. There He would plant to His own peculiar liking, and receive pleasant service from the man whom He had created. Like principles are also seen in the Tabernacle, where in the wide wilderness God chose a limited court wherein were His house and altar in the midst of a redeemed people. So also when Israel came to their resting place in Canaan, God had in view a place where He would set His Name, which place would be sanctified to His use.

fied to His use.

The location of the Place of the Name is not disclosed in Deuteronomy 12. The error of Jeroboam (1 Kings 12) and the frequent condemnation of his wicked deeds in setting up two altars, show clearly the great importance of this one only place of divine service. God required that this principle be rigidly adhered to. The reason for this relates to teaching concerning Christ, for the Temple was built on mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3.1), on which mount the coming death of Christ had been foreshadowed in the offering of Isaac (Genesis 22). Moreover the sacrifices and services associated with the house of God all had their typical teaching concerning Christ.

It is important to notice that the "one place" of the Old Testament finds an answer in the "one thing" of the New Testament. Christ prayed "that they may be one" (John 17. 11), i.e., one thing, as in John 11. 52.
J.J.P.

THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE (Deuteronomy 11. 26-32, 27. 9-26, 28. 29, 30)

From Hamilton, Ont.—The blessing of Jehovah was distinct from the curse, and in them is revealed the holy character of God. The blessings and curses were annexed to obedience and disobedience. The blessing speaks of joy and happiness, life and the good pleasure of Jehovah. The curse speaks of sorrow, death, the displeasure and anger of God. God delights in blessing His people, showing lovingkindness unto thousands that love Him and keep His commandments (Deuteronomy 5. 9, 10). God had wonderful blessings in store for His people; Israel, it might be said, were blessed with every earthly blessing. They were associated with the kingdom and the land, and their continuance and standing as a holy nation were conditional. If they would love the LORD and walk in His ways, and if they would obey His voice and keep His commandments, blessing and prosperity would ensue. "Blessed are they that keep His testimonies" (Psalm 119. 2).

The Lord Jesus, having become a curse for us, has brought us into the place of blessing, but the blessings and privileges associated with God's house are still conditional, and depend upon our obedience to the will of God.
T. Ramage.

COMMENTS

[1] (Bradford, etc.).—It was not a question of excluding the Levites; Numbers 18. 21-28 and other scriptures show that the tithe was to be given to the Levites as their inheritance in Israel. It was to be for meat in God's house (Malachi 3. 10) to meet the need of the Levites, the poor and the stranger, and a tithe of the tithe was to be given to the priests (Numbers 18. 26). Deuteronomy 12 does not affect the statute of Numbers 18 re the tithe.—*J.M.*

[2] (Willington Quay).—As Elkanah was a Levite he would no doubt come to render Levitical service in addition to the appointed times of the holy convocations, at the time of (1) the passover and feast of unleavened bread, (2) Pentecost and (3) the feast of tabernacles.—*J.M.*

[3] (Willington Quay).—What satisfied Phinehas should satisfy us. It was not an altar for sacrifice, but an altar to see, to remind the tribes of the obligation of the two and a half tribes to come to the place of the Name at the times of holy convocation.—*J.M.*

[4] (Willington Quay).—The revival in Josiah's time was largely superficial, a godly king ruled a backsliding people. (See Jeremiah 3. 10).—*J.M.*

[5] (Wembley).—See Comment [1] above.—*J.M.*

[6] (Liverpool).—The threshing floor of Oman is the same as Mount Moriah.—*J.M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Brantford, Ont.—What would the words, "Every man (doing) whatsoever is right in his own eyes" (12. 8) refer to?

Answer.—This phrase is frequently used in the end of the book of Judges, and there we may read what it means in the things that were done in Israel. Ezekiel 20. 7, 8, 15-17 shows clearly that in the wilderness they did not forsake the idols of Egypt, and in the wilderness God foretold that He would scatter them among the nations (Deuteronomy 28. 64, 32. 26 : Ezekiel 20. 23, 24).—J.M.

Questions from Ilford.—(1) What is the spiritual significance of *eating* before the LORD? (2) Were the new generation (27. 9) the people of God by birth, or did they become such on the "this day" of 27. 9?

Answers.—(1) This phrase, "eating before the LORD," indicates the difference between eating in the place of the Name at the appointed feast times (and probably at other times also), and eating in their own homes. (2) Israel was not merely the elect people of God by birth, but by their confessed obedience to the covenant terms, as at Sinai (Exodus 19. 5-8 ; 24.1-8). See the force of Deuteronomy 26.16-19, especially verses 16 and 17, where Israel avouched God to be their God, and the LORD avouched them to be His people. This people were the children of the men who entered into covenant relationship with God, in Exodus 19 and 24, but who, alas, fell in the wilderness through their disobedience.—J.M.

Question from Wembley.—Was the place of the Name Shiloh or Jerusalem?

Answer.—Shiloh was the place of the Name till God forsook it in the time of Eli and Samuel, when the ark was taken by the Philistines. Jerusalem was the place of the Name from the time of David until the days of the Lord Jesus, when it too was forsaken.—J.M.

Question from Barry.—Numbers 18. 21-32 seems to imply that the tithe was wholly for the LORD : how then could Israel eat of the tithe?

Answer.—The tithe plainly was to be given to the Levites and was for them, the poor, and the stranger. A number of things are mentioned in Deuteronomy 12. 17-19, of certain of these the Israelites could eat, and certain were for the Levite. This passage must be read in the light of instructions given elsewhere. See Nehemiah 10. 37; Hebrews 7. 4-10.—J.M.

Question from Cardiff.—In what way did the people in the wilderness do what was right in their own eyes (12. 8) any more than they did in the land (Judges 17. 6)?

Answer.—See reply to question from Brantford. In both places, alas, they did what was right in their own eyes. Such should be a warning to us all.—J.M.

Question from Willington Quay.—It would seem to us that the LORD'S choosing of Shiloh, unlike His choosing of Jerusalem, was of a temporary nature. Are we correct in this?

Answer.—It was temporary because of the sin of Ephraim. Note in Psalm 78. 9, 10 how they turned back in the day of battle (like Israel at Kadesh-barnea), and kept not God's covenant, and refused to walk in God's law. Hence it was, in verses 67, 68 and 70, that God refused the tent of Joseph and chose Judah instead; He chose mount Zion instead of Shiloh, and David also to be His servant. Let us be in that condition that, when God is choosing, we may be in the line of His chosen ones.—J.M.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS
CHAPTER 1.

Verse 14 : *And that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.*

" Brethren " defines those who are born of God. " In the Lord " shows their position as united together in assembly life, as being subject to Christ as Lord. A fearless leader engenders the same courageous spirit in those that follow. Paul was fearless and tireless. He had had visions of the Lord that dwarfed all men and earthly things which opposed him in his course in the fulfilment of the ministry which he had received of the Lord : even his own life was of small account to him in this great work. No wonder men looking on this man with a poor afflicted body and with many weaknesses, yet fired with a zeal that burned with increasing vehemence, caught somewhat of the same boldness and determination to speak the word of God ! This is the powerful weapon put into men's hands, that the Holy Spirit uses in the carrying on of the work of God, against which the powers of darkness cannot stand.

Verses 15, 16, 17 : *Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife ; and some also of good will: the one do it out of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel: but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.*

Motive and effect we do well to keep apart ; they are often confused. This portion clearly shows that the gospel may be preached in an envious (jealous of the good fortune of another), factious (faction is the demon of strife) spirit, and some preachers may even be actuated by a spirit of covetousness and greed. Yet, despite this, souls may be saved, for God is sovereign and may bless His word though the preacher may not be acting in fellowship with Him. Jonah's message, both in the ship and in Nineveh, was most signally blessed to the turning of the mariners to Jehovah and the Ninevites to repentance, yet he was both a disobedient prophet and one who was angry with the LORD Himself when He showed mercy to the men of Nineveh, and said that he did well to be angry even unto death. Paul had great difficulty with the Judaizers of his time, in Antioch and Jerusalem, in the Churches of Galatia, and no doubt in Rome also. Such were active in preaching Christ in a party spirit, their object being to stir up affliction for Paul the prisoner, the defender of the fundamental principles of the gospel, which he set out so clearly that there was no room left for legal works or the flesh to glory. On the other hand, there were those in the church of God in Rome who preached out of good will; all honour to them !

Verse 18 : *What then ? only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed ; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*

Paul's view is that of the Lord as to those who use His name and professedly do His work. John said, " Master, we saw one casting out devils (demons) in Thy name ; and we forbade him, because he followed not with us. But Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against you is for you" (Luke 9. 49, 50). The name of Jesus is all-powerful, though those who may speak it may know little of its power, and those that preach Christ may not be walking with Him, yet the gospel will do its work in the hearts of those who believe. The Lord issues no interdict against using His blessed name. This must not be confused with that other statement of the Lord : " He that is not with Me is against Me ; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." The Lord only gathers disciples together according

to the principles of His word (Acts 2. 41, 42). Alas, there are many who set aside these divine principles and gather according to the doctrines of men, either ancient or modern, and such are scatterers of the Lord's sheep.

Verses 19, 20 : *For I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death.*

" My salvation " cannot mean Paul's assured deliverance from prison, though some have thought so, but rather that salvation indicated in the words, " that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." Paul wished no such calamity to befall him as befell John the Baptist, who from his prison sent his disciples to the Lord with the words, " Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another ? " (Matthew 11. 3). Whether he was in " Doubting Castle," or whether some other motive caused him to act as he did, it may be impossible to say, but who can doubt that he needed to be saved from such a state that caused him to act as he did ? The gloom of discouragement or doubt is as a creeping paralysis from which we all need to be saved. What buoyancy is in the apostle's spirit when he contemplates Christ being magnified in him, whether by life or death ! The preaching and praying of saints on the manward side, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ on the Godward, would effect this glorious result in the apostle's life and testimony right to the end.

Verse 21 : *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

We have here an intriguing statement, yet it is but the summing up of the previous verses. It is what he puts in other words in different places, as for instance, " God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him " (Galatians 1. 15, 16). It was not to reveal His Son *to* Paul, but to reveal His Son *in* him. " I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me " (Galatians 2. 20). " Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body " (2 Corinthians 4. 10). The objective in Paul's life was to live Christ: the old Saul of Tarsus was dead, and Christ was living over again on earth in the man Paul the apostle. What a conception ! What an expectation and hope ; Christ magnified in the body of a man ! With the greatest of worldly men whose portion is in this life, it can be written, " To die is loss " but with Paul and all such-like men, " To die is gain." The reason is, their portion is not in this life, but in the life to come. Their treasure is in heaven, where thieves do not break through and steal. What gain it will be ! There is our citizenship, our country and our home, our friends, our wealth, and, above all else, the Lamb, our Saviour and our Lord.

Verses 22, 23 : *But if to live in the flesh,—if this is the fruit of my work, then what I shall choose I wot not. But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better:*

Paul has just placed before his readers two propositions—to live, and to die. What is meant here by " this is the fruit of my work," or " this is to me the fruit of work " ? " This " points us back to what he has been saying with reference to the purpose of his life, that for him to live was Christ, and that Christ should be magnified in his body. Between living such a life in the flesh, and departing to be with Christ put him in a strait. Which should

he choose ? Who can answer such a question ? No one, unless he is assured, as Paul was, not a great while later than this, when he wrote, " For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith " (2 Timothy 4. 6, 7), that his time has come to depart and to be with Christ. We all want to live until we have borne such fruit in our lives to God as it is His will we should, and then to be called home is the best for us. Those who live Christ live fruitful and victorious lives.

Verses 24, 25 : *Yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith ;*

The need of the saints ever pressed itself upon Paul, and his will was to abide with them, and he seemed confident that this was the Lord's will for him at that time also. It is, I think, better to render " your progress and joy of faith," of the A.V., than "in the faith," of the R.V. Though the definite article is before faith here, it is the subjective faith of the Philippians, rather than objective faith, *i.e.* the faith. The definite article is frequently in the Greek before faith where it is subjective faith. See Romans 10. 17 ; 2 Corinthians 1. 24; 4. 13, etc.

Verse 26 : *That your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again.*

We have here the unique expression concerning the boasting of the Philippians—" In Christ Jesus in me " (Paul). In Christ Jesus denotes Him in whom their boasting ever was, and the presence of the apostle with them again a further cause for glorying.

Verse 27 : *Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel;*

" Manner of life " literally means " to behave as citizens " ; and remembering that our citizenship is in heaven (chapter 3. 20), we see how fitting a worthy manner of life is for such citizens, so that by life as well as by lip the gospel may be commended. How necessary also is divine unity to the progress of the gospel ! The Lord prayed that those whom He was leaving as His witnesses on earth might be one (John 17. 21, 22). Paul here entreats the Philippians " to stand fast in one spirit, with one soul." Division blights divine testimony. How successful the enemy has been in causing this ! The striving (striving together) is not *for*, but *with* (R.V.M.), the faith of the gospel. The gospel is the weapon which the combatants use in the combat against the powers of darkness. Striving (*Sunathleō*) comes from the Greek word for athlete, so the church in Philippi was a group of heaven's athletes engaged in a mighty contest of rescuing souls from the power of darkness.

Verse 28 : *And in nothing affrighted by the adversaries: which is, for them an evident token of perdition, but of your salvation, and that from God ;*

Christians are not to be scared or terrified by their opponents. The athlete who is afraid of his opponent enters the stadium in the spirit of a beaten man. He that fears God need fear the face of no man. " Who art thou, that thou art afraid of man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass ? " (Isaiah 51.12). The opposition of the adversaries is, Paul says, a demonstration or omen of their destruction and of our salvation in due time from them. God will in due time deal with opposers and save His faithful witnesses.

J.M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Romans 15. 4), is our assurance for using the Old Testament writings as an analogy for the present day. In Deuteronomy the analogy is unmistakable: most of our contributors developed in their papers the analogue with regard to the holy nation, and consequently there was much repetition, which in turn led to extensive excisions. We were, nevertheless, happy to see the close parallelism of thought: it is good to see fellow-students of the Scriptures thinking in close agreement. We cannot afford to lose sight of the principle that God's people must always be separated unto Him. We trust those younger in the Faith are making good use of the opportunity, afforded by our study of Deuteronomy, to grasp firmly the basic things seen there. To the natural man separation may seem severe and unattractive, but without it we should lose the spiritual joy of communion with God, the solemn privilege of worship in the Holies, and happy fellowship with saints living in obedience to the Lord. We cannot enjoy the riches of Christ, if we do not bear His reproach and willingly reject the pleasures of the world. Remember that Moses accounted the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than the treasures of Egypt (Hebrews 11. 26). J.B.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY A HOLY PEOPLE

(Chapters 7. 1-11 ; 13 ; 14. 1-21 ; 26. 16-19)

From Birkenhead.—It was God's desire that Israel should be a holy people or nation. The word nation is used to describe a people separated by language, customs and land from other nations [1]. In Exodus 19. 5, 6 we have the first reference to Israel as "an holy nation," conditional on their obedience to the voice of God and the keeping of His covenant. Today God has a people whom He has chosen, and who are described as "a holy nation, a people for God's own possession," for the purpose of showing forth the excellencies of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2. 9): at one time we were no people but now, having obtained mercy, we are the people of God.

Israel occupied a unique position amongst the nations, being separated from them to be an example and make no alliances with these other nations, so today the people of God are marked out and separated, their manner of living being different from the world around. They should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present age (Titus 2. 12) and serve the Lord Christ. It was God's desire that that generation should not overlook the great work of redemption from bondage in Egypt (7. 8). Similarly, we need to be reminded of God's loving kindness to us in redemption.

In chapter 13 one vital lesson we noted was in connexion with the judgement which was to be meted out to any city following the teaching of false doctrine. This involved action by the nation as a whole. The holy nation had the responsibility to see that no such teaching was preached

in any city. This would remind us of the responsibility of the Fellowship today regarding the teaching of false doctrine in any assembly of God. Judgement might extend even to the removing of the lampstand, should the error continue.

The children of Israel were reminded (ch. 14) of God's commandments in relation to His people; a holy God demands a holy people rendering complete obedience to His commands. They were to discern between the clean and the unclean; failure to comply would bring about the displeasure of God. God made the distinctions, and these were to be accepted without question. The people of God today must discern between the clean and the unclean, between good and evil.

R. Hyland, P. Roylance.

From Lerwick.—The same faithful God, who has called us into the Fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ (7. 9; 1 Corinthians 1. 9), had chosen Israel from among all the nations of the earth to be unto Him a peculiar and a holy people (14. 2). Through His servant Moses, who first met God on holy ground (Exodus 3.5), and who had given to Israel God's holy law (Romans 7. 12), God set forth the standard of holiness which He required from His people: holiness must be born of separation. The seven nations, whose land Israel was to possess, lay in the darkness of idolatry, and were thus unfit to please a holy and righteous God, who therefore instructed His own chosen people as to how they ought to behave in such circumstances: "thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them"—no compromise, no alliance: the people of God must recognize their divine position and obey the holy One who out of love had chosen them (7. 8).

"There is none holy as the LORD" (1 Samuel 2.2), and whatever thing was likely to turn Israel away from Him, whether it be a dumb image (7. 5) or a false prophet from among themselves, must be destroyed and put away from their midst (13. 5).

D.S.

From Kingston-on-Thames.—After Israel had been delivered from the bondage of Egypt, God revealed to them that His purpose in them was that they should be a peculiar treasure unto Him from among all peoples. They were to be a kingdom of priests and an holy nation, "a peculiar people unto Himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth." The word "peculiar" here does not mean "strange," as it often does in modern speech, but "exclusive" or "special." Perhaps the equivalent New Testament expression would be more readily understood—"a people for God's own possession." This blessed but solemn relationship was not the automatic result of deliverance from Egypt, although the deliverance was a necessary step. God's word to the Israelites was, "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me." They were free to choose whether or not to enter into the covenant relationship, but God in His sovereign grace had already chosen them and set His love upon them, although they were the fewest of all peoples. Had this been fully appreciated, pride would never have reared its head.

They were "a people that dwell alone" and were not to be reckoned among the nations. Such a position could be maintained only if there were no compromise with the nations round about. Separation was one of the most important truths to be learned. The punishments which were to be meted out to those who failed to observe the principles of separation may seem severe, but the very existence of the nation was at

stake and any relaxation would bring dire consequences in its train. So today the seeming harshness of scriptural separation, in its bearing upon family ties and social relationships, is often criticised, but it is God's way, and the only way, if He is to have a people for His own possession.

Strict rules were to be observed as to what could be eaten. The Israelite was not to defile himself by eating any abominable thing. This was because they were a holy people, separated unto God. The things which were forbidden were, in the main, those which it would be wise to avoid in a warm climate, but God's purpose primarily was that we who are God's people today might learn that discrimination is vitally necessary in our choice of spiritual food. It should be characterized by the parted hoof, speaking of a separated walk, and the chewing of the cud, speaking of quiet meditation. Whether or not there is any spiritual teaching to be found in the rules concerning clean and unclean birds and fishes, at least this much is clear, our reading and listening must be confined to things which are clean, holy and sanctified. "But like as He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1. 15, 16)

L. Burrows.

EXTRACTS.

From Nottingham.—Some in the organisations of men outside teach that, because Christ has set us free, we are free to walk as we like, free, if we so desire, to take part in the things of the world. This is not compatible with the teaching of Scripture in respect to God's holy nation, His peculiar people, whether of a past or of the present dispensation. We were chosen to be a peculiar people, a people separated to God. Therefore we have no part in the world's politics, no place in the world's armies. Note God's twofold purpose for His peculiar people of this day; we are to be a holy priesthood and a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2), and in each capacity we have a service to render, though many believers lose sight of the Godward aspect.

It is most remarkable that the distribution of the peoples of the earth was made according to the number of the children of Israel (32. 8). God had in view Israel, a nation as yet unborn, when he gave to the nations their places, which He did before the call of Abram (Genesis 10. 5, 20, 31).

F. Allen, R. Hickling.

From Greenock.—It was said of Israel by Balaam that they were "a people that dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob?" (Numbers 23. 9, 10). "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy tabernacles, O Israel! As valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the riverside, as lign-aloes which the LORD hath planted, as cedar trees beside the waters" (Numbers 24. 5, 6). In these similes are thoughts of quietness, rest, fruitfulness and majesty. Compare Titus 2. 14, "that He (our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ) might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works." Good works are different from righteous works, for the doing of good works blesses both the evil and the just, whereas the doing of righteousness rewards the just and punishes the evil (Matthew 5. 43-48; Romans 2. 1-5). Goodness has in it generosity, and this ought to characterize the people of God.

The Hebrew word translated "peculiar" (according to Strong's Concordance) is from a verb meaning "to shut up" or "wealth (as closely

shut up)." The children of Israel were to be a peculiar people unto God, closely shut up to God and therefore shut off from the nations round about. The purpose of God was that they should be a holy people, and therefore "turning aside," which is much before us in this study, had to be severely dealt with. Enemies without and within had to be put to death without compassion. If a person brought an abomination into his house, he became a devoted thing (i.e., for utter destruction) like unto it (7. 25). If the inhabitants of one of their cities turned aside, it brought the fierceness of God's anger on the people as a whole, until they had been put to the sword and all that belonged to them destroyed by fire (13. 17). Compare in this connexion Joshua 7. 1. To be a holy people unto God required "wholly following" the LORD.

John H. Johnson.

From Edinburgh.—In discerning between the clean and the unclean animals, the two essentials were dividing the hoof and chewing the cud. The two are necessary: the one speaks of the outward walk and the other of the inward life. We might study and meditate upon the word of God, but, if our walk does not correspond, we are unclean. Again, there is the possibility of walking with Pharisaic blamelessness which is not the result of the hidden life. In the first octonary of Psalm 119 we see the parted hoof, and in verse 9 provision is made for cleansing ("according to Thy word") in case of defilement. The written word and, above all, the living Word should be our guide.

There were also two essentials for the cleanness of fish, namely, fins and scales, both being necessary. Fins enable the fish to move through the water, while scales keep out the dirt and scum. This would teach us that while we are passing through this world we must keep out its influences and sins. As for the birds, the carnivorous and omnivorous were unclean. All winged creeping things were unclean, except those mentioned in Leviticus 1. 21, 22. From this we learn that we must resist all that is of a carnal nature.

J. Paterson.

From Glasgow.—God called the children of Israel out of Egypt, that He might fulfil His oath which He had made unto their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and because He desired a holy people to worship Him. There were many things which could mar their holiness, Moses therefore warned them of the snare which would entice them away from God, that is, the nations, and the gods they worshipped. Intermarriage was forbidden for this would cause the people to be enticed away to worship other gods. If any disobeyed these commands severe punishment would be theirs: it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for our God is a consuming fire. There was also the possibility of one arising from their midst to proclaim himself a prophet of God, and show a sign or a wonder to draw away the people from God. Such an one had surely to be put to death. And if a brother or a bosom friend sought to draw them away from God, he also was to be stoned to death, so that all Israel should fear and do no more wickedness as this.

Fred Harvey.

From Crowborough.—Deuteronomy 7 brings before us the dangers arising from wrong companions, and in this God commanded His people not to compromise: in the putting away of evil they were not to show mercy. Deuteronomy 13 tells us of false teachers who have, it would seem, a measure of truth in their message, but mixed with evil. Again we are warned to show no mercy. It may be that a whole company is involved

in wrong teaching or wrong practice, and we must of necessity put the whole company away.

Deuteronomy 14. 1, 21 teaches concerning defilement through association with the dead: death is the result of sin, and renders unclean any who come into contact with the dead.

S. Swift.

From Liverpool.—We note the difference between God's command concerning the seven nations (20. 17, 18), and the instructions concerning cities (20. 10-15). It was suggested that these nations were so guilty of abomination and idolatry that they were ripe for judgement, and God wished to bring His judgement upon them and reveal His abhorrence of idolatry.

The sad tale of the early chapters of Judges, after Joshua had led Israel into the land, gives us solemn warning through the result of their failure to observe the command to destroy and to make no covenant (Judges 1. 21-35, 2. 7-9). The danger of false prophets arising and leading the people astray was brought before them. Note the force of the words, "in the midst of thee." There is a parallel in Acts 20, where Paul warns of what would transpire after his departure (Acts 20. 25-32). Jeremiah was in effect accused of being a false prophet (Jeremiah 38).

Chapter 13. 12-14 shows the responsibility of the nation collectively towards their cities, and verses 15 and 16 show the nation acting in judgement. This, we thought, typifies judgement among God's people today, and we associated it with Leviticus 14. 33-53, which reveals God's mind with regard to sin in an individual and in an assembly.

J. Wannop, A.H.

From Barry.—God warned the children of Israel that they would be tried and tested by (a) false prophets, (b) relatives, and (c) sons of worthlessness. No matter who should seek to draw away the hearts of God's people after other gods, the command was, "neither shall thine eye pity." In reference to false prophets our attention was drawn to 1 John 4. 1-3 and Revelation 2. 2. The instruction as to relatives should give us guidance in our attitude to those who are put away (1 Corinthians 5. 9-13) from an assembly. In the judgement on cities we see the responsibility of one assembly towards another; if one goes wrong the others must act.

The matter of eating is taken up by God as affecting the holiness of His people. We need to take heed as to what we feed on, and to remember the words of our beloved Master, "I am the Bread of Life." It was also suggested that we can learn the lesson that we can have things in the home that may not be expedient in an assembly, but anything that would draw us away from the Lord would be wrong. In our business transactions it is not for us to question what people outside do with their lives: it was wrong for God's people to eat anything that died of itself, but it could be sold to the stranger. We thought, however, that our example to the world should guide us in what we should sell to the stranger.

D. H. Butler, J. Doel.

From Wigan.—Israel's collective testimony was subsequent to redemption by blood and separation by water, for Israel were redeemed by blood (Exodus 12) and baptized in the cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10. 2). Today we have the redemptive work of Christ (Ephesians 1.7) and baptism in water (Acts 2. 41). This accomplished, God was ready to enter into

covenant relationship with them, first reminding them of all He had done for them in His grace : we too have eternal blessings according to His grace (Ephesians 1 ; 1 Peter 1. 3-5) [2]. Israel avouched God to be their God (26. 17) and God avouched them to be His people (26. 18). Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people (Exodus 24. 8). Answering to this we have Peter writing to the saints of this dispensation as the elect in sanctification unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1. 1, 2). Israel must then respond to the law which was given them : today we must continue steadfastly in the apostles' teaching (Acts 2. 42), and contend earnestly for the Faith once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

Israel were not to imitate the nations (14. 1); neither are we to walk according to the course of this world (Ephesians 2. 2 ; Colossians 3. 7), nor be fashioned according to our former lusts (1 Peter 1. 14, 15). *J.H.*

From Southport.—The children of Israel were not to practise the customs of the neighbouring nations, e.g., they were not to disfigure themselves for the dead, as did some of the nations : the New Testament counterpart is, " Be not fashioned according to this world " (Romans 12. 2).

God gave His holy people a list of forbidden meats as a test of obedience. Adam was tested in like manner in the garden of Eden. Though we are not restricted in this sense today, God does expect us to obey Him in holiness of life and in separation. *N.B.*

From Willington Quay.—Israel was to be a peculiar people unto the LORD. Separation was to be the vital principle, whether as to marriage (7. 3), their worship and service (Deuteronomy 13), or their eating (14. 1-21). We sought a basis for distinguishing the clean from the unclean (chap. 14). This distinction goes back to the time of Noah : the clean and the unclean were to be preserved for future replenishing of the earth. Seemingly it was given to Adam to eat herbs and fruit only ; this would continue until Noah was instructed otherwise. We note that though the unclean meats were forbidden to Israel, the meats were not of themselves impure, as they could be sold to, and eaten by, the stranger. The distinction was removed by the Lord whilst here on earth; and the making of all meats clean was later confirmed in a vision to Peter. *C.B.*

From Wembley.—"Holy" (7. 6) means "separate, set apart," and has the same meaning in Exodus 19. 6 and Leviticus 20. 26. The same meaning is found in 1 Peter 1. 15, 2. 5, 9, thus giving a very definite link indicating that God's requirements are unchanged with regard to the holiness of a people for Himself. Holiness in this sense cannot be maintained without separation. God's ancient people were to be separated from the nations dwelling around them. Today our separation is from the world, unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6. 14), and from certain believers (Galatians 5. 20, 21) : the word "heresies" is the same Greek word as "sect" in Acts 5. 17. *TV. F. Toms.*

From Hamilton, Ont.—The LORD'S desire for Israel is seen in Psalm 84. 11 : " No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly," and yet in spite of all Jehovah's promises, His longsuffering and His love for them, they grieved the LORD. We can learn solemn lessons from Israel's past history : Israel might have been used of God to bring divine

blessings to the nations, but instead, because of the course which she took, she brought divine judgement upon herself.

Israel's separation is seen in abstinence from certain meats. God made known the animals that were clean and unclean, those of which they were to eat and those which were to be an abomination unto them (Leviticus 11). Our separation today is also shown *in* abstinence, but not from meats, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving" (I Timothy 4. 4). It is the responsibility of God's chosen people today to separate themselves from everything that is not of God.

R. Dryburgh, W. Ramage, Jr., W. Dryburgh.

From Atherton.—Deuteronomy 14. 6 brings out a most helpful truth in relation to the chewing of the cud and the parting of the hoof. The chewing of the cud would tell of our meditating upon the word of God, giving it careful and considered thought. The parting of the hoof would tell of separation. Thus as we allow the word of God to take effect and operate in our lives, then the step of separation will be taken and the walk of separation maintained.

In chapter 13 there are several similar expressions of the utmost gravity : "to draw thee aside" (13. 5), "to draw thee away" (13. 10), and "have drawn away" (13.13). The apostle Paul, speaking to the elders of Ephesus, refers to men arising "speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20. 26-30). Yet the matters under consideration in chapter 13 may well go deeper, since idolatry is in question, with its dread consequences. Idol worship may be viewed in a wider sense—love of self, of money, and of pleasure rather than of God (2 Timothy 3. 1-9): aught that takes the place of God is idol worship.

G. A. Jones.

From Cowdenbeath.—God loved (had affection for) Israel (7. 8), therefore He set His love upon (delighted in) them (7. 7) and chose them. In return God looked for love (7.9) and obedience to His commandments.

Israel became God's people at Sinai, when they avowed obedience to all that God had spoken. God is holy and will dwell with men only if they are holy. Every believer has been made holy, sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1.2). Nothing can mar or interfere with this state of holiness. There is also a conditional aspect of holiness, for which we ourselves are responsible and which demands separation from evil. This separation is seen in at least three different ways in God's dealings with Israel: (1) separation from the peoples which were around them (chapter 7), (2) separation from evil from within (chapter 13), and (3) personal, daily separation from evil (chapter 14). All are essential to the existence of a holy people for God.

In chapter 13 are given three instances in which action had to be taken to put away evil. The prophet or dreamer (verses 1-5) would speak of the false teacher who might be found in a church of God today, and against whom action must be taken to excommunicate. The member of the family (verses 6-11) would speak of an individual saint in an assembly, who must be judged and put away for wrongdoing. Obedience to God's word and not pity must be the guiding rule. In verses 12-18 there is a much more serious matter which involves a complete city, which is finally destroyed, speaking of God's judgement being carried out on an assembly and resulting in its cessation. Note the care required in the investigation of such a case. "Inquire . . . make search . . . ask diligently . . . if it be truth and the thing certain . . . thou shalt surely smite."

J. Bowman.

COMMENTS

[1] (Birkenhead).—"Nation" is one of a family of words which spring from the word "natal," which means belonging to one's birth, which comes from Latin through French to the English language. From the Latin *natus*, born, springs nation. Of the Hebrew word for nation Gesenius says, "prop, it would deem *body*, . . . and then a *body politic*." (Political means constituting the State.) The Greek word for nation (*Ethnos*) means "a race (as of the same habit)," that means of the same custom or law. So that while birth cannot be dismissed from the idea of nationhood, yet nationhood signifies more, it indicates a people subject to the same law and following the same custom and habit. It will be seen from Exodus 19. 5, 6, that obedience to the voice of God was fundamental to Israel becoming a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. Then in chapter 20 Jehovah the King of Israel promulgated His law from the top of Sinai, and no nation ever heard God speaking out of the midst of fire and lived, as did Israel (Deuteronomy 4. 33).—*J.M.*

[2] (Wigan).—It is, I think, well to remember that the covenant which God made with Israel at Sinai and the New Covenant are not identical. God says that the New Covenant is "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers" (Hebrews 8.9). The New Covenant has two sides, (1) the forgiveness of sins (the non-remembrance of sins means that there is no more offering for sins), and the new birth, implied in no one saying to his brother, "Know the Lord: for all shall know Me," and (2) the writing of God's Laws on the heart and minds, and to such as subject themselves to such writing God says, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." (See Hebrews 8. 8-12 ; 10. 15-17.) Note the New Covenant applies to Israel in a coming day, and to such as those who are viewed in Hebrews now.—*J.M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Crowborough.—What is the significance of the statement, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk" (14. 21) ?

Answer.—To seethe means to boil. The blood of the mother resulted in both the kid being born and the milk to sustain it after birth. God appears to have regarded it as a thing of abhorrence to Himself, that the mother's milk should ever be used to cook her offspring. It shows, I think, the tender feelings of God for His creatures. It may also have deeper lessons, if our eyes were trained to see them.—*J.M.*

Question from Hamilton, Ont.—Why are the animals in Leviticus 11 called unclean ?

Answer.—Paul speaking of ceremonial uncleanness, which was abrogated by the Lord in Mark 7. 18, 19, says "that nothing is unclean of itself" (Romans 14. 14), and again, "Every creature of God is good" (1 Timothy 4. 4). God made every creature for some wise purpose, and knowing well His purpose in them and their habits, He selected certain animals which could be eaten by Israel, and of these, certain which could come to His altar, for not all creatures which were clean could be sacrificed to Him. He specifically indicated which were clean and which unclean to a people whom He had cleansed and separated from all other peoples to be a holy people. His wise selection of creatures to be eaten is generally followed among the British people and those of the British family of nations. Other peoples extend their dietary to other creatures.—*J.M.*

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS
CHAPTER 1.

Verses 29, 30 : *Because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer in His behalf: having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

" To believe in Him " here, presents faith in the same sense as in 1 John 5. 4, 5 : " This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith, and who is he that overcome the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? " It is not here the initial act of faith which brings salvation to the believing sinner, but the faith which is continuous, the victorious faith of the believer in an antagonistic world, which is granted to him on the behalf of Christ, both to believe on Him and to suffer in His behalf. Those who are of this faith will be sufferers, be their sufferings great or small. The same conflict which was in the Lord, and also in Paul, will be in them. Conflict is ever known by the athlete, the violent struggle which they had seen in Paul in past days, and which still continued in him in the then present time as a prisoner of Rome.

CHAPTER 2.

Verse 1 : *If there is therefore any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions,*

Here the apostle raises powerful arguments, based on Christian experience, in reference to what he is about to put before them as to the need of being of one mind and having the same love. There could be no doubt that the Philippians had known comfort in Christ, for He is a Comforter, as is also the Holy Spirit. Had they not known the consolation (or encouragement) of love ? for God's love had been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, as in the case of the Romans (Romans 5. 5), that blessed restfulness that only love can minister to a restless and storm-tossed soul. They could not have missed having known that fellowship with the Father and the Son, that the indwelling Holy Spirit makes possible for those to know in whom He dwells (1 John 1.1-7; 2 Corinthians 13.14); this fellowship is to be experienced through walking in the light. And of tender mercies and compassions, who should know more of these than those who know the yearning love of the Father, Son and Spirit for the children of God? The Philippians had known all these. "If" here is not the "if" of doubt, but the "if" which forms the premise of an argument.

Verse 2 : *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind;*

What can be more disastrous to an army facing an enemy than dis-unity ? Dis-unity amongst saints is a tragedy, and we are in this day of sectarianism surrounded by it. The apostle has just been viewing the saints as striving together with the faith of the gospel, but if through dis-unity their team-work is destroyed, how helpless they will become ! Instead of striving together against the common enemy they would be striving against one another. Paul's joy over them was in their being of the same mind and having the same love. It is said of the multitude of the disciples in Jerusalem in the early days, that they were of one heart and soul (Acts 4. 32). What progress was made in those early days as the result of this unity ! " Of one mind " means "joined in soul."

Verses 3, 4 : *Doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.*

Some words have both a good and a bad meaning according to the context in which they are found, but faction is ever a bad word. It was used in the past of such as canvassed for public office, intriguing, and doing anything for gain or ambition, courting applause. It has been called the demon of strife. Vainglory is simply empty pride. In contrast to striving for applause or empty glory, saints should be characterized by lowliness of mind, humility, modesty, each esteeming the other better, a more excellent man, than himself. How foolish is the practice of peering into, and preening oneself before, the mirror of self-admiration ! The women who served at the door of the Tent of Meeting of old gave their copper mirrors to provide the Laver for the cleansing of the priests in the service of God. A worthy example ! Saints are not to be looking, viewing intently, their own things, matters, interests, qualities, or advantages, or whatever would engender pride of heart, but rather the things or excellencies of others. We have to be exceedingly careful in the consideration of our own things that we do not fall a prey to self-gratification as to what we are or have.

Verses 5, 6 : *Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God,*

Here we have the humility of Christ Jesus set as a pattern of mind for those who would follow Him. Men by nature are proud, some more than others, but by the contemplation of Christ His lowly mind is to become ours. The mind of Christ is, that He who is, and was, and ever will be, in the form (*Morphē*) of God took the form of a servant. He was originally (R.V.M.) in the form of God, and "none can be in the form of God who is not God." " *Morphē* (form) . . . signifies the form as it is the utterance of the inner life," the "mode of existence." Being truly and fully God, He did not grasp, as a prize in rapine or robbery, at being on equality with God, for He was equal in all the attributes and prerogatives of Deity, of glory, honour, majesty, and so forth, which are peculiar to, and exclusively those of, Deity.

Verses 7, 8 : *But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.*

He being God, it was impossible for Him to grasp anything as a prize and so enrich Himself, but He could empty Himself, He could become poor : "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor" (2 Corinthians 8. 9). He could not empty Himself of the form of God, but He "emptied, stripped Himself of the insignia of majesty," as is implied in John 17. 5 : "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." This casts light on the self-emptying of the Lord. He could not divest Himself of that glory which is inherent in Divine Being, the glory of the only begotten Son (John 1. 14), which the apostles beheld, veiled as it was by the veil of His flesh, and so tempered to their sight; but of that glory which is associated with Deity on the throne of heaven He emptied Himself in His self-humiliation and taking the form (*Morphē*) of a servant

(bondservant). The two actions coincide, the self-emptying, and the taking of the form of a bondservant. As with the form of God, so with the form of a bondservant, all the characteristic attributes of bondservice are implied, such as subjection and obedience and all that goes with bondservice. In this taking the form of a bondservant is implied the Lord's humanity. He who is Lord of all became Jehovah's Servant to minister to others and to die for them. See Matthew 20. 28, and note the context. "The likeness of men" strengthens the former statement, "the form of a servant," for man was made to be God's bondservant, which the apostle gladly acknowledges in chapter 1.1, when he writes of himself and Timothy being bondservants of Christ Jesus. Sinners are bondservants broken loose from their Divine Master and Maker, and this rebellion will become more manifest yet, as Psalm 2. 3 clearly shows. Christ came in the likeness (*Homoïomati*) of men, truly man, but with a difference, for He was not man utterly; He was God, the Word, who had become flesh (John 1. 14), and He was only in the likeness (*Homoïomati*) of sinful flesh (Romans 8. 3) He was found in fashion (*Schēmati*) as a man. This is how men found Him; in His outward appearance there was no apparent difference between Him and other men. The Jewish people condemned Him, because He being Man made Himself God (John 10. 33). Pilate and the Lord's accusers took Him for a man merely (Isaiah 53. 2, 3). The words form (*Morphē*), likeness (*Homoïōma*), fashion (*Schēma*), are worthy of careful study. There is a grading of thought from *Morphē*, the form as expressive of the inner life, to *Schema*, the outward, superficial appearance. He who humbled Himself from the throne of God to the stable in Bethlehem to be Man on earth, humbled Himself still further, becoming obedient, as Jehovah's Servant, to death, the death of the cross, the death of a slave or a common criminal. Mystery of mysteries!

Verses 9, 10, 11 : *Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

The former verses describe the Lord's descent from the throne to the cross, these show the ascent from the cross to the throne. Christ emptied and humbled Himself, but God highly exalted Him, giving Him a name that is above every name. There are differences of opinion as to what this name is, as to whether it is the name "Jesus," or a new name as yet unknown to us. It should, I think, be noted that this name which has been given to Him is given in connexion with His exaltation, whereas the name Jesus was given when He humbled Himself and became the Babe of Bethlehem. It seems to me that this is the name referred to in Revelation 3. 12, "Mine own new name", which He promised to write upon the overcomer of the church in Philadelphia. It seems to be connected with the thought of overcoming, for it was after the Lord had overcome all that was opposed to Him and had triumphed through the cross, that this name was given to Him, befitting the Lord as Victor in resurrection; thus the name of the Great Overcomer will be written on all overcomers. But on the other hand men in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, will be compelled to bow in the name of Jesus, the name that so many have despised, the name of the rejected One, and to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that to the glory of God the Father, the Father of His co-equal Son.

Verses 12, 13 : *So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure.*

The Philippians were dear to Paul. He called them "my beloved." They had been obedient to God both when the apostle was present with them and when he was absent. In the light of all he has just written as to the humiliation and exaltation of the Lord, he calls on them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. This is not salvation from sin's penalty (which was a past experience with them) but from sin's power. We all need deliverance from "the power of cancelled sin." We need to know deliverance from the power of sins which have been forgiven that they may not still enslave us after we are saved. The drunkard, after he has been forgiven, needs to be saved from the sin of drunkenness, the gambler from gambling, the railer from railing, and so on. The old roots of sin stick fast in the flesh and are a trouble to us like bad teeth. Deliverance does not arise from ourselves. We are commended to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, but whence comes the power? The answer is, It is God that worketh in us first to will, to make us willing to be saved from all evils, and then to work for His good pleasure. He cannot save the saint against his will from any evil practice, even as He cannot save a sinner from hell against his will. But the power to save in each case is available if there be the will to be saved, so that the sinner may be saved eternally and the saint have a saved life and not a lost one.

Verses 14, 15, 16 : *Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labour in vain.*

How much harm has been done by saints murmuring and disputing! Think of Jehovah's pattern Servant: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench" (Isaiah 42. 2, 3). He was holy, guileless (harmless), undefiled (Hebrews 7. 26). We should count it an honour to be engaged in the lowliest part of the Lord's service, and carry it out with a sweet un murmuring attitude of mind. It is to be coveted to be blameless and unblemished children of God living in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. The world has not changed its character, nor can it, since Paul's time; and the present generation is perhaps more perverse than the past. The children of God are to be lights or luminaries (as the lights of heaven that shine in the darkness) in the world. The world would be without light save for them. "Ye are the light of the world," said the Lord to His disciples (Matthew 5. 14). The work of those who have been illuminated is to hold forth the word of life. If the Philippians so continued, then Paul would have whereof to glory in the day of Christ; but if they failed in their testimony, in so far as that is concerned, Paul would have run and laboured in vain.

J.M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these tilings were so" (Acts V7. 11).

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EDITORIAL

This month we have only thirteen contributions, the lowest number for the year. This fall in numbers occurs in most July issues, probably because May 20th falls inconveniently near to a regular public holiday which affects most of our contributors. Please bear with us if we take this opportunity to repeat a former suggestion that this situation might be averted if our contributors made a point of preparing, each year, a calendar of the work of the year, and such that in spite of holidays, etc., no subject need be omitted. This may involve papers arriving to us very early; but we shall not object to that! Suffer, please, one word more: the devil never takes a holiday, and consequently we cannot afford to relax our spiritual vigilance, or our application to the study of the Scriptures, or our evangelism.

The apostle Paul, in commending the elders of Ephesus to God, and to the word of His grace, reminded them of the example he himself had set, when with them, in the matter of ministering to the needs of others (Acts 20. 32, 34), and exhorted them to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, whose saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20. 35), has a distinct bearing on gifts to God and men. Giving is a blessed action: men blessed and enriched by God, whether in spiritual or in temporal things, should find joy in communicating to others less favoured, and their joy in giving to men is heightened, if they give as unto the Lord. Giving to God should bring joy unspeakable, for it is cause for wonder on our part that God should condescend to receive from men. The greatest good that we as children of God can do to unregenerate men is to proclaim to them the gospel and set before them the Gift of God; and as in the case of Israel our giving to God is derived from His unspeakable Gift to us, His Son; for God is the supreme Giver of all good (Matthew 7. 11).

J.B.

THE TITHE

This matter of the tithe is one on which there are diverse views, among both Jewish and Gentile interpreters. Some seem to see three tithes; (1) one which was given to the Levites as their reward for the service they rendered to God, they having been given no inheritance in Israel; (2) one which was given and consumed on festal occasions; and (3) one which was given to the poor. As I read the instructions of Moses and historical references elsewhere, it seems to me that there was one tithe and not three tithes. Note what Leviticus 27. 30 says, "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD." Verse 32 says, "And all the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD." It was not to be changed or redeemed. There is here no indication whatever of three tenths, or of three tenths being holy.

In dealing with this matter of the tithe, the income tax, or tax on all the increase of Israel, we have not to think of something a man could put into a basket or bag and carry to Shiloh or Jerusalem ; we have to think in terms of hundreds and thousands of bushels of grain, and thousands upon thousands of cattle and sheep, not to speak of the later harvest of the trees, of olives, vines and figs, etc. Here was to be provision for the Levites and their families, many thousands of people, for a whole year, besides strangers, widows and fatherless children, and there were many widows and fatherless in Israel oftentimes. Whilst, no doubt, a token of this vast store was taken to the place of the Name and eaten there before the LORD, much or most of it was eaten within the gates of the people ; it was their daily food. Whilst the tithe was the LORD'S and was given to the Levites as their reward for service rendered, yet it is clear that not they alone ate of the tithe. All cases of need were to be amply met from the goodness of a giving God, and the hearty obedience of willing-hearted and giving people, and the land a Beulah (" married " by the husbandman) pregnant with divine blessing would yield its increase, as it yet will in the good days to come (Isaiah 62. 4, 5).

J.M.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY GIFTS TO GOD AND MEN

(Chapter 14. 22—15. 23 ; 26. 1-15)

From Southport.—The tithe was to be given to the Levites, "in return for their service which they serve, even the service of the tent of meeting" (Numbers 18. 21). The provision made for the Levites enabled them to give their time to service and to the law : we see examples of this in various portions of the Scriptures. It is well illustrated by the action of king Hezekiah, when he commanded the dwellers in Jerusalem " to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might give themselves to the law of the LORD " (2 Chronicles 31. 4). The people brought in the tithe, which was laid in heaps, and the LORD'S servants could then say, " Since the people began to bring the oblations into the house of the LORD, we have eaten and had enough, and have left plenty " (2 Chronicles 31. 10). It might be an encouragement to state in connexion with king Hezekiah that " in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered " (2 Chronicles 31. 21).

The Scriptures show also the result of withholding the tithes : when Nehemiah returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, he found the portions had not been given to the Levites that did the work, and so they had fled every one to his own field (Nehemiah 13. 10). The house of God was forsaken (Nehemiah 13. 11), a serious result.

Every seven years the Israelite was to make a release of all that he had lent to his fellow Israelite, and they were warned that a man should not withhold help because the time of release was near. There were to be no poor in the land, but this is connected with the " if " of the following verse (15. 5). That there were poor in the land, as we so often read in the Old Testament, is evidence of shortcoming in Israel. We also should listen to the voice of the Lord and walk as the Lord Jesus Christ would have us walk.

In the same way, a Hebrew man (or woman) was to be released by his Hebrew master at the seventh year, and when released he was to be given out of the flock, the threshing floor and the winepress. God has made

at all times rich provision for us. If the man did not wish to go free, but desired to serve his master because he loved him, his ear was to be bored through with an awl to the door. The servant then bore a mark that he belonged to his master, and the master, as he went through the door, continually remembered his servant. We too have been freed from the bondage of sin by belief on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have become His bond servants. Separated from this world to serve Him, may we each show to the world whom we serve.

W. S. Holden

From Barry.—Should the people of God today tithe their increase? The laws of tithing and sabbath-keeping were given to Israel at Sinai. While God in creation established the principle of the sabbath, it was not given to man as a statute until Moses. In the matter of tithing we find the first mention in connexion with Abraham and Melchizedek (Genesis 14). Hebrews 7 states that the priesthood of the Lord Jesus is "after the order of Melchizedek," and since Abraham gave a tenth to Melchizedek, there is a strong case for suggesting that in our Lord's priesthood the principle of tithing should be perpetuated [1]. As far as we are aware Hebrews 7 is the only scripture which associates the tithe with the present dispensation.

Alternatively, in the days of the apostles we find no mention of the tenth part, but rather that "not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; they had all things common" (Acts 4).

Shortly afterwards the Church at Jerusalem was scattered by persecution; thus the plan was then desirable. Today it is neither practicable nor necessary. However, the underlying principle of counting nothing that they possessed as their own could well be our guide today. The plain command is that we give as the Lord has prospered us (1 Corinthians 16. 2), and in our giving we do well to remember the example of the Macedonian saints who first gave their own selves (2 Corinthians 8. 5).

E. S. T.

From Melbourne.—It was kept before Israel that what came into their hands was not all their own; there was a portion which belonged to the LORD. The divine commandment, when kept, brought the blessing of the LORD (14. 29), and when Israel forgot the commandment, they suffered. It was God's will that they should ever have before them that they had been bondmen in Egypt and that the LORD had brought them out with a strong arm, therefore they must give the LORD His portion of all wherewith He had blessed them. Today God's people are exhorted: "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper" (1 Corinthians 16. 2). We, too, must give the Lord His portion "not grudgingly or of necessity" (2 Corinthians 9. 7). We suggest that, whilst the commandment of tithing was not repeated under grace, nevertheless there is the great responsibility and privilege of the believer to give the Lord His portion in material things.

In Deuteronomy Israel were instructed to give to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow; in so doing they were giving unto the LORD. We felt that the Levite has a counterpart in the Lord's servant of today, and the saints in the Fellowship have a special responsibility to meet the needs of those who have devoted their whole life to the Lord and His service. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (1 Corinthians 9. 9) is the divine injunction for our day.

In Malachi's day (Malachi 3. 10) the people had forgotten these things, and God said, "Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse . . . and prove Me now herewith, . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and

pour you out a blessing." As in that day God promised a full recompense for faithfulness in this matter, so today " God loveth a cheerful giver " (2 Corinthians 9. 7), and " he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully " (2 Corinthians 9. 6). It is the Lord who sits over against the treasury (Mark 12. 41), and it is a matter between the believer and his Lord that he should rise to the responsibility laid upon him. *P.W.A.*

EXTRACTS

From Cowdenbeath.—Chapter 14 deals principally with giving, and chapter 15 with forgiving ; God desires that both of these qualities be seen in His people today as in a past day. The seventh year was a year of testing, the year when every creditor released what he had lent to his neighbour, the year when the poor brother leaving his employment was given sufficient to meet his need (15. 13, 14), the year in view of the near approach of which the master had not to harden his heart towards his servants (15. 9, 10). Although the master might appear to be the loser, yet being the forgiver, God was willing to bless his action ; with God the way to receive blessing is to show mercy and give unto others (14. 29 ; 15. 6, 10, 18). The slave who wished to go free at the seventh year was not to be sent away empty. However, the possibility remained that one might be sent away empty-handed : in that case, then to the one who had employed him it was indeed a sinful action, which would merit God's judgement (15. 9, 10). There is a parallel teaching for us in James 4. 17.

Not only was the increase of the ground to be for God, but the unblemished firstling males of the herd and flock were His also : such were destined to go to the altar to be God's portion, the owner receiving nothing of them (15.19). The firstling was a type of Christ, whose primary purpose in coming to this scene was to go to the altar (the Cross), for He, the unblemished One, was the only acceptable Offering.

God not only required the tithe, the firstfruits of the ground were His also (26. 2), being given at the beginning of harvest as something apart from the tithe, which could only be given at the end of harvest. The basket of firstfruits was to be taken to Jerusalem every year, to be offered unto God through the priest. This is typical of our approach to God on the Lord's day, when we offer acceptably our basket of firstfruits to God through our Great High Priest.

Iain T. H. Hunter.

From Bradford, Halifax and Leeds.—The portion for God, the tithe or tenth, appears to have been recognized in early times, as in the case of Abram (Genesis 14. 20). Jacob referred to it in his vow at Bethel: " Of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee " (Genesis 28. 22). Israel's offerings to God were but a portion, the LORD'S portion, of what He had given them. David the king said, " But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort ? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee " (1 Chronicles 29. 14).

It was thought that the tenth was a guide for us today in our offering to the Lord, but this was a subject of much discussion. Paul instructed the saints at Corinth that each man should give "as he may prosper" (1 Corinthians 16. 2), and again, " Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity : for God loveth a cheerful giver " (2 Corinthians 9. 7).

D.B.R.

From Edinburgh.—Chapter 14 details where the tithe was to be taken, where it was to be eaten, and why. The commandment was, " thou shalt

surely tithe all the increase." The responsibility was on the man, under the eye of God, to deal honourably in this matter, and to tithe all the increase, not part only. The offering, and the enjoyment of the offering, could only be acceptable at one place, the place where God chose to set His Name, and coupled with that we have the purpose of both the tithing and the place of the Name, "that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always." So during seed time or harvest, the man's thoughts were on (1) the increase, (2) the tithe, and (3) the fear of the LORD. This was to be a time of rejoicing for the man, his household, and the Levite. So we find a divine order. God gave the increase; the man gave his portion under law to the priest, who presented the offering to God, and then the man received his portion. The Levite also received the portion of the firstfruits, and from this also he had to present a tithe to the priests: so that the circle was now complete. Provision was made for (a) the increase to the man, (b) the offering to God, (c) the priest's portion, (d) the Levites' portion, (e) the Levites' offering to God.

The year of release was a general year and it was not governed by circumstances, times, or people's laws. When the appointed time came, rich and poor, master and servant, all were equally affected. That is the time which we now await. Let us not say in our heart that the time of release is near, but rather let us give as we have received till the appointed time.

T. Hope.

From Wigan.—All giving begins with God; every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights (James 1. 17). What Paul says to the Corinthians is true of every age, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" We are only able to give because God first gave.

When God gave commandment to Israel concerning tithes, He reminded them that "the land is Mine" (Leviticus 25. 23). All the tithe is the LORD'S (Leviticus 27. 30-34). This was a compulsory offering, required of men who had known blessing from God, yet a privilege as well as a duty. Israel were commanded to give the tithe of all their increase to the LORD (Deuteronomy 14). God gave it to the Levites in return for their service in the tent of meeting; they had no inheritance (Numbers 18. 23). Before they used it, they were required first to give a tithe of the tithe to Aaron the priest (Numbers 18. 26-29). Out of the gift the Levites received, the best was given to Aaron as a heave offering unto the LORD. In this we learn that only the best is acceptable to God.

It must have been a pleasant scene, when the multitudes of Israel were going to the place of the Name, with their baskets of firstfruits and rejoicing in the goodness of God (Deuteronomy 26). We, too, can glorify God in our giving, presenting our bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God (Romans 12. 1). Some ministered to the Lord of their substance (Luke 8.3 Mg.). He accepts as unto Himself that which is given to the saints. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, . . . ye did it unto Me" (Matthew 25. 40). Giving unto the Lord's servants is precious unto God; as was the gift which the Philippians sent to Paul, "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God" (Philippians 4. 15-18).

J.H.

From Birkenhead.—The gifts brought before us were a commandment from God, to be an expression of appreciation by the children of Israel of their redemption (26. 5-11). We note the tithes and the gifts had to be brought to a place of divine choice. This is an important feature in God's dealings with His people (chapter 12); no other place, no matter how convenient, would do. Their first responsibility was Godward, and, in

relation to the feast of Tabernacles, none were to appear before God empty (16. 16). In our responsibility to God, we come to the place of the Name, where God can be worshipped and praised acceptably according to His will, to offer up spiritual sacrifices through our Lord Jesus Christ. As in the case of God's ancient people, this should be the result of gratitude for God's great goodness towards us.

We are to give according as the Lord prospers us (1 Corinthians 16. 2), but from the Israelite God demanded one tenth of the increase. In this dispensation the matter of giving is not compulsory; our responsibility is one of privilege in giving to God. Again, in 1 Corinthians 9 the apostle Paul establishes beyond doubt the principle that "they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." This he does on reasonable grounds, first by the analogy of natural tilings, secondly by reference to the law, and thirdly by reference to the provision Jehovah had made for the priests and the Levites in Israel. This responsibility is no hardship; it is rather, and ought to be to the people of God, an unspeakable privilege to serve the Lord in ministering to His servants' need. The Lord, while on earth, said, "The labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10. 7).

P. Kelly, L. Bowman.

From Glasgow.—God has always been a bountiful Giver to the creatures of His hand. We trace this from the Garden of Eden: "I have given you every herb yielding seed" (Genesis 1. 29), to the new heaven and the new earth: "I will give . . . the water of life freely" (Revelation 21. 6). And the great giving heart of God found its fullest expression in the free gift of His Son.

It was but reasonable then that God should desire to stir up in the hearts of His covenant people a feeling of gratitude for all His many gifts, a desire to give back again to Him who had given so much to them. To this end He laid down laws governing the gifts to Himself and to His priests. The firstfruits of corn, wine and oil and honey were His by right, and enjoined on all to give. So also the tithe of all the increase of the field, and the tithe of the oxen and sheep. It does not appear that the tithe of herbs was required. But the Lord said of the Pharisees, "Ye tithe mint and rue and every herb" (Luke 11. 42).

A "tithe" means a "tenth-part": Abraham gave to Melchizedek "a tenth of all" (Genesis 14. 20), and this tenth is described in the New Testament as a "tithe" (Hebrews 7. 6). The Hebrew and Greek words used mean "a tenth."
J.H.P.

From Nottingham.—Deuteronomy 26 deals firstly with gifts to God. Israel were to take of the fruit of the land, which had first come from God, for without Him there could be no fruit, collect it in a basket (26. 2) and bring it to the priest, who was to set it down before the altar. This would seem to be a beautiful picture of our bringing our offerings to God in worship on the Lord's day morning. We can only bring to Him that which He first gave to us. If we are to give to God acceptably, it will be as a result of prayerful meditation before Him during the course of a whole week, a day by day meditation upon the Lord, resulting in our having full baskets of firstfruits to present to our God, when we come before Him in the Spirit to worship.

As they brought their baskets of firstfruits they were to remember in the words they spoke (26. 5) all the way the LORD their God had led them. Is it not when we remember the pit from which we were digged that we too have grateful hearts?

Israel's experience had been a progressive one. They had known redemption from Egypt, the passing through the Red Sea, the many trials of the Wilderness : and their experiences of God's goodness were to be that which would create within them the spirit of thankfulness. Our spirits, too, should respond to the love of God. *J. Balcombe, R. Hickling.*

From Liverpool.—The firstfruits were to be offered in a basket through the priest in office in those days, and he in turn would take it and set it down before the altar of the LORD their God. A confession was to be made of the manifold grace of God in Israel's case, and an acknowledgement of what Jehovah had done for them in bringing them out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan. They were to worship, and rejoice in all the good God had given them.

The possessions of God's people today are spiritual (Ephesians 1.3). The land, as the place of God's rest, has its counterpart in God's house today. Our future inheritance is " incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven."

" Thou shalt eat before the LORD " (14. 23, 26) seems, we thought, to suggest joyous communion with God in the blessings of His hand. That the Levite was not to be forgotten suggests our obligations to brethren out in the work. The fatherless, the widow, the stranger were not to be forgotten (15. 7, 8 ; 26. 12). We were reminded of the words, " He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD."

A. Fairhurst, Jr., A.H.

From Wembley.—The striking feature is the amount which the Israelite was called upon to give. The tithe was for the following purposes : (1) one-tenth of his income to be assigned to the Levites as a reward for service, and because they had no inheritance of their own in the land ; (2) one-tenth of his income for festival purposes, to be shared with his children, servants, and the Levites ; (3) one tenth of his income every third year for the poor ; (4) tithing of the increase of cattle and wine. There were also other forms of giving :—(5) firstfruits ; (6) every seventh year he was (a) to leave his fields for the poor, the hungry, the widows, etc., (b) release all debtors from their debts, (c) open his hands to the poor, and " lend him sufficient for his need," and (d) release all bondservants, and not let them go empty, but furnish them liberally out of his flock, threshing floor, and winepress. On top of all this, there was voluntary giving, as in the case of the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple at Jerusalem. It may be thought that the Israelite had an abnormally heavy burden to carry in respect of giving, but it is noteworthy that every call to giving carried with it promise of great blessing if the law were adhered to ; and in view of the promise of special fertility of the soil, conditional on the observance of the commands of the law, the LORD'S demands were not excessive. *P. R. Sweetmore.*

From Atherton.—Deuteronomy 26 introduces a scene which was to be enacted only once, that is, when Israel came into the land [2]. It was to be the individual's response in thankfulness for all the LORD'S great goodness. We think of our experience week by week, as we remember all the good things God has done for us. The call is to personal exercise. Do we endeavour to fill our basket ? [3].

The question was asked, What is the teaching of the tenth or tithe ? It certainly played a vital part in Israel's experience, and it has been said that under grace today the people of God should not give less. Very clear principles are outlined in the Epistles, which, if responded to, will mean

that the Lord will receive His portion from His people. The first day of the week is the day specified for assembly giving. "Let each one of you lay by him in store," would involve that we give week by week when present, and, if unavoidably absent, what has been laid by for the Lord should be brought at the first opportunity (1 Corinthians 16. 1, 2). "As he may prosper" would indicate that the more the Lord gives to us the more we are to give to Him. Purpose of heart, too, is a guiding principle. The Lord looks for willing-hearted ones (2 Corinthians 9. 6-15). Freely ye received, freely give.
J. K. Southern, G.A.J.

COMMENTS

[1] (Barry).—What caused Abraham to give to Melchizedek a tenth of the chief spoils of his conquest (Genesis 14), and what caused Jacob to say in Genesis 28 that he would give a tenth of all that God would give him, is not revealed to us. But for Israel as a nation to give the tithe (the tenth) required God to give instructions to them in the law. The conduct of their fathers was not a sufficient reason. So also for God's people in this dispensation, it is not sufficient to say that Abraham gave a tenth to Melchizedek (of whose order Christ is a Priest—and we have to learn what this order means), and Jacob promised to give a tenth, and Israel were commanded to give the tithe, we likewise should give the tithe. Where is the Lord's commandment to us regarding this? It is not to be found in the New Testament.—*J.M.*

[2] (Atherton).—Where does it say that the offering of the firstfruits in Deuteronomy 26. 1-11 was once only? See Exodus 23. 19; 34. 26; Numbers 18. 13; Deuteronomy 16. 10; Nehemiah 10. 35. The giving of the firstfruits would be a continuous one as the harvests of the land progressed. The harvests began with the barley harvest and went on till the feast of Tabernacles, when all the harvesting was completed.—*J.M.*

[3] (Atherton).—Where would the analogy be in our giving week by week, if Israel gave the firstfruits once for all?—*J.M.*

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Questions from Barry.—(1) Is it correct to say that in the third year there was no tithe brought to the place of the Name, because it had to be laid up within their gates (14. 28)? (2) Deuteronomy legislates for a Hebrew servant, but Leviticus 25. 46 says, "over your brethren the children of Israel ye shall not rule, one over another." In what way does a Hebrew differ from an Israelite?

Answers.—(1) What is said in Deuteronomy 14. 28 re laying it up within their gates is evidently only in view of taking it to the house of God, either in token or whole (Malachi 3. 10: God's house is called the storehouse): it was given to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. (2) It is evident that our friends have not observed in their reading of Leviticus 25. 46 four small words "for ever," and "with rigour." That it is contemplated that some of the men of Israel might sell themselves or be sold to their brethren, the year of release (the seventh year) and the year of Jubilee make quite clear, also what is said in Exodus 21. 2-6. But they must be liberated in the seventh year or at the Jubilee (save in the case of a willing bondservant, as in Exodus 21. 2-6); they were not to be bondmen "for ever," neither must they be made to serve "with rigour."
 —*J.M.*

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS
CHAPTER 2.

Verses 17, 18 : *Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all: and in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me.*

Offered here is "poured out" as a drink offering (2 Timothy 4. 6), which means to give his life. This pouring out should not be confused with the Lord's emptying of Himself (verse 7). The emptying coincided with His incarnation, not with His death on the cross. But Paul's pouring out of himself was in his life being spent in the service of others, and he reached that point in 2 Timothy 4. 6. If Paul poured out his life upon the sacrifice of the faith of the saints and on their priestly service in their witness for Christ, then he rejoiced and congratulated them, and in the same manner they were to rejoice and congratulate him.

Verses 19, 20, 21: *But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.*

Paul's hoping and acting in the Lord shows how truly his actions and thoughts were governed by the Lord's will. "If the Lord will" should be a governing factor in the lives of all believers (James 4. 15). Through the visit of Timothy to Philippi Paul expected to learn of their spiritual state and might be comforted by his report. He said that He had no man like Timothy who would genuinely care for them. Even in Paul's day there was not a surfeit of spiritual men of worth. We need not wonder that this is so in our time. Many then, as now, sought their own things and not the things of Jesus Christ.

Verses 22, 23, 24 : *But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me : but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly.*

The proof of Timothy was in his being a tried and consequently approved man. He was Paul's child in faith (1 Timothy 1. 2), and as a child to a father, he served as a bondservant with his spiritual father in the gospel. This tried and trusted man was soon to be sent to Philippi, as soon as Paul saw how it would go with himself. He seemed confident in the Lord that he would be liberated and would himself visit them. It is generally held that he was set at liberty, and visited Ephesus (1 Timothy 1. 3 ; 2 Timothy 1. 15-18), Macedonia, and Miletus (2 Timothy 4. 20). He hoped to visit not only Philippi (Philippians 1. 25), but also Colossae (Philemon 22). Then finally he hoped to winter at Nicopolis (Titus 3. 12), where, it has been suggested, that he was arrested, but without scriptural evidence, and sent to Rome for his second term of imprisonment in Rome, which was his last. There Nero, that bestial man, killed one of the noblest characters that ever lived.

Verses 25, 26, 27 : *But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need; since he longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye had heard that he was sick: for indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him ; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.*

What a number of glorious titles this man has, far greater than the titles of nobility or royalty—my brother, fellow-worker, fellow-soldier, your apostle and minister to my need ! Crowns, coronets, orders, medals and ribbons mark the world's great ones, but these honours are nothing compared with the honours of Epaphroditus. The diadems of the Caesars are lost in the rubble of Rome, but these men who lived within its walls, and, in Paul's and Timothy's cases, its prisons, shall wear the crowns and unfading laurel of heaven. Paul counted it necessary to send Epaphroditus to Philippi, whence he had come bearing the gift of the Philippian saints to Paul. In this work of mercy he had almost lost his life, whether on the way or at Rome we know not, but he had been at death's door. But God had mercy both on him, and on Paul that he might not have sorrow upon sorrow. Epaphroditus was glad to return, for Paul says that " he longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye heard that he was sick." This is one of those affectionate touches that show the anxiety of love.

Verses 28, 29, 30 : *I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy ; and hold such in honour : because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.*

Paul sent Epaphroditus the more diligently because of his longing for the Philippian saints, for they had heard that he was sick. This shows how news travelled throughout the Roman world from assembly to assembly. Paul said that they were to receive him in the Lord with joy, and honour him for what he had done. Epaphroditus left Paul, carrying, it is believed, this wondrous epistle back with him, a much greater gift than Paul had received, necessary as were the material comforts which the Philippians had sent to him.

CHAPTER 3.

Verse 1 : *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe.*

Finally, in conclusion, rejoice, be joyful, in the Lord. Rejoice is also used in salutation—Farewell. The great spirit of the apostle rises above his sorrow alluded to in the former chapter, and he strikes a joyful note, for well he knew the meaning of what he wrote to the Corinthians at an earlier time, " Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory " (2 Corinthians 4. 17). It was not irksome for him to write, and it was safe for the Philippians to get such an epistle with such truths.

Verses 2, 3 : *Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision : for we are the circumcision, who worship (serve) by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh :*

Paul calls the Judaizers dogs. They were the evil workers from whom Paul suffered so much. They were also the concision or the cutters. Circumcision was with them a mere rite which bore no relation to their inward state ; it was as the gashings and the mutilations of the heathen. The saints were the circumcision, for they had been " circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ " (Colossians 2.11), Paul wrote of this in other words to the Romans ; " Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the

Spirit of God dwelleth in you " (Romans 8.9). Hence Paul wrote as above, "We . . . worship (*Latreuo*, religiously serve) by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Here the believer in Christ parts company with the mere religionist, whether Jew, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or any other, all who depend on mere ceremonials, and promote the doctrine of perfecting the flesh. The fundamental doctrine of the faith is, "Ye must be born again," "born of the Spirit." "The flesh profiteth nothing."

Verses 4, 5, 6 : *Though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh : if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more : circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews ; as touching the law, a Pharisee ; as touching zeal, persecuting the church ; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.*

Here is a veritable galaxy of qualifications which would dazzle any who were seeking perfection in the flesh. Dare any one rest in confidence as to eternal peace upon any one or all of these things which were so much admired in Jewish society ? Circumcision in Paul's case had been attended to scrupulously ; his pedigree was correct, he being of Israel and Benjamin ; his parents were both Hebrews, who adhered to the Hebrew language and customs, and in strict upbringing and profession he was a Pharisee, "a son of Pharisees" (Acts 23. 6). His zeal could never be called in question, for he persecuted the church of God in Jerusalem and laid it waste (Acts 8.3), and as touching the law's righteousness men (not God) found him blameless. Truly he was a pattern of a man in the flesh, which availed much in time, but nothing in eternity.

Verses 7, 8 : *Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ,*

Paul was not only born again ; he was soundly converted. He stepped out boldly upon the doctrine of Christ—"It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing." When the Lord spoke these words, "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him" (John 6. 63, 66). Many still cling to the flesh and seek the worldly gains the flesh brings, but Paul sought a truer gain. He suffered the loss, the confiscation, of all things, and in his old age he still viewed those things as loss, as he did in the early days of his first love, when he regarded them as dung, or offal to be cast to the dogs. Christ was Paul's gain or enrichment, and in order to advance in that knowledge which eclipses all other forms of knowledge, the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, he regarded all else as worthless. No one who reads Paul's writings can fail to see the richness of his mind in the knowledge of Christ, and many, many have been enriched by him.

Verse 9 : *And be found in Him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by (Epi, upon) faith:*

What were his earliest thoughts about the righteousness of God were still his thoughts after long years of persecution and privation, that his righteousness should not be a legal righteousness of his own, but that which is through faith in Christ, even that righteousness of God which rests upon faith and not upon works of law. God's righteousness in Christ was his soul's resting place and his hope for glory.

Verses 10, 11 : *That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death ; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.*

The true knowledge of Christ is not theoretical or merely historical, it is experimental and practical; it affects the whole life and conduct of the person who has it and seeks it. With some the knowledge of Jesus Christ is no better than the knowledge of Julius Caesar so far as yielding any real fruit in their lives is concerned. Christ is an historical Person truly, but He is much more ; and besides, He is alive and Caesar is dead and gone to dust. The words that the Lord spoke are spirit and are life (John 6. 63), such are not the words of men. Besides, He, the eternal Son of the Father, has sent forth the Holy Spirit into the hearts of His own to comfort and quicken them and to revive their hopes. With Paul the knowledge of Christ was intensely practical. In these verses there is a cycle—resurrection, sufferings, death, resurrection. It is a spiral; it means that the person ascends each cycle. This ascending is by sharing His sufferings, by being conformed unto His death, and by attaining unto the out-resurrection out from among dead ones. This is to be the present experience of those that follow the Lord. They are to take up their cross daily (Luke 9.23), and die daily (1 Corinthians 15. 31), if they would know that power which raised Him from the dead, and will raise them from among the dead among whom they live. This power is the exceeding greatness of His (God's) power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead (Ephesians 1. 19, 20). It is one thing to know about Christ's resurrection, but it is quite another for that to be working in us who believe. This power makes real living for Christ possible.

Verse 12 : *Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus.*

What he strove after in the practical knowledge of Christ in his day by day experience, he had not yet obtained. He was not yet made perfect (though he was in another sense perfect in Christ), but he pressed on towards it, for in the knowledge of Christ he would learn the purpose that Christ had in apprehending him. He knew much already. He knew that he was a called apostle of Christ Jesus, and he knew what the Lord had wrought in and through him towards the Gentiles, as well as his own people, but he had not apprehended all that it was the Lord's purpose to accomplish through him. The painting of Paul's life was not yet complete. " I press on," he said ; that is, he pursued for the purpose of catching or obtaining what was still in front of him.

Verses 13, 14 : *Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended : but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Not apprehending all God's purpose in him, he sought to forget and to neglect the things that were behind him ; these things cannot be lived over again and improved. He stretched forward, as a runner in a race to the course that lies in front, toward the goal, the mark at the end of the racecourse on which the eye is fixed, to the prize (as the crown, wreath or chaplet which was bestowed on the victor in the public games). The race is towards the place whence the call came. The calling is heavenly (Hebrews 3.-1); it is an upward calling, hence the course is ever ascending. *J.M.*

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

The subject chosen for 1957 is the Epistle to the Hebrews, to which we return after the lapse of a considerable number of years. On the previous occasion we read straight through the book, and gathered as the Lord enabled us. This time, as the syllabus indicates, the book has been taken each month in portions dealing with a significant central topic, and by this method the entire book, with the exception of a few verses in the final chapter, will be read. We ask our contributors to treat each subject directly and pointedly: this may mean additional difficulties for editors, but has the advantage of avoiding a mere repetition of the previous study of Hebrews: it should also provide our fellow-students of the Scriptures with an opportunity for exercise in setting out, in a reasoned and orderly form, Scriptural teaching on selected major subjects. Further, Hebrews has a strong Old Testament background, sometimes merely implied in the writer's argument, and we therefore suggest that the harmony of the Old and New Testaments and the illumination of the Old Testament by the New Testament should be purposefully kept in mind. If these considerations are given due weight, we feel that this mode of reading Hebrews should prove profitable, especially if all contributors make a point of writing for *every* issue of *Bible Studies*.

Special contributions (which please send to Mr. Martin) are again invited. With its grandeur of Subject and expression this epistle provides ample scope for such articles, and we hope that the present revived interest in this department of the magazine will continue (and increase). Even if your individual contribution (which should not normally be on the subject for the month) is very brief and simple, send it in. No matter how simple an article may be, if it is sound in doctrine, is of high spiritual tone, and is marked by loving appreciation of the Lord, it should be to our spiritual edification. Remember that in the will of God things hidden from the wise and understanding may be revealed to babes (Matthew 11. 25, Luke 10. 21).

J.B.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy opens with, "These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel beyond Jordan in the wilderness."

On many occasions Moses is presented as the speaker or the one addressed by the LORD (5. 1; 10. 1; 18. 17; 29. 1; 31.1, 24, 30, etc.). Then in chapter 31. 24-26, we read that Moses wrote "the words of this law in a book," and said, "Take this book of the law, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God," and in chapter 17. 18 he gave instructions that when a king should reign in Israel, "he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, *out of that which is before the priests the Levites,*"

This book was evidently in existence in Joshua's time (Joshua 1. 8), and apparently is the book which Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD (2 Chronicles 34. 14). In many instances in both the Old and New Testaments reference is made to the book, or the law, of Moses, and never is any other name associated with the giving of the law. In particular chapters 12—25 is the portion some modern critics contend to be the "product (a) of Israel's maturity in Palestine, or rather of that period of national decay which resulted in the Babylonish Captivity, or (b) of the restoration. The age of Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, or Ezra has been suggested as the source of these precepts." But Deuteronomy 12. 9 says, "Ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD thy God giveth thee." It is clear from chapter 12. 14, 21, etc., that the place which the LORD would choose was not then known, and from chapter 26. 1, 16-19 that Israel were still in the wilderness and there the Covenant was entered into.

Chapter 16.18 requires judges and officers to be appointed, and according to Joshua 23. 2, they had already been appointed in Joshua's day.

In Nehemiah 13. 1, 2 the law regarding an Ammonite and a Moabite was found written in the book of Moses. This is the law of Deuteronomy 23.3-5. Reference is again made to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses in 2 Kings 14. 6, when quoting from Deuteronomy 24. 16. The Lord, in Matthew 19. 7, 8, refers to Deuteronomy 24. 1-4 as that which Moses suffered Israel to do. He asks, in John 7. 19, "Did not Moses give you the law?" He never refers to any other law-giver. In Acts 3. 22, Peter refers to Deuteronomy 18. 15, 19 as what Moses said. In a reference to Deuteronomy 32. 21 Paul says, in Romans 10. 19, "Moses saith," and again, in 1 Corinthians 9. 9, he quotes Deuteronomy 25. 4 as that which is written in the law of Moses. In Hebrews 10. 28 what is written in Deuteronomy 17. 2-6 is said to be "Moses' law." If we accept these plain statements of Scripture, we must surely believe the Mosaic authorship to be established, and reject the suggestion of the modern critics that the portion referred to above was the work of a later age than Moses.

The last chapter may present some difficulty. We ask how could Moses recount what is said about his own death, burial, and subsequent events? Was Joshua or some other man with Moses on the top of Pisgah? How else could what is said in verses 1 to 6 be recorded?

This chapter may have been added by some other hand.

Is it however, not unreasonable to consider that the God who by revelation enabled Moses to write of events prior to man's existence on earth could also enable him to write of events subsequent to his own death? *R.T.H.H.*

Can we even suggest that there was someone on Pisgah with Moses when he died? In any case, who told the writer of Deuteronomy 34 that the LORD buried Moses, seeing that no one saw the burial?

We may ask several questions along the lines of the difficulty of Deuteronomy 34, and state one or two facts. Who wrote Joshua 24. 29-33? Who wrote the books of 1 and 2 Samuel seeing that Samuel died in 1 Samuel 25. 1? Who concluded the book of Job by writing the two last verses? Indeed we do not know at all who wrote that book. Part of the book of the Proverbs was written by the men of Hezekiah (Proverbs 25. 1). Jeremiah did not write chapter 52 of his prophecy. Tertius, who wrote Romans under Paul's dictation, added Romans 16.22, and possibly verse 23. There maybe other things of like nature elsewhere in Scripture.—*J.M.*

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY
THE FEASTS OF JEHOVAH
(Chapter 16. 1-17.)

From Edinburgh.—We can look at the keeping of the Passover under five heads. (1) When was it to be kept? The month Abib, the fourteenth day of the month, at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season at which they had left Egypt (16. 1, 6) [1]. (2) Who were to keep it? All the people of Israel were to keep it (Exodus 12. 48). Provision was also made for the stranger, but no uncircumcised person could eat thereof. God graciously permitted the keeping of the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month in the case of persons unclean by reason of a dead body (Numbers 9). Even so, it was incumbent on the people to be there and in a condition to partake of the Passover. Any who failed to keep the feast were to be cut off from the people (Numbers 9. 13). (3) Where was it to be kept? Both the positive and negative are here given: in the place which Jehovah shall choose (16. 2), not within any of their gates (16. 5). (4) How was it to be kept? Details are given in Exodus 12. The sacrifice could be taken from the flock or the herd, a lamb or a kid (and must be without blemish), kept up for 4 days, slain and eaten that night with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. (5) Why was it to be kept? In order that Israel might remember the day when they left Egypt in haste [1].

The feast of unleavened bread is allied to the Passover and the feast of firstfruits is associated with the feast of Weeks.

The feast of Tabernacles was the closing festival, the last feast of the year. All had been gathered in from the threshing floor and the winepress. This points forward to a coming day when Israel will rejoice before the LORD. In the past Israel failed badly in this feast: we learn from Ezra and Nehemiah that it had not been properly kept since the day of Joshua. But it is good to see that it was still being observed during the Lord's sojourn on earth (John 7).

We note that the branches of the trees used in the making of the booths mentioned in Leviticus 23 are also mentioned in Nehemiah 8, but in the latter are mentioned the olive, the myrtle, the palm and others, while in the former we have the willows of the brook. W. Muirhead.

From Melbourne.—The feast of the Passover was to be kept by Israel as a separated people at a set time in a set place. It was a remembrance of their deliverance by blood and power, which they were to remember all the days of their life. It pointed backward to that night in Egypt when the destroying angel passed through the land, and when the LORD passed (or hovered) over each house with blood-stricken doorposts and lintels and protected the firstborn. It also looked forward to Calvary, for "our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ" (1 Corinthians 5), and we too must ever remember the deliverance wrought for us by our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2. 11-14). The Remembrance each Lord's day points us backward to Calvary, and through it we show forth His death, which brought life to us and delivered us from the power of sin and Satan.

In later years that which had been called a feast of the LORD (Leviticus 23), was (alas), called "a feast of the Jews" (John 5.1). Let us not lightly esteem the Remembrance, but let us ever remember the price paid for our redemption. Following the Passover was the unleavened bread period of seven days, wherein no leaven was to be found in their houses. Leaven is a type of sin, and the Passover was to be followed by a week without leaven.

This we felt was typical of the necessity in our day for removing leaven from our midst collectively and from our lives individually, when it is detected. The assembly at Corinth had to remove a sinning one from their midst, and thereby cleanse the company (1 Corinthians 5). The period of seven days seems to indicate a continuous time, and we felt that there would never be a time in our lives when the need for removing leaven would become unnecessary. Ere we partake of the Remembrance we should give due heed to the instruction, "Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup" (1 Corinthians 11. 28). Confession of sin must be made and communion restored ere we draw near. *P.W.A.*

From Wembley.—The month of Nisan (or Abib) began the sacred year, and in that month the Passover was to be kept. The presenting of the first sheaf to the priest seems to be connected with it. During the seven succeeding weeks the entire grain harvest was garnered, and then took place the feast of harvest or Pentecost [2]. In Palestine the harvest of the trees was important and in the autumn, when all had been gathered in, was celebrated the Feast of Ingathering or of Tabernacles.

Jehovah's feasts, their manner of observance, and their times were fixed by Him, and they were to be kept in the place which the LORD should choose to cause His name to dwell (16. 5).

The Passover was a feast of remembrance, and looked back to a night never to be forgotten, the night of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. In their remembrance they remembered a night : we remember a Person ; the Lord Jesus our Passover has been sacrificed, and He has commanded us to remember Him. We who know the Lord as Saviour have been directed by Him to the place, the church of God, where His will is to be done.

The first great festival immediately followed the Passover feast, the last followed the Day of Atonement, reminding us that all true worship and all real joy begin with and are based upon redemption and forgiveness.

These feasts were intended as types. The Passover suggests a Victim and a Saviour, and our need as sinners. The Sheaf of Firstfruits speaks of the Lord in resurrection. We had difficulty with the Feast of Unleavened Bread as to present-day teaching. If leaven in 1 Corinthians 5. 7,8, speaks of evil (still apt to manifest itself in each one of us), we wondered whether we are right in suggesting it implies a seven-day proving of ourselves before the Remembrance again comes around, so that we may, as an unleavened lump, remember Him [3]. *W. H. Bartlett.*

From Willington Quay.—The keeping of the feasts of Jehovah was both a responsibility and a privilege for Israel. Strict adherence to the times and seasons, accompanied by a rigid observance of detailed procedure, whilst perhaps appearing somewhat exacting, must be compared with the blessed experience of appearing before the LORD.

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were closely associated, one following immediately after the other. Three outstanding characteristics of the Passover were that it was a time of remembrance, all leaven had to be removed, and the Passover had to be kept in the place where the LORD would choose to cause His name to dwell. It cannot be said that we have any gathering today which corresponds to the Passover feast which Israel kept, but some comparisons can be drawn between it and the Remembrance.

The Feast of Weeks stands in contrast to the Feast of Unleavened Bread in that it was a time of great rejoicing. The two wave loaves occupied the

premier place in the Feast of Firstfruits, and we wondered whether the two loaves were in any way symbolic of the blessing bestowed upon both Jew and Gentile when, at the beginning of this dispensation, the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost [4].

The Feast of Tabernacles (booths) commemorated the time spent in the wilderness (Leviticus 23. 43). It was held when the fruit of the threshing floor and winepress, etc., had been gathered in. Israel was to rejoice over the LORD'S blessing bestowed upon them. Excelling any temporal blessing which Israel enjoyed, however, is the blessing to be had by any who respond to the invitation given by the Lord Jesus when, on the last day, the great day of the feast, He cried, " If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink " (John 7. 37). K.R.

EXTRACTS

From Wigan.—There would seem to be a form of progressive teaching in the order of the set feasts. Following upon the feast of Unleavened Bread came the feast of Weeks. The sheaf of the firstfruits of the harvest was to be waved before the LORD on the morrow after the sabbath, this being the first day of the week. We are reminded of the apostle's teaching concerning the glorious fact of resurrection. " But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep . . . But each in his own order : Christ the firstfruits ; then they that are Christ's, at His coming " (1 Corinthians 15). Seven sabbaths were to be numbered and then on the fiftieth day a new meal offering was to be made unto the LORD. Again, we are directed in thought to the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of Christ, when the work of the Holy Spirit was so manifested in the firstfruits in the first church of God. The association of the sacrifice of peace offerings, the blood of which was to be sprinkled upon the altar round about, with the two wave loaves (Leviticus 3, 23. 19, 20), reminds us that Christ has made both Jew and Gentile one, and made peace by the blood of His cross (Colossians 1. 20).

Following the feast of Weeks came the feast of Tabernacles (or booths), which was the closing festival (Leviticus 23. 36, R.V.M.). Israel were ever to remember the fact that they had been a pilgrim people: the commandment of the LORD that they should dwell in booths seven days was intended to impress this fact upon them (Leviticus 23. 42, 43). H. Caldwell.

From Cowdenbeath.—God was careful in His instructions concerning the Passover both as to persons and their condition, and also as to the place, time, manner and purpose of the feast : God is just as explicit in His instructions concerning His people today. As the Passover would bring before us the death of the Lord, so the feast of Weeks would bring to our attention the sending of the Holy Spirit.

It is interesting to compare the new meal offering (Leviticus 23. 16), fifty days after the wave sheaf, with Pentecost fifty days from the Lord's resurrection (Acts 2). In Zechariah 14. 16 we have the application of the feast of Tabernacles, when those that are left of all nations shall go up to Jerusalem year by year to worship the King the LORD of Hosts, in the day when the LORD shall be King over all the earth (Zechariah 14. 9). In connexion with the feasts we note a difference in manner and approach : the Passover, " a solemn assembly to the LORD " (16. 8) ; the feast of Weeks, " Thou shalt rejoice " (16. 11) ; the feast of Tabernacles, " Thou

shalt be altogether joyful" (16. 15). These suggest the solemnity of the Lord's death, the joy of receiving the Holy Spirit, and the exceeding joy of the Lord's coming again.

D. McLelland.

From Crowborough.—Associated with each feast there was something to remember. Of the feast of Unleavened Bread we read, " It shall be a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in thy mouth " (Exodus 13. 9). Of the feast of Weeks we read, " Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt " (16.12), and of the feast of Tabernacles, "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days ; . . . that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt " (Leviticus 23. 42, 43).

The loving heart of the great God is seen in that He did not forget to include in addition to the Israelite, his son, daughter, maidservant and manservant, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (16. 11, 14).

In Exodus 34. 23, 24 we see the power of God in protection of His people, in that, when all the males went up to appear before Him, their land would be safe in their absence.

J.H.B.

From Southport.—At the feasts of Jehovah the males of Israel had to come before the LORD, and every man had to give according to the blessing of the LORD. This seems to suggest a percentage although there is no mention of it.

Israel were told to give a tithe (or tenth) of all the seed, fruit, herd and flock unto the LORD (Leviticus 27.30). With this in mind we asked ourselves, " What do we give unto the Lord ? "

Comparing Deuteronomy 16. 1-8 with the account in Exodus 12, we noted that the fact that Israel had to eat the Passover with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, their staff in their hand, and to eat it in haste, is not mentioned in the Deuteronomy account. This may be because in Deuteronomy they were receiving the commandments for a time when they should be settled in the promised land. Would we not be a better people, if we were more like the children of Israel when they first kept the Passover in Egypt ?

B. Hindle.

From Glasgow.—In giving Israel instructions as to how, when, and where the Passover should be kept, the LORD appointed it as a yearly feast to impress upon their minds the time when the LORD delivered them from bondage in Egypt. Having delivered them, the LORD gave them a land to possess, and in which they were to receive blessing from Him ; and that blessing made provision for offerings at the other feasts. Israel received much from the LORD, and opportunity was given for freewill offerings from their hands, according as the LORD blessed them.

The last Passover kept by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself before He suffered, was kept at night, at the going down of the sun, between the two evenings. This is another night never to be forgotten, for then He instituted the Remembrance and said, " This do in remembrance of Me."

Mark G. McKaig.

From Lerwick.—The first feast was to be a feast of remembrance; Israel were for ever to remember that wonderful night of redemption, when the LORD their God delivered them from the house of bondage (16. 3 ; Exodus 13. 1). Likewise, we ought to remember the night in which our Lord was

betrayed (Luke 22. 21-23), the beginning of that "hour" which ended in His glorious resurrection, our deliverance from bondage (Hebrews 2. 14, 15) and from wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1. 10).

In the second feast Israel were to give unto God a freewill offering according as they had been blessed of Him (16. 10). It is God's desire today that we who have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Ephesians 1.3) should freely offer that which is acceptable to Him.

The third feast was to take place after the wine and corn had been gathered in, and this time rejoicing is the great theme (16. 14, 15). Surely we can greatly rejoice that God in this day of His grace should have saved us and gathered us into His house (Ephesians 2. 21, 22) ! D.S.

From Nottingham.—The Passover was to be often remembered : our Passover is fulfilled in Christ. The people of Israel failed to keep the Passover consistently, and 2 Chronicles (34. 21, 35. 18) reveals something of their condition. The Passover was only the start of God's plans for His people ; there followed service for Him.

On the fifteenth day of the month the Feast of Unleavened Bread commenced. Verse 6 gives the time of the Passover, and it would seem that there was no discontinuity between the two feasts. The absence of leaven reminds us of the absence of sin in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. Verse 3 mentions "bread of affliction," and calls to mind the haste of Israel's coming out of Egypt. The corrupting influences of the world should ever be left behind us, and we should manifest characteristics befitting our calling.

The days of grace are shown forth in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles we see a type of the day of solemn rest, the purposes of God consummated. There seems to be a difference between the gathering in of the harvest and of the fruits of the land. The harvest of grain came first and here, it seems, we have a picture of the harvest of the days of mercy while in connexion with the vintage we read of divine wrath (Revelation 14. 17-20).

The festival covered seven days, but had an eighth day associated with it, a day of great solemnity. The festival seems to point to that last day in "God's year," when a new service is instituted ; and this may even point on beyond the millennium to that coming day when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men (Revelation 21. 1-3). What great service lies ahead for us in those eternal ages ! R. Hickling.

From Atherton.—The Feast of Weeks in Exodus 23. 16 is called "the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou sowest in the field." The people were called upon to bring a tribute to the LORD, according to the measure of a freewill offering as the LORD had blessed them. This tribute seems to involve two loaves baked with leaven, seven lambs, one young bullock, two rams, and one he-goat, and two he-lambs (Leviticus 23.17-19). The two loaves would tell us of Jew and Gentile to whom the word of God came at Pentecost, both proved guilty and undone, as suggested by the leaven, a type of sin.

The feast of Tabernacles lasted for eight days, commencing on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when all the harvest, both grain and vintage, had been gathered in. It was the greatest of all times of joy and gladness, when the people must leave their houses and dwell in booths,

that in days to come they might remember that it was God who made them thus to dwell when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. Would it be possible to consider the millennium as the antitype here, a supreme time of joy and gladness and of rich ingathering (Isaiah 62. 8, 9) ?

The eighth day seems to indicate the consummation of the feast, the last day mentioned in God's year. This was the very day when the Lord Jesus spoke of living waters that shall flow, the great day of the feast (John 7. 37, 38). The great antitype of this is possibly seen in the future, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell with them (Revelation 21. 3). The dwelling in booths would also indicate that our citizenship is in heaven, that here we have no abiding city.

The Passover tells of the death of Christ, the Son of God. The feast of Weeks, telling of Pentecost, presents the picture of the descent of the Holy Spirit. The feast of Tabernacles, the eighth day in particular, tells of that day when God the Father shall be all in all (1 Corinthians 15. 28).

E. Birchall, G.A.J.

From Birkenhead.—The feasts began properly with the Passover, which spoke of Christ crucified. In Egypt they kept the Passover in their houses, but in the land it was to be observed in the place chosen by God Himself. This feast was kept in the wilderness, the first occasion being described in Numbers 9.5. Then it was kept in the land of Canaan, and we hear nothing of it until the days of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 30). King Josiah read in the book of the law of God how the Passover should be observed (2 Chronicles 35. 18), and acted accordingly. There is much in so-called Christianity today in which the element of human choice is prominent. God desires to have His people keep the Remembrance of His Son in accordance with the divine commandment. We can learn much from the example of Josiah, who in his youth began to seek after the God of His Father David, and carried out what was written in the book of the law : as a result he was blessed exceedingly. Closely related to the Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In Exodus 13. 9 we have an interpretation of the latter : "It shall be for a sign . . . and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in thy mouth . . .". Following the Passover no leaven was to be found in all their borders during the Feast of Unleavened Bread: leaven speaks of sin. In our case, following the Remembrance of the Lord, we are to keep a seven days' festival with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

An interval of fifty days followed the Feast of the Wave Sheaf (speaking of resurrection) and brings us to Pentecost, at which season the apostle Peter spoke (Acts 2) of the fulfilment of the prophetic words of Joel, "I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2. 32).

The Feast of Tabernacles, the last of the feasts of Jehovah, covered a period of seven days, and had associated with it an eighth day, which appears to have had a very important place : it is the last day mentioned in God's year. An important occasion, on which this feast was observed, is seen in Nehemiah 8 ; the people came together, and the law of God was read and expounded to them. It was a holy day ; their weeping was turned to joy ; and it is recorded that the joy of the LORD was their strength (Nehemiah 8. 10). Note how ready the people were to keep the law of God.

The Day of Atonement was a very solemn occasion : it was a day of judgement, and was one of sorrow both for God and for His people. In relation to the judgement day that lies ahead of the saints, we would judge this speaks of the judgement-seat of Christ. *L. Bowman, R. Hyland.*

GIFTS TO GOD AND MEN
(Chapters 14. 22-15. 23, 26. 1-15.)

From Hamilton, Ont.—Giving to God and giving to men have a bearing upon fellowship of God with men. God required His portion first. To give of the first and of the best is contrary to nature, but with the giving of the tithe went a blessing that the fruit of the field and flock would increase, and so there was a very close link between giving and receiving, between obedience and blessing. As the Israelite separated the tenth for Jehovah, he would be reminded of God's blessing upon him, that God must have a portion, and of the place of the Name. We, as God's people today, enjoy the spiritual blessings of the truth, and should ever remember our deliverance from sin's bondage and from sectarianism. Having come to the place of the Name, God's spiritual house, we can in obedience separate our lives to Him and bring that which is acceptable to Him. We should present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service.

Marshall Vanderwater, D. Beck, Basil James.

COMMENTS.

[1] (Edinburgh).—Israel left the land of Egypt on the 15th day of Abib (Numbers 33. 3). They came out on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, an unleavened people with unleavened dough (see 1 Corinthians 5. 6-8 for the New Testament answer).—*J.M.*

[2] (Wembley).—The harvest began on the first, "first day of the week" after the Passover. On this first day of the week the sheaf of firstfruits (typical of Christ in resurrection) was waved before the LORD. From that first day of the week Israel were to number 50 days, 7 sabbaths, which brought them to the first day of the week again, when two loaves of the new harvest were brought out of their dwellings and also waved before the LORD (typical of Pentecost (Acts 2) when the fruits of the new harvest, of which the Lord is the sheaf of firstfruits, began to appear). Where does it say that the entire grain harvest had been garnered by the time of Pentecost?—*J.M.*

[3] (Wembley).—The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a seven day feast. The children of Israel left Egypt on the first day of unleavened bread (see [1] above) with unleavened dough, and they were to be free from the leaven of Egypt afterwards. Such was our state at the beginning—free from the leaven of moral and spiritual evil—and this state is to be maintained continually in all periods of 7 days, not simply on one day in the week, the Lord's day.—*J.M.*

[4] (Willington Quay).—It should, I think, be noticed that the two loaves of Pentecost were baked with leaven (Leviticus 23. 17), so that they do not speak of Christ. Leaven in connexion with the offerings in Leviticus speaks of evil. No offering made with leaven was ever to be brought to the altar. But note here, that these leavened loaves were baked. Fire is the only thing which will kill leaven, and the leaven had been killed in the loaves by the application of heat. Thus in what was offered to God, the fruit of the new harvest of grace at Pentecost (Acts 2), was that of men in whom the leaven of sin had been killed by the holy fire of the Spirit (Hebrews 9. 14), and hence could be an offering of first fruits, but it could not come to the altar; the loaves could not in any sense be vicarious as conferring a substitutionary benefit on any one. This is a matter of vital and fundamental importance. Such a sacrifice as is mentioned in Romans 12. 1, 15. 16 is in no sense vicarious or substitutionary.—*J.M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions from Wigan.—(1) Deuteronomy 14. 22 reads, "tithe all the increase . . . year by year," but verse 28 says every three years. Was this a second tithing? (2) The tithe of corn or wine or oil or firstlings was to be eaten before the LORD (12. 17). What part of the tithe could be eaten within their gates (14. 28, 29; 26. 12-15)?

Answers.—(1) It seems to me that the answer to the tithing year by year and in the third year is that, whilst they tithed two years, on the third year a complete and accurate survey was made of their increase over the three-year period and all the tenth of their increase was handed over, so that the tithe, or income tax, in Israel was measured in three-year periods. (2) We must, I think, take a wider view than that the tithe was simply something that could be put in a basket and carried to the house of God. Let us think of the amount of grain the tithe would involve in Israel, grain from the fields of possibly thousands upon thousands of people. There would be tons upon tons of grain, grain to sustain the Levites, of whom there were thousands, besides providing for the strangers, widows and fatherless, for a whole year until the harvest came again. What it seems to me Deuteronomy 12. 17 is telling us, in a chapter which is dealing with the importance of serving God in the place of the Name, is that offerings must be brought to God's house, but to suppose that all the tithe was eaten in the place of the Name is plainly not so from the Deuteronomy scriptures cited. The whole matter of the tithing would be carefully dealt with under the control of the Levites, who would undoubtedly see that all was done and distributed according to the law.—*J.M.*

Question from Hamilton, Ont.—When does the Remembrance end? Does it end after the partaking of the emblems and the singing of a hymn, or does it include the whole meeting?

Answer.—It should be noted that in Matthew and Mark there is no mention made about doing again what the Lord did for a remembrance. We are told in these two Gospels of how the Lord commanded that His disciples should eat of the loaf and drink of the cup. In Luke there is no mention made of the eating and drinking, only of doing what the Lord did for a remembrance of Him. What did He do? Did He eat and drink of the loaf and the cup? No, there is no record that He ate and drank of these. What did He do? Luke 22. 19, 20 answers this: "And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you." The Remembrance proper is in doing what the Lord did. (1) He took a loaf, (2) gave thanks, (3) brake it, and (4) gave to them, and in like manner the cup, (1) He took it, (2) gave thanks, (3) poured it, and (4) gave to them. But such acts as the Lord did cannot be separated from the eating and the drinking, which are implied in the giving of the broken loaf and the poured cup to His disciples. The meeting for the purpose of keeping the Lord's Remembrance is not over when this part of the service of God is completed, it is followed by the offering of the sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13. 15), which Peter calls spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2. 5), which in turn are associated with entrance into the holy place or holies (Hebrews 10. 19-22). This meeting on Lord's day, the first day of the week (Acts 20. 7), may also be a time for ministry, suitable ministry to the occasion, but this should not take place until it is spiritually discerned that the time of offering spiritual sacrifices is at an end. We repeat again that the remembrance proper is doing what the Lord did, but this cannot be separated from other things which belong to the divine service of that occasion.—*J.M.*

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS
CHAPTER 3.

Verses 15, 16 : *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded : and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, even this shall God reveal unto you : only, whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us walk.*

" Perfect " here should not be confused with " made perfect " (verse 12) ; the latter may lie in the future while we are on earth, but the former word signifies mature full-grown persons, and such persons of full growth are to press on towards that perfect state (1 Corinthians 13. 10) which lies ahead. But if there be differences of mind arising from the standard of spiritual growth, even that will God reveal. Such differences will inevitably arise, for some make marked progress, whilst others are slow, and some make little or no advance in spiritual things. There is a danger, in seeking to preserve unity, of making the standard of the backward believer that for all the rest. The standard by which we shall all be measured in due time, and by which we are to walk now, is that whereunto we have attained. Walk (*Stoichein*) means to walk in order.

Verse 17 : *Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them which so walk even as ye have us for an ensample.*

The Philippians were together to imitate Paul and so bear his resemblance. All such as followed this course of Paul-like, and consequently Christ-like, behaviour were to be marked as persons worthy of being ensamples or patterns of conduct for others to follow. These good-living people were to be marked, considered and followed, but those of Romans 16. 17 were to be marked and avoided, because they caused divisions contrary to the doctrine.

Verses 18, 19 : *For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose God is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*

The persons here indicated were believers who followed a life of self-pleasing and indulgence. They were not enemies of God in the sense of Romans 5. 10, but they were enemies of the cross. They knew little or nothing of the truth of Paul's words, " I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live ; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me " (Galatians 2. 20). Their end was perdition, the complete loss of their life for God (Matthew 16. 25; Hebrews 10. 39). Their god was a belly-god; they were devoted to uncurbed appetites. Their glory was naught but shame, and the whole bent of their minds was down and not up, earthly and not heavenly. Over the conduct of these Paul wept bitter tears of sorrow, because of his love for his Lord and for them.

Verses 20, 21 : *For our citizenship is in heaven ; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself.*

It is a distortion for a believer to have his mind set on earthly things, seeing that his citizenship is in heaven. There is his commonwealth and his politics. He has not bought this citizenship, as the Roman captain bought

Roman citizenship (Acts 22. 28), for he has been born from above. Hence Paul says that we are to " behave as citizens worthily " (Philippians 1. 27, R.V.M.). We wait for the Lord, the Saviour from heaven, who is coming to deal with the bodies of the saints, called properly in the R.V. " the body of our humiliation," and not " our vile body," as in the A.V. These bodies will be fashioned anew, their outward appearance will be changed, and they will be conformed to the body of His glory. Thus the bodies of the saints will express the inner life, the eternal life which they already have in Christ; Christ is already their life (Colossians 3.4). This conformation like unto the Lord's resurrection body will remain unchanged and unalterable. The power which will effect this change is said to be " according to the working whereby He is able to subject all things unto Himself." The same power which will put down instantly and irrevocably the antichrist and his minions, and bring into being a state of ordered government on earth and throughout the universe, is the same as that which will cast out sin and mortality from the bodies of saints for ever. Never again will there be an emotion or thought in these bodies which is out of alignment with His holy will. Blessed thought!

CHAPTER 4.

Verse 1 : *Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my beloved.*

" Wherefore," as those who are citizens of heaven, who are beloved and longed for (this last description is not found elsewhere), his joy and crown (see 1 Thessalonians 2. 19), he exhorts them to " so stand fast in the Lord." " In the Lord " indicates subjection to the Lord's will.

Verses 2, 3 : *I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yea, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life.*

Some have thought that Euodia and Syntyche were men. Though there is no word for women in the Greek, yet the fact that " these " (*Autais*) is feminine, should determine the matter that they were women. They may have been two of the women that gathered with Lydia at the place of prayer (Acts 16. 13, 14). In any case they had been of those who laboured with the apostle in the gospel in past days. Now a difference had come in between them, and this state of dis-unity was having a harmful effect on the church in Philippi. Help is to be given to the women by one who is called a true yokefellow, who probably is Epaphroditus who will shortly be bearing this epistle to Philippi. Clement cannot be identified, but the thing that really matters is, that he and the rest of those that laboured in the gospel have their names in the book of life. This is the same book as is referred to in Revelation 3.5.

J.M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

Contributions this month, specially in their original form, are acceptably unanimous as to the greatness of the Lord Jesus as Priest, (and here we interpolate the remark that there were many references to Hebrews, possibly an indication that our fellow-students are thinking in anticipation of our next subject), but in the matter of the man Moses as a type of the Lord as Prophet there was not the same unanimity.

In reading the Scriptures we must give careful attention to what may, at first sight, appear to be minor detail, as did the apostle Paul in instructing the Galatians as to the promises to Abraham and his Seed : " He saith not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy Seed " (Galatians 3. 16). We suggest that Deuteronomy 18. 15, 18, should be read after the same fashion, that is, with due regard to the fact that the word is prophet (as of one) and not prophets (as of many). There are some who do not so read these verses, but take them to be a general statement as to how God was to raise up prophets in Israel, and not a direct prophecy concerning the Messiah, which they clearly are according to Acts 3. 22, 7. 37. Others, while accepting the prophetic view, say that the words " like unto me " refer to the words " of thy brethren " (18. 15), and do not mean that Moses was a type of the Lord Jesus. They object that to liken the Lord Jesus to Moses, a man, would be unique in Scripture. But is this really so ? Is not the Lord described as a Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110. 4) ? The Lord apart, Melchizedek was unique as a priest, and Moses as a prophet. Under God he led Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness ; through him God gave the law to Israel; when Israel were in distress he stood before the LORD for them ; he mediated between God and His people in the day of divine wrath (9.18-20, Exodus 32.10-14, 30-34), and he was used of God in the institution of the worship associated with the Tabernacle, which was with a view to worship in a chosen place in the land. No other man so served the LORD and His people Israel, then or ever since ; he was a prophet (the text in question is sufficient warrant for the use of the word) and he was a mediator between God and His people. The Lord Jesus is the Mediator between God and man in this dispensation : He leads a people for God, a holy nation whose worship is a sweet foretaste of the praise and worship that shall ascend in the eternal state.

Moses was leader, mediator and prophet, and as such he was a unique type of the Lord Jesus Christ, who in addition is, like Melchizedek, Priest and King.

J.B.

IDOLATRY AS SEEN IN DEUTERONOMY

We desire to make brief comment this month with regard to the great gravity of the sin of idolatry in the eyes of the LORD.

While the principle may apply to other forms of sin, due weight should be given to the fact that it was in association with the second commandment that the LORD spoke of " visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the

children, and upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate Me " (5. 8, 9, Exodus 20. 4, 5) : that the direct commandment against idolatry should be accompanied by such a statement of the awesome displeasure of God, should prove beyond doubt the heinousness of idolatry to God. Again, the command to destroy the nations in the land, and the strict injunction that Israel be separate from the nations round about and make neither covenants nor marriages with them (7. 2, 3), were designed to prevent Israel from being led astray : and, if such a thing should happen, the anger of the LORD would be kindled against Israel that He should destroy them quickly (7. 4). That this was no empty threat was proved by the LORD'S dealings with Israel at the provocation in Horeb (9. 8-21), in reminding them of which Moses spoke of the anger and hot displeasure of the LORD, and His will to destroy both Israel and Aaron (9. 19, 20, Exodus 32. 10). Deuteronomy 9 vividly and movingly recounts the story of Exodus 32, where we find that the people desired Aaron to make them an idol to fill the want they felt through the prolonged absence of the man Moses and through their own forgetfulness of the presence of God in their midst. Aaron, on seeing how the people received the idol, built an altar and said, " Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD," thus making matters worse by producing a revolting mixture of idolatry and an alleged form of worship of the LORD. Such confusion was not of God : true worship of the LORD must ever be unadulterated and pure, and corrupted worship must ever bring the wrath of God. The men of Israel about to enter the land would, in the light of their fathers' failure at Horeb, feel something of God's jealous hatred of idolatry.

Many practices and rites of present day professing Christendom are nothing short of idolatry; and in Deuteronomy and elsewhere in the Scriptures there is abundant evidence that all forms of idolatry (Jewish, Pagan, and " Christian " so called) are alike gravely hateful to God. Let us therefore eschew the evil of corrupted worship by worshipping God according to the pattern He has shown.

J.B.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY PRIESTS AND PROPHETS

(Chapters 13. 1-5, 18)

From Greenock.—Prophets spoke in the name of the LORD (18. 18, 19), but priests ministered before the LORD (18. 5). Prophets were raised up by God from among their brethren, and could be of any tribe (18. 18), but priests were all from the tribe of Levi (18. 1). Prophets were not specifically provided for in the law, but the priests' due from the people, from them that offered sacrifices, was the shoulder, and the two cheeks and the maw (18. 3) [1]. A prophet would not be a priest unless he was a Levite, but a priest could be a prophet (*e.g.*, Moses). Prophets were " burdened " with the word of the LORD (Malachi 1. 1), but priests were " numbered by the hand of Moses, every one according to his service, and according to his burden " (Numbers 4. 49).

The people were to hearken to the prophets. The words, " I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee (Moses)," speak of the Lord Jesus (18. 18, Acts 3. 22). It is interesting to note the different shades of meaning of the word " raise up " in Acts 13. 32-34 : in verse 33 it refers to the fulfilment of Deuteronomy 18. 15, whereas in verse 34 it refers to His being raised from the dead. But does not Deuteronomy 18. 18 also speak of all the prophets, for verse 20 goes on to speak of

prophets who should speak "presumptuously in My Name," and no other reference is made to the prophets who spake in the Name of the LORD before the Lord Jesus came? Would meekness be the characteristic of all the prophets which made them like unto Moses? [2].

A prophet who spoke in the name of other gods was to be put to death, whether what he said came to pass or not. To speak in the name of other gods was sufficient for condemnation. In this connexion we too have a simple test of the true and the false: "every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist" (1 John 4. 2, 3): also false teachers deny even the Master that bought them (2 Peter 2.1).

John H. Johnson.

From Wigan.—The opening words of Hebrews, "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets" (Hebrews 1.1), show God as the Speaker and the prophets as the channel of communication.

The adversary ever has his own men (false prophets) ready to lead the people away from God, who therefore warned His people against these false prophets coming with signs and wonders and predictions (13. 1, 2). It can be expected that before such evidence the people might say, "How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?" (18. 21). The true and complete test is obtained from chapters 13 and 18 taken together, because a sign or wonder coming to pass does not in itself prove divine commission, but the message of the prophet must also comply with the revealed will of God. For example, if he say, "Let us go after other gods" (13. 2), when God's revealed will was, "Thou shalt have none other gods before Me" (Exodus 20. 3). Herein is the test of the prophet, and a proving of the people to see if they love the LORD their God with all their heart and with all their soul (13. 3). Today we have need of such warnings that we be not carried away with every wind of doctrine, for "there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall shew signs and wonders" (Mark 13.22).

Hebrews 5. 1 clearly indicates the work of the high priest:—"Every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." Taken from among their brethren, Aaron and his sons were appointed to the priests' office by a divine call, that they might minister before God for men. The Levites, who were taken in place of the firstborn after the incident of the golden calf, were separated from among the tribes of Israel (Numbers 3. 12, 8. 18), that they might serve in the tent of meeting. God gave them to Aaron and his sons, that they might minister before the LORD, and teach Jacob God's judgements and Israel His law (34. 10).

It is fitting that our thoughts should be directed to the Lord Jesus, who is not only the Prophet promised of old (Acts 3. 22), but also the Apostle and High Priest of our confession (Hebrews 3. 1), and made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest (Hebrews 2. 17). Our Great High Priest hath passed through the heavens (Hebrews 4. 14), and thus the people of God today are able to draw near into the Holies.

J.H.

From Glasgow. Although Israel were a people redeemed by God, priestly service was not the lot of all. In Exodus 28. 1 we have the choice of God that Aaron and his sons should be brought near to Him to minister

in the priests' office. A study of this chapter reveals how representative their service was. The high priest's garments had a place on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod and on the breast-plate of judgement for the names of the twelve tribes on whose behalf they served. As the priests reverently performed their service, conscious that they stood between God and the people, Israel were a joy to God, and the people enjoyed His blessing. In such conditions an Israelite could come to the house of the LORD to have a matter righteously dealt with, and also to receive instruction : " For the priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth " (Malachi 2. 7). The priests' service was twofold, Godward and manward : and a priest should be one who could bear gently with the ignorant and erring (Hebrews 5.2). In the days of Eli, this holy service was at a very low ebb, so that a godly woman praying in God's house in bitterness of soul was sadly misunderstood by the priest; and also those who came with an offering were caused to abhor the offering of the LORD (1 Samuel 2.12-17). With what relief we turn to consider Him who serves for us ! "His heart is filled with tenderness, His very name is Love."

We are impressed with the service of the man Moses, who enjoyed a very near place, hearing the words from the mouth of the LORD. In this matter Moses is unique, as the testimony of God shows, " with him I will speak mouth to mouth " (Numbers 12. 8). Yet, when Joshua, being jealous for Moses' honour, would have stayed the prophesying of Eldad and Medad in the camp of Israel (Numbers 11. 29), Moses said, " Would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them ! "

Prophets were raised up by God from a great variety of walks in life, their station in life being no hindrance. God, in kindness to Israel, raised up prophets for the instruction of His people, but in times of serious declension, such as we find prior to the Babylonian Captivity, " they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets " (2 Chronicles 36. 15, 16).

R. Shaw.

EXTRACTS

From Wembley.—God expects His people to love Him with all their heart and soul (13. 3), and gives six points for guidance : they should walk after Him, fear Him, keep His commandments, obey His voice, serve Him, and cleave unto Him. If Israel had adhered strictly to these, there would have been no attraction in the wiles of false prophets or in the abominations of the land. But man's natural inclination is to turn aside from God's way (13. 5, R.V.M.), so often being lured by what may well appear to be quite harmless and, indeed, even worthwhile (Genesis 3. 4-6). Often the devil assures the waverer that " There's no harm in it." But is it God's will ? The danger arises from self-choosing, from whence arise the sects and systems of men.

Priests and Levites, engaged in service in and about the house of God, still had temporal needs which had to be satisfied. Both they and their families had to be fed and clothed, and they could not give to God their full attention if worried about these other things. So adequate provision was made for them in the firstfruits, in the first of the fleeces, and in the shoulder, the cheeks and the maw from the sacrifices. What the significance of these portions of the carcass is we do not know., and would appreciate guidance [3].

A.C.H.

From Lerwick.—Prophets and priests were two classes of servants which God used in His dealings with Israel. Prophets were those through whom God declared His word (Hebrews 1. 1), so that from time to time such were chosen to correct and warn Israel, and to make known the wonderful things to come, as did Moses when he spoke of the Prophet that was to be raised up from the midst of Israel having God's word in His mouth (18.15-19). Although Israel has rejected for the present time this Prophet, who was Jesus of Nazareth, "mighty in deed and word" (Luke 24. 19), unto us He has spoken (John 17. 8), and the word which we have heard of Him is the word to which we ought to give the more earnest heed (Hebrews 2. 1), for we live in days when there are many false prophets who speak that which is not commanded of God (18. 20).

The Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God (Ephesians 5. 2), has on His ascension into heaven been made a " High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek " (Hebrews 7. 17). Such is the One whom we read of in Zechariah as the Branch who shall be " a Priest upon His throne " (Zechariah 6. 12, 13).

What a glorious day when Israel shall know Jesus as Prophet, Priest and King !

D.S.

From Melbourne.—In Deuteronomy 18 we have the first mention of Christ as Prophet. Viewing the raising from the dead of the young man, the people said of Jesus, "A great Prophet is arisen among us " (Luke 7. 16). We felt that His ministry as a Prophet commenced at His baptism and will have no end, for He will in eternity be the One who will ever tell forth God's goodness to His redeemed people [4].

Priests came between God and man. Their ministry was to offer gifts and sacrifices to God. Also sinning ones were brought to them for judgement (Numbers 5. 15). The priests must receive their portion from the gifts, and we felt that in our position as a holy priesthood worshipping God there is that portion enjoyed by us whilst we are giving to God.

The priests of old lost their position as priests on death, but we felt that believers today will never cease to be priests [5]. We believe that God desires all believers today to be in the holy priesthood, but owing to disobedience a very small remnant are found in collective testimony for God.

P.W.A.

From Crowborough.—A prophet is one who has the dual gift of foretelling and of telling forth. A precious prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus as Prophet is here given us (18. 15). See the use Paul makes of these words in Acts 3. 22-26.

Priests came of the family of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi. They had many things to attend to associated with God and His people. The priests were assisted by the Levites in the preparation of the sacrifices for the many offerings ordained by God.

God made special provision for the priests and the Levites, that they might have sufficient for their temporal needs.

Both prophets and priests had a privileged position before God, but also a responsible one. We need to remember that with privilege comes responsibility,

J. Robertson.

From Cowdenbeath.—False prophets and teachers are to be found in every dispensation : in Old Testament times Moses gave warning against them, and in the present dispensation warnings were given by the Lord Himself (Matthew 7. 15). Some are named in the epistles, for instance, Hymenaeus and Philetus (1 Timothy 1. 20). In Revelation 19. 20 we find the climax of falsehood and deception in the false prophet, the colleague of the beast.

God allowed false prophets among His people to prove them (13. 3), and Deuteronomy makes it very clear that false prophets in Israel might arise from their very midst. Today as then provision is made for dealing with false teachings ; we should shun profane babblings, and purge ourselves from such that we might be meet for the Master's use (1 Timothy 1. 20, 2 Timothy 2).

We would suggest that the portion and the inheritance differ from one another. The priests' and Levites' portion was their daily sustenance ; our daily portion is from meditation on the word and nearness to God. Inheritance is by birthright, natural in the case of the children of Israel and spiritual in the case of the children of God, and to be enjoyed both in the present and in the future (Acts 20. 32). It could be said that every believer has a future inheritance, but not all believers enjoy a present inheritance.

Neville G. Coomer.

From Edinburgh.—The Levites were given in all forty-eight cities, six of them being cities of refuge (Numbers 35. 7), and were maintained by the people in the cities wherein they lived. Nehemiah 13. 10 records failure in Israel's care of the Levites. It was the privilege of the Levites at the first to bear the ark of the covenant, and also to stand before the LORD, to minister unto Him and to bless His name. They kept the furniture of the tent of meeting and were wholly given (given, given, R.V.M.) unto Aaron and his sons (10. 8, Numbers 3. 8).

The priests were to receive their due from " them that offer a sacrifice," and their portion consisted of the shoulder, two cheeks and the maw. The fat, which was the best, was for God, and precious too in His sight were the ashes. Also, the firstfruits of corn, wine, oil and sheep-fleece were given unto the priests.

The holy nation was high above all nations (26.19). The abomination of Moab was Chemosh, and that of Ammon was Molech, but Israel were not to learn from these and other nations. God had already shown His people the pathway of His commandments : to be instructed by idolatrous nations would only serve to draw them out of His way. Our teaching must always be God's teaching, else we cannot fail to go astray and run after the things contrary to His word.

A. M. Hope.

From London, S.E.—The portions of Scripture for this study emphasize words spoken together with signs and dreams—words of truth from God spoken through true prophets, lying words spoken in prophecy by false men purporting to be prophets. The Spirit of God records what was found in the land of Israel's possession (18. 9-15). Abominations of every form, of which Israel were warned, " Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations " (18. 9), and concerning the practice of these things, " The LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do " (18. 14).

In contrast to falsity and evil, the Lord Jesus said, " My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself. He

that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory, but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him" (John 7. 16-18). This is fully applicable to the Lord Jesus and also sums up the difference between the true and false prophets. We note that of those prophets it was said that they should rise up from among Israel. For our warning and exhortation the apostle said, "From among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20. 30), and he wrote, "Such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ" (2 Corinthians 11. 13). Of the end of such men we read, "whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11.15), and again, "whose end is perdition" (Philippians 3. 19).

G. A. Reeve.

From Nottingham.—Deuteronomy 18. 1 opens with the words, "The priests, the Levites." This was the people whom God had appointed to be His priests. They were sons of Levi, and were to be very near to God, a state of affairs which would seem incongruous to men, but which in fact displays the wonderful grace of God. Genesis 49. 5 tells us the early history of Levi: he was a murderer. Yet his descendants became the priests of God. So we, who were sinners of the dust, have in this dispensation been brought nigh to God as priests to worship Him.

Levi's experiences did not all come at once. The ones who were to be brought so close to God must first be proved. Exodus 32. 26 records such an occasion. Levi came through with triumph (33. 9). As priests the Levites had to dedicate the members of their bodies in service to the LORD. This compares with Romans 6. 13. Numbers 8 teaches us that Levi was brought nigh and kept nigh by blood. We are brought nigh by God to fulfil His purpose. This in respect of Israel is revealed in Exodus 19. 6, a kingdom of priests. God brought them near as the priestly tribe, but there was no perfection in this system (Hebrews 7. 11). God has no further pleasure in this way, yet men return to it in their religious systems. The priests' work was in connexion with the place of the Name, the house of God. Our Great High Priest is in heaven for us. We, as associated with the house of God, should know service as a holy priesthood: this is the service Godward, in worship to Him. There is also our royal priesthood service to bear the name of Christ to the dying.

Levi was to receive tithes of his brethren. Yet Levi, in the person of Abraham, met Melchizedek and paid him tithes. Our Great High Priest is after the order of Melchizedek: He was not of the tribe of Levi, but of Judah. God says that without contradiction the less is blessed of the better (Hebrews 7.7). The new order of the priesthood is heavenly not earthly.

R. Hickling.

From Birkenhead.—It has always been God's desire that His people should heed the voice of His prophets. There was danger, however, that false prophets would arise amongst God's people. The portion before us indicates what was to be Israel's attitude to a false prophet. The acid test of genuine prophecy was the word of God. If the prophet spoke contrary to God's word, even though he may have performed a sign, such a prophet was false and a menace to the people of God. It would appear that there is a difference in the two portions before us. Chapter 13. 1-3 speaks of a false prophecy together with a sign or wonder being allowed by God to test Israel: but chapter 18. 20 speaks of a prophet speaking presumptuously in

God's Name. We are reminded of Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20), " From among your ownelves shall men arise," and also of the words of the same writer regarding Hymenaeus and Alexander, men who made shipwreck concerning the Faith (1 Timothy 1. 20).

The Levites were not given an inheritance with Israel, although it does appear they had some possessions. It was Israel's responsibility and privilege to attend to their needs. We are reminded of the teaching in the New Testament as to our responsibility for the Lord's servants today (1 Corinthians 9. 13, 14). It was thought that, although there is not an exact parallel between the Lord's servants and the Levites, the principle is the same.

D. Banks, R. Hyland.

From Southport.—The Prophet whom the LORD promised to Israel (18. 15) is the Lord Jesus Christ: Acts 7. 35-37 marks Moses as an outstanding type of Christ as the Prophet in Israel. Under God, Moses led Israel out of Egypt against seemingly insurmountable difficulties. All the prophets bear witness to Christ (Acts 10. 43), and all things written concerning Him must be fulfilled (Luke 24. 27, 44).

The Scriptures contain interesting examples of both true and false prophets. False prophets, including Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah, advised the kings of Judah and of Israel to go up against Ramoth-gilead, and on that same day the true prophecy of Micaiah was fulfilled in the death of the king of Israel (2 Chronicles 18). Jeremiah 28 also contains the sayings of a true and of a false prophet, and the true prophecy quickly came to pass, for Hananiah had " spoken rebellion against the LORD " (13 5, Jeremiah 28. 15-17).

Edgar I. Hodson.

From Liverpool.—Prophecy has been called " a miracle of knowledge," and a prophet one who " foretells " and " tells forth." Balaam shows what should be true of a prophet: "I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind ; what the LORD speaketh, that will I speak" (Numbers 24. 13).

That Jehovah spoke in revelation through dreams and visions is beyond doubt. See Genesis 37. 5-11 ; 41. 25 ; Numbers 12. 6. He also spoke thus to individuals (Job 33. 14-18), and in the New Testament also God spoke in dreams and visions (Matthew 2. 13, Acts 10). We in our day must also beware of false prophets (Matthew 7. 15); warnings were given during the sojourn on this scene of God's beloved Son both to Israel and to the disciples (Matthew 24. 4, 11, 24). Today we have the blessed Holy Spirit to guide us into all the truth (" Thy word is truth," John 17. 17). Israel in a bygone day had to rely upon the prophets of Jehovah, upon whom the Spirit of the LORD came, enabling them to reveal Jehovah's will for His people. Our solemn responsibility is seen in Hebrews 10. 26-31.

The promised prophet of Deuteronomy 18 is Christ; and God's people were to look for and rely upon the promised One. That some recognized Him is undoubted, and that some waited in eagerness for Him is readily seen (John 1. 19-26, 45). There should have been no doubt as to His authority (John 17. 7, 8 ; Acts 2. 22 ; 3. 22-26).

Some controversy took place over the meaning of Deuteronomy 18. 19. Is its application confined to the obligation of men as touching the gospel, or has it an application to the responsibility of children of God ? [6].

A. P. Sands, A. H.

From Atherton.—The outstanding feature that distinguishes priests from prophets may be outlined thus. The priest goes in to God on man's behalf. The prophet comes out from God to speak for God and with a message for men. The Lord Jesus in His own Person fulfils both of these offices. Of Him alone the divine word came to Moses, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee" (18. 18). Of Him alone, too, the psalmist wrote, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110. 4).

According to Hebrews 3. 1 the Lord Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. We suggest that His Apostleship is closely allied to His prophetic office, as the One who came out from God in a way none other did. He came with a message of unparalleled import and value (John 3. 31-34). His Apostleship and Prophetic work are supreme in character, excelling all that went before, and yet in grace the divine voice from the Father has Himself spoken, giving to men who were named apostles and prophets the message of N.T. revelation.

The priests of Old Covenant times were, according to God's order, of the sons of Aaron. They were the men who went in unto God on the people's behalf: the high priest alone making that year by year entry into the holies on the day of atonement. By contrast, we also have one Great High Priest, but God's people are priests in a priesthood. What a unique privilege! Consequently our obligations and responsibilities are correspondingly higher. A true Levite spirit should dominate our service, that we should come with all the desire of our soul unto the place which the LORD has chosen (Deuteronomy 18. 6). G. A. Jones.

COMMENTS

[1] (Greenock).—There being no lineal descent in the case of prophets, as was the case with priests and kings, God could not and did not specify whom or from whence He might raise up prophets, but surely it is contemplated that He would raise up prophets in Numbers 12. 6; Deuteronomy 13. 1. The darker the day, the greater the need for prophets (2 Chronicles 36. 14-16); indeed the failure of the priests called for the ministry of the prophets (Malachi 1. 1, 6; 2. 1). Jeremiah and John the Baptist were priests who became prophets (Jeremiah 1. 1; Luke 1. 5, 13; Matthew 11. 9, 13, 14).—*J.M.*

[2] (Greenock).—Deuteronomy 18. 15-19 speaks of one Prophet who would be like Moses and there was no other. These verses were fulfilled in Christ alone, as Acts 3. 22, 23 clearly shows; *the* prophet (John 1. 21) stood out from all the prophets, even as Moses did (Numbers 12. 6-8). He was the one mediatorial-prophet of the Old Testament, even as the Lord is of the New Testament. Meekness should characterize all men who carry God's messages. Moses and Christ were patterns of meekness (Numbers 12. 3; Matthew 11. 29).—*J.M.*

[3] (Wembley).—In Leviticus 7.34,35 we read of the anointing portion of Aaron and his sons, which was the wave breast and the heave thigh or shoulder of the peace offerings. Deuteronomy 18. 3 in addition to the shoulder mentions the two cheeks and the maw. The two cheeks are rendered by some the jaw bones, and the maw is the first stomach of the clean animals (and other ruminants). These all point to that which is first in an animal and this is in keeping with what God says regarding the first of corn, of wine, of oil, and the first of the fleece of sheep (verse 4). God will have the first or none. In addition there may be something to be learned from the shoulder, the seat of strength, the breast, the place of affection.

Both were and are needed in those that serve God, to serve Him with strength and in love. Also, only animals which chewed the cud were clean, for which the jaw bones and the first stomach of animals were necessary. Priests then and priests now need to know the invaluable exercise of meditation in the word, of which chewing the cud speaks. We need to eat God's word. Note Jeremiah 15. 16 about the eating and then the joy of the heart. See also Psalm 1. 2.—*J.M.*

[4] (Melbourne).—Whilst I agree with our friends that the Lord will speak to us, no doubt much and often because of His great love, and we to Him, in the ages to come, yet I am doubtful whether we can say that it will be as a prophet He shall speak. The essential feature of prophets was that men spoke from God whether in fore-telling or forth-telling.—*J.M.*

[5] (Melbourne).—What shall be is a difficult matter. Indeed it is difficult to say what engages saints in glory in their unclothed state (2 Corinthians 5). It seems clear enough that saints that depart to be with Christ are no longer in the house of God of 1 Peter 2. 5, and hence are not in the holy and royal priesthood. At the same time there will be some form of divine service in the ages to come (Revelation 22. 3, 4).—*J.M.*

[6] (Liverpool).—It applies first of all to Israel, but it may be applied to sinner and saint. Each will have to give account for what was spoken and what they heard or refused to hear. Note how Isaiah 45. 23, which applies to all men (Philippians 2. 10, 11), is applied to the judgement-seat of God (Romans 14. 10, 11), which is the judgement-seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5. 10)—*J.M.*

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question from Bradford, Halifax and Leeds.—What is the interpretation of Deuteronomy 18. 1? According to Numbers 18, only the priests were to partake of the offerings by fire.

Answer.—The burnt offering was wholly consumed on the altar. A memorial of the meal offering was burnt and the rest was the priests'. The sin offering, the blood of which came only to the copper altar, was eaten by the priests. But of the peace offering, the blood and fat of the inwards was God's portion, the heave thigh or shoulder, the wave breast, the jaw bones or cheeks, and the maw, the first stomach, were the priests', the remainder of the peace offering was the offerer's, "And as for the flesh, every one that is clean shall eat thereof" (Leviticus 7. 19). It was a peace or fellowship offering, in which all clean persons might share in a common enjoyment, this sacrifice bringing them together into one—God, the priests, and all who were clean.—*J.M.*

NOTICE : A Request.

We have a request for *Bible Studies* volumes for 1937 and 1938. Cost and postage will be met. Please communicate with Mr. James Martin, 36 Whitley Crescent, Wigan, if you have a spare copy of either or both of these.

A CORRECTION

Our attention has been directed to an unfortunate editorial error in our August issue. The last sentence of the special article (p. 86) reads : " Is it however, not unreasonable . . ." This is the exact opposite of what Mr. Home wrote. The correct reading is : " Is it, however, not reasonable . . ." We suggest that readers correct their copies ; and we tender sincere apologies to the author.

J.B.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

CHAPTER 4.

Verses 4, 5 : *Rejoice in the Lord always : again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*

Here Paul repeats his words of chapter 3 . 1 , " Rejoice in the Lord," and adds "always." The believer has nothing to rejoice in in himself, or in the world, but however turbulent be the lives of saints on earth, they can by faith look up to and rejoice in the Lord. Forbearance is gentleness, mildness of disposition. This gentle, Christ-like spirit is to be made known to all. Can the believer afford to maintain this mildness of temper always ? Yes, for the Lord is at hand to be His helper. This is not the coming of the Lord that is at hand, as in James 5. 8. The Lord is the Helper of His saints (Hebrews 13. 5, 6). The power of the Lord is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12. 9). Paul entreated the Corinthians " by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10. 1). J.M.

Verses 6, 7 : *In nothing be anxious ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.*

To be anxious is to be cumbered with care. Note how the elders are to cast all their anxiety upon God, for He cares for them, while they seek to care for others (1 Peter 5. 7). Saints are to bring their cares to God, in supplication, and prayer with thanksgiving, " nothing doubting " (James 1.6). The peace of God like a garrison will enter to guard their hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus. This experience passes all understanding.

*" Oh what peace we often forfeit,
Oh what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer ! "*

Peace is concord, harmony, unity, the opposite of anxiety, which conveys the thought of a divided mind.

Verses 8, 9 : *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do : and the God of peace shall be with you.*

The mind is the most difficult part of ourselves to be happily and usefully engaged. But here are things for useful and profitable employment. Things true, conformable to truth ; honourable, grave and dignified ; just, nothing superfluous or deficient, in just proportion; pure, chaste, modest, blameless; lovely, amiable, grateful; good report, commendable, laudable; virtue, goodness, good quality of any sort, excellence ; praise, honour paid, commendation. Think on these things, and let us remember that our thoughts find expression in our acts and ways ; they build our characters. Excellent thoughts reveal themselves in a beautiful character. Paul had demonstrated

these things in his conduct amongst the Philippians in past days ; he says, " The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me." "These things do," and says he, "The God of peace, of concord and harmony, shall be with you."

Verses 10, 11, 12, 13 : *But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me ; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound : in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.*

The apostle rejoices greatly in the Lord at the revival of the thought of the Philippians for him, and he gives them credit for the lack of opportunity to express it. He does not speak of their gift as though want caused him to write as he did, for in his arduous and abundant labours he had learned (as a disciple) the secret (*Mueō* — from *Mud*, to shut the mouth — to initiate, to instruct in secret rites and mysteries ; used only here in the N.T.) of contentment in all his varied circumstances whatever they were, whether he was brought low in times of privation or abounded in times of plenty. It is not an easy secret to learn, both to be filled and to be hungry, to abound and to be in want. Contentment is a mind contented with its lot, " independence of external circumstances." Paul added that he could do all things in Him that strengthened him, an echo of what he wrote in 2 Corinthians 12. 9.

Verses 14,15,16 : *Howbeit ye did well, that ye had fellowship with my affliction. And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only ; for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need.*

The well-doing of the Philippians, that they had fellowship with the apostle in his affliction, has been to their credit all the centuries since they sent Epaphroditus with their gift, and will remain so for ever. The carrying of the treasure of ravaged lands to Rome by Rome's victorious legions was as nothing compared with this ; such deeds of rapine will be to their shame as long as their history remains. Not only was it now that the Philippians were mindful of the apostle, but while he was at Thessalonica they sent to him once or twice to meet his need, and when he left Macedonia they continued to minister to his necessities. How gratefully he recalls their care for him!

Verse 17: *Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account.*

This great-souled man rose above the thought of his own comfort to the thought of what it would mean for them in the day of reward. It was their reward he sought, not their gift. How different this is from commercialized religions, which like the horseleach cry, " Give, give," and never say, " Enough ! " J.M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 24.

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EDITORIAL

On the basis of the statement, "Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel" (31. 22), several of our contributors seem to imply that Moses caused the children of Israel to commit it to memory. Whether or not this is an allowable inference, it is not our purpose to argue, but rather to emphasize the value of storing the mind with the Scriptures. We recall that, a generation ago, there were among us many who gave much attention to memorizing long passages of Scripture, and that memorization was a major feature of the work among the young and in Bible classes. This is indeed a profitable exercise: we cannot do better than fill our minds and the minds of disciples, young and old, with the Scriptures; and we do hope that this aspect of Scripture study is not being overlooked among us today. It may be the hard way, but it well repays the effort involved: a mind stored with Scripture is a great asset to the child of God, and perhaps some are spiritually ill-nourished for want of this very thing. The benefits of a mind enriched with the Scriptures are to be felt in all the vicissitudes of life: in temptation we may find strength to resist; in anxiety, peace; in bereavement, comfort in our bright hope; in sickness, courage to endure with patience; in conversation, joy in speaking of the Lord's things (Malachi 3. 16); if we err, salutary correction and reproof (2 Timothy 3. 16); if the Adversary should seek to lead us into unbelief, our eyes may be opened and our hearts caused to burn within us (Luke 24. 32); and meditation on the Scriptures will gain in sweet fulness to the increase of our joy in the Lord. Scripture study is not an end in itself, but has in view the furnishing of the man of God unto every good work (2 Timothy 3. 17).

J. B.

IDOLATRY AS SEEN IN DEUTERONOMY

We wish to make very brief comment on the matter of the source of idolatry. Even in a cursory reading of Deuteronomy, it would readily be gathered that the apparent sources of idolatry in Israel were Egypt, the nations through which Israel had passed, the nations round about the land, and the nations in the land (6. 14; 7. 2-4; 29. 16, 17). While it is true that Israel might borrow false gods and idolatrous rituals from these nations, it is also a fact that the error might arise through enticement from within (13. 1-18). These sources are only the immediate sources: the reference to demons (32. 17) may be taken as indicating the true and ultimate source of idolatry: it is from the evil one, who in the case of Israel used the nations (and certain individuals) as his agents to tempt the LORD'S people: he might also tempt through silver and gold (7. 25). In this respect idolatry is like sin in general: "Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death" (James 1. 14, 15). Declension into idolatry would appear to follow a like course, for in Deuteronomy there are frequent references to forgetting the LORD, forsaking

the LORD, breaking His covenant, and turning (or being drawn) aside out of the way, which all appear to imply a state of departure from God leading to worshipping and serving other gods (e.g. : 4. 23, 31 ; 8. 11,19 ; 31. 16, 18, 20), the act of idolatry being the outward result of spiritual departure within. This makes the children of Israel fully responsible for their acts of idolatry. With this solemn fact should be coupled the fact that the only true antidote is also set forth in Deuteronomy—fear the LORD and love the LORD (e.g. : 4.10; 6.4-9; 10.12; 11.18; 28.58). This Old Testament teaching was renewed in this dispensation by the Lord Jesus, who said, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment " (Matthew 22. 37, 38). The parallel for today is obvious : " beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness (2 Peter 3. 17).

J.B.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

THE SONG OF MOSES

(Chapters 31, 32)

From Nottingham.—There seems to be a note of sadness mingled with triumph in the words of Moses in chapter 32. His journey's end had been reached. God has been pleased to record the death of certain men of God, thus giving us an insight into the feelings and thoughts of these individuals when on the threshold of eternity.

The last words of Moses compare with those of David in his closing hours, as he charged Solomon. Moses said, " Set your heart unto all the words which I testify unto you this day " (32. 46), and David said, " Keep the charge of the LORD thy God " (1 Kings 2.3). These men were speaking according to their experience, and in passing on their tasks to others, called upon them to have the same determination. To set our hearts necessitates exercise of heart, and deep concern for the things of God ; superficiality and casuality have no place with God. He desires men of purpose, men whose hearts seek after God. As older men go home today, are our young men who must bear the responsibility men of purpose with hearts set in the things of God ?

But why should Israel set their hearts ?—" Because it is your life " (32. 47). Israel could not live without observing the law of God, and it was their failure so to do that led ultimately to the Babylonian Captivity. David knew the truth of this (1 Kings 2.4). Failure to observe the will of God in our day can only end in like disaster.

Moses, an old man who had reached the end of his course, spoke of the greatness of His God. In the course of a life of many experiences, he had proved that his God was able. While we have the power and greatness of God in 32.1-4, we see the failure of Israel in 32. 5, 6, and verse 7 opens with the word, " Remember." If Israel had remembered more often the works of God, perhaps they would not have been so foolish and perverse. Let us never forget those things that have been our experience. Apostasy is brought before us in 32. 15-18, for, in spite of all the good things that God had done, they went astray from Him. Indeed it was when Jeshurun waxed fat (32.15) that he forsook God. Then followed judgement (32. 19-26), and God's forbearance through the reproaches of their adversaries (32. 26-31). There is a prophetic note in the closing verses of the song, where we have pointers to that glad day, still future, when God will restore His people.

What a joy it must have been for Moses to behold the land! yet there must also have been sadness, for he was not to go in (32. 52). This was Israel's inheritance which God had appointed for them. All other nations

took their portion according to the number of the children of Israel (32. 8). The value which the people set on their inheritance was displayed in their life. May we more fully value the inheritance that is ours.

K. J. Holmes, R. Hickling,

From Crowborough.—God signified to Moses that he would not pass over Jordan and that the time had come when he must die. He knew the hearts of the people of Israel, that they were rebellious against the God who had delivered them from Egypt's bondage and cared for them throughout their journey, and that their children would be likewise. He wrote the law of God in a book and commanded that a copy should be kept alongside the ark as a witness against Israel. He also gave commandment that every seven years, when they kept the Feast of Tabernacles, they should read publicly this law. Alas, the feast was not kept after Joshua died, and probably the reading was neglected until the days of Nehemiah. Moses wrote a song in which he described what should befall Israel through many years. We judged that this is the song which the remnant will sing in the scenes described in Revelation 15. 3. [1].

The song begins with a declaration of the greatness and faithfulness of God, and then goes on to describe the failure of the people. God had designed that Israel should be the pivot around which the nations should revolve, but Moses tells of their rebellion and the visitation of God's wrath. In His wrath God would set aside Israel, and bring in another nation to receive His blessing ; but in God's own time Israel would be brought again into His love and care. God would remember His covenants of old, and save Israel from their enemies and bring vengeance on those nations which had afflicted His people.

Moses' work was finished and God called to his rest the faithful servant in God's house.

S. Swift

From Liverpool.—Both to the people and to Joshua were the words spoken, " Be strong and of a good courage " (31. 6, 7, 23). Joshua was to lead them into the land (31. 7, 14, 23), and Jehovah would destroy the nations as He had done hitherto. They were to be strong (in faith) and courageous. They were not to fear or be afraid ; Jehovah was with them; He would not fail them nor forsake them : such was to be the ground of their confidence.

Provision was to be made for the reading of the law every seven years at the Feast of Tabernacles. All were to be assembled, men, women, children, and strangers, to the end that they might hear and learn to fear the LORD and to observe to do all the words of the law, and that subsequently their descendants also might do likewise. We were reminded of the solemn issues involved in the blessing and the curse (30. 15-20).

The responsibility of God's appointed leaders is clearly revealed (31. 25-30). Leaders must themselves be led, and in the people two vital things are required, subjection and discipline. Without these conditions of heart and mind the flesh would have its way. How vital for us today!

In that day Israel had the law ministered to them by chosen men : today we are blessed with the Holy Spirit within us to teach and guide us into the truth. In view of what would happen after Moses' death (31.16) and of the result (31. 18), Jehovah instructed Moses to write the song (to be learned by the people) as a witness for God against the children of Israel, when they should turn aside. To us today the words of the apostle Paul are very pertinent : " Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of

you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God " (Hebrews 3. 12). There is a remarkable parallel between Deuteronomy 31. 29 and Acts 20. 29, 30.

The solemnity of Jehovah's judgement upon Moses impressed us, though we can appreciate the provocation under which he fell (Numbers 20. 1-5). The real issue was not so much what he did in his anger with the people (in smiting the rock instead of speaking to it), but what he did not do—sanctify Jehovah in the eyes of the people (32. 51, Numbers 20. 12). We should guard our tongues, for we too need to be careful that we sin not in this way (Psalm 106. 32, 33) [5].

We gave some thought to " strangers " (such were we, Ephesians 2. 19, Isaiah 56); we have a responsibility towards such.

A. Fairhurst, Jr., A. Horridge.

EXTRACTS

From London, S.E.—At the commencement of his song Moses, in poetic language, called upon the heavens and earth to hear his words, and referred to his doctrine, or teaching, under the figure of rain falling on the thirsty earth waiting to receive moisture, whereby the tender plants might grow. Doctrine should sustain and refresh, otherwise it is like a cloud with no moisture, a mere promise of rain. We should be like tender grass, thirsting for the living waters of the word of God.

Moses ascribed greatness to the LORD, calling Him " the Rock," suggesting stability and strength : " Rock " is mentioned five times (with capital R) referring to God, and twice (with small r) referring to the false gods of the nations (32. 31, 37).

Of all the nations God's portion was the children of Israel; and His loving care for them is likened to an eagle stirring up her nest, that her young might take exercise—so the LORD wrought with Israel. Yet they went after strange gods and provoked the LORD to jealousy. For this the LORD would scatter Israel afar, but for the fact that their adversaries would say that it was their own hand which had done this. God cannot overlook wilful sin ; verse 36 reminds us of the New Testament counterpart: " The time is come for judgement to begin at the house of God." Nevertheless Moses said, "Praise His people, ye nations" (32. 43, Mg.) : this would appear to be a prophecy concerning the time, still future, when Israel will be again in their own land. Events of today seem to be leading to the fulfilment of this prophecy, for Israel, Egypt and Arabia are prominently involved in present-day troubles.

R. F. Robertson.

From Glasgow.—The order and exactitude of Moses in his faithfulness concerning the things of God surely command our attention. After his death there was no panic or tumult in Israel, for everything had been left in order before his departure (an example for us).

With regard to Israel and their leader Joshua going into the land to fight nations greater and mightier than themselves was given the precious promise from God that He would not fail them nor forsake them (31. 3). Encouragement is something we all, at times, need. What can we turn to for encouragement ?—the word of God. God has promised that He will never fail us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13. 5, 6).

The song of Moses was given as a witness for God against the nation of Israel (31. 19). It tells of God's care for His people and His faithfulness in the fulfilment of His word ; but it also speaks of Israel turning their back

upon God and provoking Him to anger with their vanities. It was taught in Israel, and sung by the Levites in their courses in the Temple. Whilst there is a pleasant part in it, sounding out the wonderful works of God and His dealings with His people, there is also a sad and searching part concerning Israel's failure. This song and the song of the Lamb will be sung in heaven by the redeemed that come through the tribulation (Revelation 15. 3). There will be great joy in the hearts of the redeemed then [6]. *J.R.*

From Melbourne.—Moses had an earlier song (Exodus 15), a song of joy at deliverance from the power of Egypt, but this last song was in marked contrast to that of Exodus 15. It was to be laid up beside the ark of the covenant as a testimony against the people, for God knew that they would turn away from Him in later years.

Heaven and earth are called to listen. Moses' preaching and words are likened to the rain and the dew, and if heeded and absorbed would have refreshed the people. He spoke of "the Rock," a title of the LORD which emphasizes the immovability of God's steadfast purposes in contrast to the faithfulness of the people.

Deuteronomy 32. 8, 9 reveals the value God placed upon His people, and we are reminded that God's collective people today are also of great value to Him. If Israel had appreciated the value that they had in His sight, there would have been less unfaithfulness toward Him. Herein is a solemn lesson for us, that we learn to keep His word and not to depart therefrom. Thus we may not be unfaithful, but steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. In so doing we will give Him pleasure. We felt that the name Jacob (32. 9) is used of the people collectively, and that the finding, teaching, instructing, and keeping of the succeeding verses were seen in God's care for His people in Egypt and in the wilderness. *P.W.A.*

From Wembley.—The Israelites were to teach the song of Moses unto their children ; a song taught should not be easily forgotten. It was in the nature of prophecy, even as Moses had said, " Evil will befall you in the latter days ; because ye will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD."

We noted three things in particular : (1) God is a jealous God. (2) " They moved Him to jealousy with strange Gods " (32. 16), and again " They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God ; they have provoked Me to anger with their vanities : and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people ; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation " (32. 21). Romans 11. 11 says, " Salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." The thought was expressed that the Gentile nation referred to is God's people of today. We should like some help on this [2]. Another question put forward was, "Are Israel jealous today ? " Some thought not [3]. (3) The LORD " will make expiation for His land, for His people " (32.43). The Authorised Version renders the word "merciful," which means to make propitiation. It was suggested this was done when the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary's Cross, the Lord's death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant (Hebrews 9. 15) [4]. *R. H. Jones.*

From Kingston-on-Thames.—There are three things which stand out in this song of Moses: (1) Israel is reminded of God's judgement, (2) God's faithfulness, and (3) Israel's failures (32. 4, 5). God is the Rock

and His work is perfect. The apostle Paul refers to the Rock : " Our fathers . . . did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual Rock that followed them : and the Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10. 3-5).

This 32nd chapter surely is a guide for us today, for verse 9 says, " For the LORD'S portion is His people." If this is so, then we should be careful not to displease God, but render that which is due unto Him and " forget not all His benefits " (Psalm 103. 2).
W. H. Humphris.

From Bradford, Halifax and Leeds.—"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12. 3). This meekness shines out in that, though he was not to enter the promised land, he wrote this great song, witnessed by heaven and earth. There is clearly a sad thought here, in that Moses, after leading this mighty people under God, should not be able to enter the land of Canaan, "because ye sanctified Me not in the midst of the children of Israel" (32. 51). The mediator between God and this perverse people, who caused God to save them from being blotted out of His book (Exodus 32. 32), said in his song, " I will proclaim the name of the LORD : ascribe ye greatness unto our God. The Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgement : a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is He " (32. 3, 4).

The song is a history of the children of Israel from beginning to end, and could be put under four headings—Blessing, Judgement, Repentance, and Restoration. It could also be termed the germ of prophecy, from which all other prophecies are an expansion and elaboration.
D.B.R.

From Willington Quay.—This song was written, taught and memorized ("put it in their mouths ") that it might ever be for a witness against Israel (31. 19, 21). God knew what lay before His people and knew their weaknesses. In spite of their calling they forsook their God again and again, and always this song would be a witness against them, hence their need to learn every word, that it might be with them in their distress.

The song seems to cover many periods in their history, past and future, ending, we think, with a reference to that great conflict at Har-Magedon (Revelation 16).
C.B.

From Lerwick.—"Behold, thy days approach that thou must die" (31. 14) : thus Moses learned from God that he could no longer remain among the people of Israel. On his hundred and twentieth birthday Moses encouraged them with the assurance of the abiding presence of God. There is a triple assurance : " The LORD thy God, He will go," " The LORD shall do," and " The LORD shall deliver" (31. 3, 4, 5). Moses, like the apostle Paul, knew that, despite these assurances, after his departure there would be a falling away from God (31. 29, Acts 20. 29, 30): yet he failed not to speak all the words of the song in the ears of the people (32. 44-47).

Because of the words of this song Israel could never plead before God that they were uninformed. On the contrary, the song would be a witness for God against the people in the day when many troubles had befallen them on account of their rebellion and sin (31. 21, 26, 27).
D.S.

From Southport.—The dignified character of Moses is markedly seen at the close of his long life, when, though still with unabated vigour, he had to take leave of the people with whom he had borne patiently through all

their provocation, with the one exception for which he was not allowed to enter the promised land (Numbers 20. 12). Yet there was no bitterness in his heart for this ; instead he rejoiced at the prospect of their entrance into the land under the leadership of Joshua.

Israel moved the LORD to jealousy with that which is not God (32. 21), and therefore He would provoke them to jealousy through those who were not a people, and by a foolish nation (Romans 10. 19-21, 11. 11, 12). Paul, writing to the Corinthians, used the same figure with regard to his own feelings towards the Corinthians, " I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy : for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ " (2 Corinthians 11. 2).

Israel's history is a solemn warning to us today : and we should heed the exhortations: "Be not highminded, but fear" (Romans 11. 20), and " Take heed, brethren, lest haply there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God " (Hebrews 3. 12).

Thomas Brown.

From Birkenhead.—Deuteronomy 31 opens on a note of sadness with Moses telling Israel that the time of his departure was nigh. He encouraged Joshua, his successor, who was to lead the people over the Jordan. We were reminded of Paul's words to Timothy concerning his departure (2 Timothy 4. 6-8) : like Moses the apostle encouraged those who were to take the lead among the people of God. We noted Ecclesiastes 2. 18-23, in reference to those who follow after. A matter which should exercise leaders at all times is : will the leaders who succeed them be wise men or foolish ? Will they build upon that which has already been builded ? It is always necessary to have good leaders.

The song of Moses was an important song, containing the final ministry of the man Moses. It is very unlike the song sung by the people on the morning of their emancipation on the other side of the Red Sea, a song of the greatest expression of joy. The object of the song of Deuteronomy 32 was to teach. In the New Testament we have the same thought expressed in Colossians 3. 16, "teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." In this we see a medium of teaching the doctrine of the Lord. Moses at the end of his days on earth spoke of the gentleness of the doctrine in tenderness and love.

L. Bowman, R. Hyland.

From Edinburgh.—Moses is one of the many great men of God who have left us a heritage in song. The song was written for the teaching of the people (31. 22). This can be linked with Colossians 3. 16, "teaching . . . with . . . spiritual songs." The songs in scripture abound in teaching for us as a people for God. More than that, the song and the joy always go together. In David's day and onwards from then, there were Levites who were instructed in the song, and the singers played an important part in the service of the house of God. When the people were in captivity in Babylon, there was no service of God's house, no song and hence no joy (Psalm 137).

In the song of Moses we find the following divine titles : Jehovah, Elohim and El (32. 3, 4), El Elyon (32. 8), Eloah (32. 15), this being the first time in Scripture that this name is mentioned.

The song speaks to Israel of the condition of their fathers, and of the way they themselves would go. They had dealt corruptly and perversely. But as for God, their God, He found, He cared, He kept, He

protected, He provided. All that they had and were, they owed to God. We do well to be taught from the words of this song : Paul's words to the elders of Ephesus are similar to it (Acts 20. 29-32) : " Wherefore watch ye, . . . I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace."

Fittingly, the song begins with the words, " Give ear, and closes with the word, " Rejoice." By hearing, remembering and being taught from Moses' song, we cannot fail to rejoice, and our joy will be full.

J. Paterson, A. M. Hope.

From Cowdenbeath.—Moses had reached the end of his earthly sojourn : he would no more go out and come in as Israel's leader, but like other leaders of God's people (e.g., Paul, Peter) his interest in their welfare went beyond his own day (31. 3-7).

Israel already knew that Joshua would be their new leader, but again he was marked out as the one chosen by God. Moses and Joshua were commanded to appear before the tent of meeting. The pillar of cloud stood over the door of the Tent and the LORD spake with Moses. He prophesied of Israel's future, and Joshua might well have been discouraged by what he heard, but God Himself gave him a charge, and promised His presence with him.

Israel forgot God, forsook Him, and served other gods (32. 15-18). The anger of Jehovah was kindled, and He caused them to suffer, but His anger will not last for ever : with God there is mercy. He will render vengeance to those very nations He used with which to scourge Israel (32. 41).

Having spoken all these words Moses reminded Israel of the importance of the law to them : " It is your life." Earlier, instruction had been given which, if carried out, would have brought all Israel under the sound of the law every seven years. This would coincide with the year of release, when debts were forgiven and many knew a new beginning. Where the reading of the word is neglected, the fear of God is lost. This was proved in Israel's case, for in the day of their departure God's law was to them a strange thing.

James K. D. Johnston.

From Atherton.—Any suggestion that Moses was not the writer of this song may be disproved by expressions in it which agree with other parts of the Pentateuch and by comparison with Psalm 90 (compare Deuteronomy 32. 4, 29, 36 with Psalm 90. 1, 12, 13). In spite of all that had been done for them, Israel are seen as a people unmindful and the LORD as God forgotten. We too are prone to be unmindful, and to forget God and His abounding goodness. Indeed, were it not for the week by week Remembrance of the Lord Himself where would we be ? Forgetfulness may well be traced to absence from this divinely ordered gathering.

The word " Jeshurun " occurs four times in the Old Testament and means " the darling upright " (Young's Concordance). This evidently was God's peculiar name for His beloved people. Balaam refers to this upright character to which they were called, though (as to condition) they were far removed from it.

The quotations of this song in the New Testament are instructive. Paul in his powerful arguments against the people of Israel, indicates God's attitude towards a people who provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods (Romans 10. 19); and further, he declares a principle which is true in all dispensations—"Vengeance belongeth unto Me" (Romans 12. 19).

The Gentiles, called by Israel "no people" and "a foolish nation," are shown by Paul to be those who would glorify God for His mercy (Romans 15. 9, 10). Two citations are coupled together in Hebrews 10. 30 in reference to the matter of presumptuous sin of the disciple.

We thought that the song of Moses referred to in Revelation 15. 3 is the song in Exodus 15 and not the song of Deuteronomy 32. The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb are songs of victory; and much of Deuteronomy 32. is far from this. Further, redemption is the keyword to the song of Exodus 15, and this is true of the song of the Lamb, since the very title bespeaks redemption (1 Peter 1.18, 19).

E. Birchall, G.A.J.

COMMENTS

[1] (Crowborough).—I rather think it is doubtful that the song of Revelation 15. 3 is that of Deuteronomy 32. What of the song of Exodus 15? The song in Exodus 15 is one of divine triumph; that of Deuteronomy 32 is largely one of human failure. The theme of the song in Revelation 15. 3 is one of divine triumph. Note the substance of the song in verses 3 and 4.—*J.M.*

[2] (Wembley).—The people and nation referred to in Deuteronomy 32. 21, are God's people in the days of the apostles. In those days the Jewish people were moved to jealousy against the disciples, as see Acts 13. 45; the stoning of Paul was the result of such jealousy (Acts 14. 19). Many other acts of violence were wrought by them because of their jealousy and hatred. Were the remnant of God's people today more in contact with Jews they would know more of their jealousy and of their hatred against Christ and all who follow Him.—*J.M.*

[3] (Wembley).—Israel is still in the same state as in the days of the Lord and His apostles. Some have been saved by grace, but the main body of that people is still in unbelief and in their hearts hate Christ and what is Christian. This will not be changed until the time of their national repentance and restoration.—*J.M.*

[4] (Wembley).—It is true that the Lord's death is that which makes expiation, but Hebrews 9.15 does not fit the case of what will yet be Israel's experience. Daniel 9. 24 is more fitting.—*J.M.*

[5] (Liverpool).—Re Moses, were not these things complementary (32. 51; Numbers 20. 12)?—*J.M.*

[6] (Glasgow).—See note [1] (Crowborough).—*J.M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question from Bradford, etc.—What does the name "Jeshurun" imply?

Answer.—Dr. Strong says that it means "upright," a symbolic name for Israel.—*J.M.*

Question from Edinburgh.—Why does the word "rock" not have a capital in Deuteronomy 32. 37?

Answer.—The rock in which the idolaters in Israel trusted is "their gods," their idols, hence it would be as wrong to print rock with a capital R, as it would be to print gods with a capital.—*J.M.*

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

CHAPTER 4.

Verses 18, 19, 20 : *But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. And my God shall fulfil every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now unto our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

The needs of the apostle, never hard to supply and often met by his own hands, were met by the gift sent to him. He was filled by it. He speaks of the gift in similar terms to the offering of Christ Himself, of whom he says, "Christ . . . gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell" (Ephesians 5.2). His offering was as the sweet savour of rest of the burnt offering (Genesis 8. 21 ; Leviticus 1.9). So also was the gift of the Philippians, for the death of the Lord was the foundation of their giving. Paul links God's unspeakable Gift with the giving of which he writes in 2 Corinthians 9. "My God," the personal God of the apostle, would, in consequence of their giving to His bondservant, supply every need of theirs, for God is no man's debtor. The fulfilling of their need was to be in no stinted way, it was to be according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. What wealth and fulness are here indicated ! He closes with a doxology to God the Father, whose is the glory for ever and ever. Verses 21, 22 : *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me salute you. All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Caesar's household.*

What a Christian gentleman Paul was ! "Every saint," the poor with the rich, were worthy of salutation. There was no passing of saints with him as unworthy of notice. The brethren that were with Paul saluted the Philippians. Then all the saints in Rome saluted them, and, especially, they of Caesar's household, those in the imperial household, slaves and others who had accepted Christ. How glorious were the triumphs of the gospel then ! and how penetrating its rays had been to reach even into Caesar's palace ! Wonderful will be the story of divine grace, when it is all written as to where this one and that one have been born (Psalm 87. 4-6). Verse 23 : *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

Grace is the closing salutation of Paul in all his epistles, as he wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3. 17, 18. Grace had not been found vain in him (1 Corinthians 15. 10).

GENERAL NOTE

When Paul arrived in Europe for the extension of the Lord's work, having been directed to Macedonia by the vision he saw at Troas, he made for "Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district" (Acts 16. 12). The work began in an unostentatious way. The account by Luke shows the small beginning of a work which was to have a not unimportant place in sacred annals of the work of the Lord. It is said, "On the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer ; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which were come together" (Acts 16. 13). Whether it was a synagogue or some other praying place is not told us, but here hearts were won by the story of Divine love, amongst such was that of Lydia, the purple-seller. Such trophies

of grace were yet to be augmented by Satan over-reaching himself and sending after the preachers for many days the young woman possessed of an evil spirit, but those trophies were not won without grievous bodily suffering on the part of Paul and Silas. The story is well known to us all. Through stripes, imprisonment, stocks and earthquake, at last Paul and Silas sat round the hospitable board of the jailor, who with his whole household had become subjects of God's saving grace and had shown proof thereof in being baptized. Such was the beginning of what became the church in Philippi.

Both Lydia and the jailor cared for the preachers in their homes, an example which has happily been followed by many, but besides, the church in Philippi in acknowledgement of the debt they owed to the Lord and His servants sent once and again to the need of Paul and his fellow-workers (4. 15, 16). This same exercise in regard to the apostle's need in early times was revived when Paul was a prisoner in Rome. Of this he wrote, "But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity" (4. 10). How gracious are Paul's words as he speaks of the reviving of their thought, he makes no accusation that they had been lax or indifferent! He quickly adds, "Ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity." It was just like how a fond parent would speak of a somewhat forgetful child.

They prepared their bounty and entrusted it to the care of Epaphroditus, whom Paul describes as "my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need" (2. 25). The long and hazardous journey of those days resulted, either on the journey, or at Rome, in sickness which brought him nigh unto death (2. 27), and later, in verse 30, Paul adds, "Because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me." Thus we learn that the supplying of the apostle's need was the work of Christ.

The reception of the gift of the Philippians was the occasion of the writing of this letter. It is a letter of grateful acknowledgment with which no letter of like sort could ever be compared. It is of course an inspired epistle and that accounts for a great part of the difference between it and all other letters, but besides this, there is a human side and here Paul the writer leaves indelibly the impress of his personality. This is true of all Scripture. All is inspired of God, and on all we see the character of the man who wrote.

Whilst Romans is Paul's grand treatise on the gospel, Philippians is his treatise on the spread of the gospel. "Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for (with, R.V.M.) the faith of the gospel" (1. 27). Earlier, in verse 7, he says, "Both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace." In this work, alas, there were those who preached Christ of envy and strife, but there were others who did it of good will. But in whichever way the gospel was preached he said, "Whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (verse 18).

In chapter 2 Paul shows the unity of mind which should exist in any church in connexion with its responsibility toward men in the preaching of the message of life and peace. "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind,

having the same love, being of one accord (joined in soul), of one mind " (verse 2). This is seen in action in the early days in Jerusalem : "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus : and great grace was upon them all " (Acts 4. 32, 33). If there is that lowliness of mind, the mind which was in Christ Jesus, there will be little difficulty in maintaining unity; but if faction and vain glorying enter, then unity and peace will flee. These things cannot dwell together.

So that saints might have the correct spirit of lowliness of mind before them, he draws that beautiful and entrancing picture of the Lord, of what He was, of His self-emptying, of what He became, and of how He went down, down, down to death, that of the cross. Can pride exist here ? Can men preach Christ in pride and self-conceit ? They may, but surely it is preaching Christ with their backs to the Crucified and sporting themselves before men. Surely we should preach Christ looking upon Him, and if the preacher keeps looking at this great sight others may be disposed to look also ; otherwise they may just look on a preacher with his back to Calvary.

There is one thing that towers above all others in importance in connexion with the preaching of the gospel, and that is, to know Christ who is the Subject of the gospel. Paul says that the gospel is concerning Him, who is of the seed of David, and is declared to be the Son of God with power. God and Man—one Christ. It is of the insatiable desire to know Him that Paul speaks in chapter 3. Paul had many natural advantages of birth, religious training, zeal and ability, things connected with the flesh ; and on mere worldly attainments he would, no doubt, have risen high in his own nation, and being besides a Roman citizen by birth, he might have attained to considerable prominence in the empire. But God had other work for him with an infinitely greater recompense at the end.

Carnal advantages Paul cast aside as offal, for these were of no value to him as a herald of the crucified Saviour. There was one thing only which would make him a sufficient minister of the New Covenant, and that was to know Christ Jesus his Lord. No sacrifice was too great and no suffering too painful for him to attain to this goal. He said, " Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things . . . that I may gain Christ" (3. 8). Those who would preach Christ must make their choice. Are they willing to lose worldly advantages and preferences to gain Christ, so that Christ may so enrich their minds and their thoughts, that as the message of life flows from their lips a crucified and living Saviour may be painted by words glowing with the glory and grace of this Saviour of men. Is it not the case that the words of Balaam are true of some gospel preachers and gospel addresses :

*" I see Him, but not now :
I behold Him, but not nigh " ?*

Many words are spoken, but Christ is lacking. Let us get back again to "the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ " (2 Corinthians I 1. 3). Let us learn Christ (Ephesians 4. 20); let us gain Christ, and then we shall speak from a present and personal knowledge, and let us then note the difference that it will make in ourselves and others.

Here in this epistle is the strife of women, alas, of Euodia and Syntyche (4. 2, 3). But we have also in contrast the devotedness and self-sacrifice of Paul and Timothy and Epiphroditus and others.—*J.M.*

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

It will be observed that in our last issue we completed Mr. John Miller's *Notes on the Epistle to the Philippians*. We appreciate the fact that the preparation of such notes requires arduous work of search and research into "authorities," in order that the teaching may be accurate and reliable. Several have spoken appreciatively of help received from the Notes: we feel certain, therefore, that all our readers will desire (as we do) that we should here place on record our appreciation of our brother and his work on our behalf. We are the richer for his labours.

Readers will be happy to learn that Mr. Miller has prepared similar notes on the epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon: these we hope to publish month by month, beginning this month, and we look forward to further profitable reading.

Mr. Miller's *Notes on Romans* are being bound and should soon be available in a separate volume. In this form they provide very convenient access to the entire sequence of the Notes and constitute a valuable addition to the library of students of the Scriptures.

By this time our fellow-students will have begun the study of Hebrews, and the time may therefore be opportune for certain remarks. May we once again remind contributors that papers should be of a study nature. In the main this rules out exhortation and exclamatory remarks. The product of study should bear evidence of "spade-work," investigations into the true significance of words and of alternative renderings, and also delineation of fine differences of meaning. Orderly exposition of the Scriptures should provide readers with food for thought: to share our light mutually is to gain light, and is profitable for all.

The matter of special articles also calls for remark. We are grateful to those who have helped by contributing articles on topics related to the main subject, and we desire to stir up increased interest in this department of our magazine. Don't wait for others to do the work; lend a hand, and don't delay. We have reason to believe that many have lost sight of the fact that *Bible Studies* also makes room for suitable *study* articles not related to the main subject. These articles should be concerned with subjects of weight and significance. If you have gathered something profitable from private Scripture study, express your thoughts and conclusions in writing and send them to Mr. James Martin. If the resulting article is suitable, and sound in doctrine, it may be published, and so others may gain instruction. It is often right that one should labour and others reap. J.B.

THE DEATH OF MOSES

The circumstances associated with the death of Moses bring to mind those of certain other deaths recorded in the Scriptures. Knowing that his life-work was completed and that the time had come for him to die (31.2, 14), Moses, having blessed the tribes of Israel, obeyed the LORD and, undismayed,

ascended mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah (34. 1), from which place he viewed the promised land (32. 52, 34. 1-4). By contrast, the apostle Paul went up to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that were to befall him there (Acts 20. 22). But the Lord Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem, knowing full well that the appointed time had come that He should suffer death (Matthew 20. 18, 19; Mark 10. 33, 34; Luke 18. 31-33; Isaiah 50. 4-9). That the Lord suffered deeply in contemplation of the cross is seen in His agony in Gethsemane; but deeper sorrows were His, when the LORD laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53. 4-6). Moses' view of the land would remind us that the Lord endured all this with a view to the glories that should follow (Luke 24. 26; 1 Peter 1. 11) and the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12. 2).

The LORD buried Moses in the valley in the land of Moab, and his tomb was never known to man (34. 6). It was impossible, therefore, for Israel to make a shrine of it, thus creating a temptation to idolatry or to worship of a man. This stands in strong contrast to the idolatrous rites associated with the tombs of the religious leaders of certain Pagan peoples, and also to those of certain so-called Christian sects in relation to the alleged tomb of the Lord Jesus, and even also in relation to His cross. It is not the Lord's desire that His saints should make pilgrimages to a tomb in Jerusalem, or to wear crucifixes, or to have such in their homes. The unknown tomb of Moses suggests the empty tomb of the Lord Jesus, who liveth evermore; and, though the wood of His cross may have perished long ago, His cross-work is as efficacious as ever with God to the saving of men. The Lord's true and only memorial was instituted by Himself on the night in which He was betrayed, and notwithstanding its chaste simplicity it ever remains the most precious and sweetly significant memorial, for it speaks of Him.

It was no reflection on the man Moses or his work, that he should have had no memorial in stone or other material: it was for Israel's sake. For Israel's sake too the wicked woman Jezebel had no burial (2 Kings 9. 10, 36, 37), for she caused Israel to sin grievously against the LORD and is remembered only for evil. But God takes account also of love and devotion Godward; for the Lord Jesus commended the humble woman who anointed Him for His burial and bestowed upon her a desirable, though intangible, memorial that shall endure throughout this age (Matthew 26. 13). In all generations some men are remembered, some for good and some for ill; and the memory of some endures longer than that of others. We look back with gratitude to men who have gone before us and who were used for our spiritual well-being. If we may look forward to future generations, it is a sobering thought that we may be remembered; but for what? It is more important to consider what the Lord may see in us, and to bear in mind the judgement-seat of Christ. For us, all remembrance pales into insignificance in comparison with the Master's "Well done." J.B.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY THE BLESSING OF THE TRIBES (Chapter 33. 1-12.)

From Cowdenbeath.—Moses is here called the man of God (33.1). Few men have been so described: we think of some: the unnamed man of God who spoke God's message of doom to Eli (1 Samuel 2. 27), the man who spoke against Jeroboam's altar (1 Kings 13. 1), Elisha, so called by the woman of Shunem (2 Kings 4.9), and in the New Testament Timothy is addressed as such by Paul (1 Timothy 6. 11). To merit such a title, a man will require to be like God in his character and devoted to Him in his service.

It is difficult to understand why the three mountains are mentioned as places from which God came. We realize that the Divine Presence was manifested in Sinai before God took up His abode in the Tabernacle, but what is the significance of Seir and Paran ? [1].

The ten thousands of holy ones are the angels in heaven, who stand to minister before the throne of God (Daniel 7. 10). When God came to dwell with Israel, He brought His holy law with Him [2]. The conditions of God's dwelling in the midst of them were stated in His law. Israel could not have God without His law. Neither can men today have God without His word. If there is no place for God's word, there is no place for God. With Israel it was God and His fiery law : today it is God and the word of His grace (Acts 20).

In Deuteronomy 33. 2, 3, Moses speaks of God, then he commences to speak to God : indeed, the second clause of verse 3 must be quite unique, for Moses speaks of God in both the third and second personal pronouns. In verse 4 he speaks on behalf of Israel. The first clause of verse 3 speaks of the place of affection which was the portion of the tribes ; the next clause, the place of security ; and the next clause, the place of privilege. Alas, not all today who are loved and made secure avail themselves of the privilege of sitting at the Master's feet ; but all who sit there shall hear His words.

The law which God gave to Israel through Moses was given to them for an inheritance. Nationally they were entrusted with the oracles of God, and individually they had the opportunity of meditating on the law and laying it up in their hearts, so making it their own personal possession.

The scene portrayed in verse 5 is a beautiful picture of the Fellowship today. Moses as a king speaks of our own Sovereign Lord: He is Lord of all. The gathering of the heads of the people speaks of overseers of the flock, who are not just simply viewed as so many individuals, but as united together that oneness of practice and doctrine may be observed. Then the gathering of the tribes speaks of the saints in the various assemblies, viewed as one complete company gathered unto the Lord.

When Jacob blessed his sons he spoke first to the six sons of Leah, then to the four sons of the handmaidens, then lastly to the two sons of Rachel. Moses did not observe this order, neither did he address them according to their encampments. Is there any significance *in* the order in which he spoke ? [3]. We note that Simeon is missing, yet twelve tribes are named, Joseph being viewed as two, Ephraim and Manassah. If the Authorised Version is correct, then Reuben's is the blessing of numbers—certainly not the most important thing [4]. Judah's blessing is much fuller : his voice was to be heard by God. This is a great privilege, whether it be in thanksgiving or in prayer.

James Bowman, Iain T. H. Hunter.

From Atherton.—The reference to God coming from Sinai does not in any sense refer to the beginning of Divine existence, for God is without beginning : He is eternal. It refers to His appearing at Sinai to Israel as indicated in Exodus 20 and elsewhere [5].

We suggest it is Moses who is spoken of as king in Jeshurun. He was king, not in the same sense as was Saul or David but as ruler, judge and deliverer (Acts 7. 35) [6]. We recognize that over and above all earthly kingship the LORD alone is King: He is supreme (Numbers 23. 21, Isaiah 33. 22).

This is the second blessing of such a kind from the lips of men about to die, the first being that of Jacob as he blessed his sons before his death. It is well to note the points of similarity and contrast. Jacob as a father spoke

of his sons. He knew each one personally and intimately : indeed, almost every phase of their characters and lives, good and bad, was known to him. Moses, the leader, spoke of the tribes: he knew them well, and spoke of them largely as a result of knowledge and experience [7]. Both in Jacob's and in Moses' blessing we trace prophetic language. Like many another prophet, they spoke of matters which they did not understand.

The reference to Reuben by Moses (33. 6) might well have been the direct result of the failure mentioned by Reuben's father : instability characterized him. God ever wants men stable in their ways. Also Moses may have had before him Reuben's failure as a tribe in the matter of Korah (Numbers 16. 1-3) [8]. Yet we see the mercy of God extended in the words, " Let Reuben live, and not die."

Simeon is not mentioned at all: this tribe had gone into idolatry [9]. Levi, by notable contrast, receives glowing praise. The sacred lot of the Urim and Thummim was theirs ; unlike Simeon the sons of Levi had separated themselves when the nation of Israel failed in the worshipping of the golden calf. Lion-hearted Judah again receives just praise : the leadership of Judah is emphasized by Moses. We noted his willingness to stand surety for Benjamin ; and the tribe led the nation in later days.

Sharp contrasts are provided in the twofold mention of Benjamin (by Jacob and Moses). Jacob's statement was indeed true of one of Benjamin's sons, even Saul of Tarsus : like a ravaging wolf he laid waste the church. In the words, " The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him " (33.12), there seems to be a link with Judah. In the division of the nation into ten tribes and two tribes, the two tribes are Judah and Benjamin. Thus Benjamin as a tribe is commended, though he sadly failed (Judges 19-21).

We noted that Judah was not mentioned in Deborah's song (Judges 5). The reason for this, it would appear, was not failure attributable to Judah, but rather that the enemy came from the north, and thus the northern tribes received the call to the battle.

John Bullock, G.A.J.

From Barry.—We found it interesting to compare and contrast the blessing of the tribes by Moses with the blessing by Jacob many years previously. Jacob was a good father, and he knew the characters of each of his sons, and so was able to bless each one accordingly. The same can be said of Moses as leader : his intimate knowledge of the tribes enabled him to accord a different blessing to each. Churches of God today, though one as to constitution and doctrine, have different characteristics. They are all known to the Lord, even as He knew all about the seven churches of Asia in a past day.

The blessing of the tribe of Levi was suggested as one to be desired by us today. In Jacob's blessing Levi is linked with Simeon, because of a joint evil conspiracy and murder (Genesis 49. 5-7). However, at the sad incident of the golden calf, the tribe of Levi stepped out to the LORD'S side at the call of Moses and consecrated themselves to the LORD. Moses says of Levi that, because they observed the word and covenant of the LORD, they would have the privilege of teaching His judgements and His laws. They would also have the joy of service in relation to the worship of the LORD.

Whilst we were encouraged by the blessing of Levi, we took warning from that of Reuben, the firstborn son of Jacob, who might have come in for special blessing. But alas, he committed a very wicked sin (Genesis 35. 22), and so lost the firstborn's blessing. He was indeed unstable as water, and Jacob said, " Thou shalt not have the excellency " (Genesis 49. 4). Reuben's birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, and the genealogy of the prince was not to be reckoned after the birthright

(1 Chronicles 5. 1). Though his life was spared, his men were to be few. The sin of Reuben left its impression upon his descendants. Though sin may be forgiven, it nevertheless leaves its mark. We should be careful in our walk and conduct, remembering the word of God which says that He will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.

Cecil Jones.

EXTRACTS.

From Melbourne.—At the commencement of the blessing, Moses emphasizes the majesty of the LORD, manifested at Sinai when the law was given to Israel. The thunders, lightnings, the thick cloud, the voice of the trumpet and the smoke (Exodus 19. 16-20) were all calculated deeply to impress the people and to cause them to realize the power and glory of the One with whom they had to do. Verse 3 stresses that He loved the people; in spite of their weakness and failure, the LORD loved them (7. 7, 8).

Judah was the kingly tribe, the royal line, of which came David and the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7. 14). Levi was the priestly tribe. In Genesis 49 Simeon is joined with Levi as ones to be avoided, and while we can trace an occasion in the history of Levi when they stood on the LORD'S side (Exodus 32. 26), Simeon appears to have had no change of heart, and as such is omitted from the blessing.

P.W.A.

From Edinburgh.—The people of Israel were separated to God by His law. He came forth from the mountain of Sinai; He rose up from the rough place; He shone through the foliage of evergreens [10]. He gave His law because He loved His people. The law was their inheritance. We note that the law was given to the people of the supplanter. Moses was king of the upright people, so in this blessing all the tribes are included.

Judah was blessed indeed: "Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah." While Judah means "praise," Judah took no part in leading the praise, but out of Judah came One who both leads, and is the Subject of, our praise. Levi was entrusted with the Thummim and the Urim, because he stood steadfast in the day of trial. Faithfulness ever brings its reward and Levi was given authority to (1) teach Jacob judgements, (2) teach Israel the law, and (3) put incense and whole-burnt offerings on God's altars.

T. Hope.

From Wembley.—"To bless" means "to speak well of," and when a prophet spoke under the guidance of the Holy Spirit there is the value of truth in it. Moses began with a descriptive poem of God's relations with His people. These verses are among the most difficult passages of Scripture to translate, and there are different renderings, and we hesitated to make much of individual phrases. One word that we did note was "inheritance" (33. 4), which describes something to be passed on whole, not diminished in any way, in contrast to the portion that the prodigal son received. The heritage here is an entailed estate. The blessing of Judah may be related to the leading part that they played in the conquest (Judges 1) and the danger they were in. We noted that Simeon is not mentioned with Levi, as in Jacob's blessing, but seems to have been regarded from this time as part of Judah.

The blessing of Benjamin presents difficulty in the identification of pronouns, but it was suggested that the last phrase refers to the situation of the Temple, which was on the shoulder mentioned in Joshua 15. 8. We found it interesting and startling to compare this blessing with the last two chapters of Judges, and to consider what havoc can be wrought and what deserts made by sin, when God would have planted a garden.

L.B.H.

From Crowborough.—Reuben was an unstable man and this characteristic was borne out even in the generations after his death (Judges 5.16). The tribe of Levi is remembered for the notable day when they put the word of the LORD before natural ties.

Rachel died giving birth to the youngest son of Jacob, and so Benjamin was motherless from the day of his nativity. The tribe of Benjamin was loved of the LORD, and received the promise that they should dwell in safety by Him, secure and protected in the place of strength. *B.V.F.*

From Southport.—The blessing of Moses on the children of Israel is tribal here, and is in relation to the Kingship and kingdom of Jehovah (33. 5). The features here outlined by the Spirit of God will doubtless be seen when Israel will be restored in millennial days.

Failure and victory in men, tribes, and nations are ever remembered by God. Reuben is to live, yet does not have the excellency which might have been his (1 Corinthians 3. 15). The faithfulness of Levi at Massah placed him very high in the favour and service of God. We are reminded here of Matthew 10. 34-39 and also Luke 14. 26. Benjamin would seem to be a type of all who love God yet may have no outstanding gifts : beloved indeed for his father's sake.

These are the blessings of the Eternal God to a people saved by Him. Happy indeed will they be in a future day. We associated in our minds, too, the promise of the Lord to His apostles in His day, when He promised that they should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22. 28-30). *T.R.*

From Willington Quay.—In considering the terms of any blessing it is important to note the circumstances in which it was given, the person who gave it and who it was that received it. Some estimation of the importance of this blessing can be obtained from the description of the one who gave it—Moses the man of God. Moses occupied a unique place in connexion with God's dealings with His people, and as a result his words carry great weight.

The tribe of Levi is one which stands out in this chapter. Much is said about it and what is said is in marked contrast to the words which Jacob spoke concerning his son Levi. The Levites may have come from bad stock, but when they came out on the LORD'S side in response to Moses' call (Exodus 32. 26-29) they did indeed gain for themselves a blessing. They observed the LORD'S word and kept His covenant. They put the LORD'S things first and considered family connexions to be of secondary importance. In return they received blessing of the highest sort in being associated with the service of the tabernacle.

This experience of the tribe of Levi brings to mind the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 10. 34-39. Here it is clearly seen that it is the disciple's responsibility to put the Lord's things first, but in return there is blessing in that " He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." *K.R.*

From Birkenhead.—The greatness of the God of Israel is brought before us at the beginning of this chapter, the God of the tribes, a holy God who loveth the peoples. Such words were spoken, just before his notable death, by Moses the man of God, the meekest man of all the earth, the man who was faithful in all God's house as a servant.

David in Psalm 68. 7, 8,17 refers to what took place at the Holy Mount. The law was Israel's inheritance : similarly we must regard the word of God as ours (Acts 7. 38, 1 Peter 4. 11).

In our consideration of the blessings of the tribes we were reminded of Jacob's words in Genesis 49. In many ways the two accounts agree, although

it was suggested that Jacob's blessings were individual in their aspect. Both were, however, prophetic.

The word spoken of Judah suggests a reference to David the sweet psalmist of Israel. God speaks of choosing Judah, and from amongst the sheepfolds he chose David to feed Jacob His people and Israel His inheritance (Psalm 78. 68-72). Here we see David as a true shepherd feeding and guiding the people of God.

In Genesis 49 Levi is associated with " weapons of violence," but here the tribe is associated with the Urim and the Thummim. Levi, acknowledged by God above his brethren, was to teach Jacob His judgements and Israel His law. The priestly service of the tribe is seen in the blessing.

N. Adkins, R. Hyland.

From Nottingham.—Judah was a leader among his brethren—"Judah and his brethren " (Genesis 44. 14). He it was who suggested that Joseph should be sold, who was entrusted with the care of Benjamin, and who was sent before Jacob to Joseph. Compare Genesis 49. 8 : " Thee shall thy brethren praise," which brings out the thought of victory, the struggle ended and the lion gone up. In Deuteronomy 33. 7 there is a precious picture of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who has indeed been victorious and has " gone up," entering into His glory. It may have reference to the future reign of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and may well be considered with the Genesis scripture : " The sceptre shall not depart from Judah."

Levi means " joined," and in Deuteronomy 33 we find the tribe that was joined in lawlessness now joined to God in His service. Such is the working of Divine grace ; it brings one afar off nigh unto God : the saints of this dispensation have been brought nigh in priestly service.

The Urim and the Thummim were placed in the breast-plate that the high priest wore. Urim means " lights," and Thummim " perfections " ; and through them God revealed His will concerning Israel. It is through those who obey that God will reveal His way.

There seems to be a different note struck in the blessing of Benjamin by Moses as compared with that by Jacob. Benjamin knew a time when many of their number were slain (Judges 20), but the tribe clave to the royal house of Judah. It is interesting to note that king Saul and Saul of Tarsus were both of the tribe of Benjamin.

J. Balcombe, R. Hickling.

PRIESTS AND PROPHETS

(Chapters 13. 1-5, 18).

From Hamilton, Ont.—In Israel's judgement of a prophet's credentials, the criterion was not to be the prophet's works, but rather the law and the testimony. False prophets would say, " Let us go after other gods," and we are given the reason for such a thing happening in Israel: " The LORD your God proveth you " (13. 3). If the word of the LORD in Deuteronomy 6 had been adhered to, no difficulty would have been experienced. In Deuteronomy 6. 6, God tells His people through Moses, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." In other words they were to memorize the law, and let it sink into their hearts and become part of their lives, so that when the words of the false prophet should come, the evil would be readily detected.

In chapter 18, we are given the method whereby the priests and the Levites were supported. Jehovah was their inheritance and He supported them with the offerings made to the LORD by the people. We were impressed with the expression concerning a Levite coming unto the place which

Jehovah shall choose "with all the desire of his soul" (18. 6). Today those who would be priests to God, and would minister worthily, should make the things of His house the deepest desire of their souls.

We viewed prophets as being God's mouthpiece to men, and priests as man's approach to God. It was generally thought that the apostles of the New Testament could be compared with the prophets of the Old Testament, as sent ones from God through whom the truth was revealed to God's people. The Lord is the great anti-type of all priests and prophets of the past. As the Prophet God spoke through Him, and we have heard His word. Out of hearts of gratitude for what has resulted, we approach to God through the Great Priest over His house.

N. MacKay.

COMMENTS

- [1] (Cowdenbeath).—It says in Job 37. 22,
*"Out of the north cometh golden splendour :
 God hath upon Him terrible majesty."*

Not living in Palestine or the adjoining countries we cannot say whether this is an allusion to the splendour of some rays peculiar to the sun in that region. Paran and Seir are in the north of where Israel were encamped at Sinai. It would seem that in the meeting between God and His people the glory of His coming to them started from the north, where Paran and Seir were situated, and overspread the northern sky till the presence of God was manifest in Sinai; and it says, "The appearance of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount (Sinai) in the eyes of the children of Israel" (Exodus 24. 17). "The LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire : ye heard the voice of words, but saw no form ; only ye heard a voice" (Deuteronomy 4. 11, 12).

In Ezekiel 43. 2 it says, "Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east." What teaching is in the different points of the compass may be difficult to say, and speculation is vain, but such were the directions from whence the glory of God came in these several cases, and with the glory was the Divine Presence. Men described what they saw.—*J.M.*

- [2] (Cowdenbeath).—While the A.V. says "with," the R.V. says, "He *came from* the ten thousands of holy ones" (Deuteronomy 33. 2).—*J.M.*

[3] (Cowdenbeath).—Moses seems to follow the arrangement in which the tribes were given their portions in the land. He began with Reuben, the eldest, and then crossed the Dead Sea to Judah and travelled north, mentioning Levi who was to be centred on God's house. Then we have Benjamin next to Judah, and then Ephraim and Manasseh, and so on. The last is Asher in the north-west. Reuben was in the south-east. Has this a voice for our time? Then Dan is mentioned connected with Bashan. Perhaps this alludes to the new territory Dan took, as mentioned in Judges 18. If there is significance in the order of the tribes as given by Moses in Deuteronomy 33, it surely shows how truly he was guided so to bless the tribes in that order by the Spirit of God.—*J.M.*

- [4] (Cowdenbeath).—Here again the R.V. differs from the A.V. The latter says of Reuben, "And let not his men be few," but the R.V. says, "Yet let his men be few," a very great difference.—*J.M.*

[5] (Atherton).—Of course what our friends say is obvious. If we say a person came from any place, the person must be in being before there can be movement. "Came" and "being" clearly do not mean the same thing.—*J.M.*

[6] (Atherton).—Moses was not anointed, as were Saul and David, but in what sense did he differ from these, if he was ruler, judge and deliverer? These three men recognized the Divine Kingship also.—*J.M.*

[7] (Atherton).—The blessings of both Jacob and Moses were not simply from experience, but, more important than that, they were oracular. Note how truly Jacob knew this when he said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the latter days" (Genesis 49. 1). Where is the father who can do this on the ground of his own personal knowledge of his children? It just cannot be done without divine revelation. "Largely" of this sentence applies to the following sentence of our friends.—*J.M.*

[8] (Atherton).—The sin of two men, in Numbers 16, cannot be laid at the door of a whole tribe, can it?—*J.M.*

[9] (Atherton).—"Simeon . . . *had gone* into idolatry." When? Was Simeon worse than others that are mentioned? Was this the cause of Simeon's omission, that he was worse than the rest? See what is said in Judges 1. 27-33, and also Judges 2.—*J.M.*

[10] (Edinburgh).—I presume our friends mean that Seir means "rough," and Paran "ornamental."—*J.M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions from Melbourne.—(1) Are the "saints" (33. 2, 3) the heavenly hosts? or does the term describe the people of God? (2) In what way was Levi proved at Massah, and how did God strive with them at Meribah (33. 8)?

Answers.—(1) The word here means "myriads holy" or "holy myriads," and means angels, not men on earth. "Saints," in verse 3, were God's people, Israel. (2) Levi, the chief tribe in Israel in the matter of divine service, was proved at Massah, and alas, proved to be a failure humanly speaking; and while Levi and the rest of the tribes strove bitterly in gross carnality and rebellion at Meribah, God strove with them in grace. But for grace He would have made a full end of such rebels. Here we see a tribe worthy of death (like ourselves) raised to serve God in the sanctuary (also like ourselves). "Oh, to grace how great a debtor!"—*J.M.*

Question from Nottingham.—We are unable to find any reference to Simeon among the blessings, and would like help on the significance of this.

Answer.—Israel is ever twelve, never thirteen, and where Joseph's two sons with Levi are included, one of the other tribes is not mentioned, as Simeon in Deuteronomy 33 and Dan in Revelation 7; also Levi is not in the breastplate of judgement.—*J.M.*

Question from Atherton.—Does Deuteronomy 33. 9 mean that the sons of Levi destroyed their own father, mother and children? or only that Levi took the sword against the rest of the tribes, who were, of course, his brethren? (In asking this question we are bearing in mind the way the O.T. speaks in relation to kinship.)

Answer.—We are not told that the Levites destroyed their fathers and mothers and children, but that they saw, acknowledged and knew not their kinsfolk according to such natural relationships. There was no shielding of any because of natural ties. Had natural ties been the guiding principle on that day of judgement, they could not have taken the sword at all. Whether a Levite slew his father or his brother, no one can tell.—*J.M.*

NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

CHAPTER 1.

Verses 1,2: *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Saviour, and Christ Jesus our Hope ; unto Timothy, my true child in faith : Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Paul speaks of himself as being a called apostle of Jesus Christ in 1 Corinthians 1.1. (See also 2 Corinthians 1.1; Ephesians 1.1; Colossians 1.1; 2 Timothy 1.1), but here he speaks of himself as being an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God and Christ Jesus. God is called here our Saviour and Christ Jesus is our Hope. Christ is our Hope before God, our Priest, the "better Hope," through which we draw nigh unto God (Hebrews 7.19 ; see also 6. 18 ; 3.6). He is also the blessed Hope, the One who is coming again (Titus 2. 13), " who shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him unto salvation" (Hebrews 9. 28) ; not salvation from the penalty of sin, but from the presence of sin, that salvation which is " ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1.5), which is nearer to us than when we first believed " (Romans 13. 11). The A.V. gives " my own son in the Faith." It is not " my own son," but " my true child," and it is "in faith" not "in the Faith," though there are differences of opinion on the point among scholars as to whether " the " is implied before "faith," though the definite article is not in the Greek. We may safely follow the R.V. reading—" my true child in faith."

Verses 3, 4 : *As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, the which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith ; so do I now.*

The question arises, " When did Paul exhort Timothy to tarry at Ephesus when he was going into Macedonia ? " Was it some time before his imprisonment in Rome, of which we read in Acts 28. 16, 30, when he abode in his own hired dwelling " with the soldier that guarded him " ? Was there but one imprisonment, or were there first and second imprisonments ? In Philippians 1. 26 Paul writes anticipating being with the Philippians again, and in Philemon 22 he writes to Philemon in Colossae, " But withal prepare me also a lodging : for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you." To Timothy he also wrote, " The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments " (2 Timothy 4. 13). In this same chapter he said, " Trophimus I left at Miletus sick " (verse 20). It seems to me that these references indicate that there were two imprisonments, and that the events he alludes to in 1 and 2 Timothy took place after the book of the Acts closes, between Paul's two imprisonments in Rome.

Timothy was besought or exhorted by Paul to stay in Ephesus while he himself proceeded to Macedonia. The object, as Paul stated, was that Timothy should charge certain men not to teach heterodox doctrines, doctrines contrary to what Paul had taught, nor to give heed to fables (Titus 1. 14 speaks of Jewish fables) and endless genealogies. In these interminable genealogies the Jews, in their pride of race and natural birth,

took a special delight. The genealogy of Jesus Christ is the only genealogy in the New Testament. He being proved to be the Messiah, having come of the seed of David and Abraham, the vital matter from then on is not natural birth, but the new birth, the birth from above, by the Spirit and word of God, by which all so born are children of God. These fables and genealogies led to questionings out of which arose strifes, the product of the carnal mind. This is the opposite of a dispensation which is in faith. Here is the great cleavage between that which is natural and that which is spiritual, of works and faith, of law and grace. If people are believers it matters not whether they are Jews or Gentiles, royal or noble or of the common folk ; pedigrees have no value now with God.

Verse 5 : But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned:

The end, object or purpose, of the charge was love out of a pure heart. Of what value is love, if it does not proceed out of a pure heart, if the motive behind a profession of love is not pure ? Love is easily felt where it exists ; it is evident in love's labour (1 Thessalonians 1.3). Then follows the next component of the charge, " a good conscience." No believer can please God with a bad or defiled conscience. What is conscience ? It is the inward knowledge of a person which bears witness to his words and works whether they are good or bad, right or wrong. Conscience either accuses or excuses (Romans 2. 15). It may be seared as with a hot iron (1 Timothy 4.2), and so rendered ineffective in its witness. Conscience is not in itself the standard of right and wrong ; it can be perverted by wrong teaching. Paul claimed to have lived with a good conscience even when he was a proud Pharisee persecuting the saints (Acts 23.1). When he became subject to the doctrine of the apostles then his conscience, enlightened by the new teaching, reacted in quite another way. The third part of the charge is " faith unfeigned." Faith is the result of hearing the word of God (Romans 10. 17). If there is no revelation there can be no faith. Some say, " I believe," when they should say, " I think." Faith unfeigned is not a mere pretence at believing, nor is it a false faith which does not rest upon the word of God.

Verses 6, 7, 8 : From which things some having swerved have turned aside unto vain talking ; desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.

To swerve is to miss the mark. Sin also means to miss the mark. Men like to talk who have no ear to listen to God talking to them. " The talk of the lips tendeth only to penury " (Proverbs 14. 23). How useless is empty talk ! trivial, vain disputings ! Such vain talkers desired to be teachers of the law, but they were without understanding of its use in this dispensation. Indeed it is well for all carefully to follow Paul's teaching regarding the law, its function as a rule of life, not a means of life, its uselessness in dealing with sin as rooted in the flesh, its inability to give life to the sinner dead in sins, or to provide him with righteousness. Its use to saints is the same in this dispensation as in the past, as a lamp to their feet and a light to their path, to teach them how to behave before God and men, love being the fulfilment of law (Romans 13. 8-10). Paul says of the law in Romans 7. 12 that it is holy, and the commandment thereof holy, righteous, and good. Its use is to guide the just who are liable to go wrong, and man being by nature a wrong-doer must learn that wrong-doing is sin against God, and so by the law cometh the knowledge of sin (Romans 3. 20).

Verses 9, 10, 11 : *As knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for abusers of themselves with men, for men-stealers, for liars, for false swearers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine ; according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*

Here we have a lengthy list of various forms of evil-doing and vice which illustrates what Paul wrote in Galatians 3. 19 : " What then is the law ? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed (Christ) should come to whom the promise hath been made." " Through the law cometh the knowledge of sin " (Romans 3. 20). " I had not known sin, except through the law " (Romans 7. 7). The true motive power of all well-doing is, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The Lord said, " On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets " (Matthew 22. 34-40). He gave the meaning of what He called the second commandment in His teaching in Matthew 7. 12 : " All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them : for this is the law and the prophets." This is the simplest, greatest and most corrective statement of the conduct of men toward each other that was ever made, and, if it were obeyed on earth, would turn earth into a veritable heaven. But self-love, with its covetousness and all other forms of evil, makes this world a heap of reeking moral and physical corruption. It is against such a state that the voice of the law speaks loudly, in the light of which men are called to repent. Even the world's legislatures are continually churning out laws to control men in their sinful propensities. Kind and loving people need few laws. The cause of all the trouble is that state of moral corruption which Paul so frequently calls " the flesh." A list of its works he gives in Galatians 5. 19-21. The moral depravity of human nature was the cause of Israel's failures and also of the world's corruptions and distresses. Against the fruit of the Spirit who indwells all believers there is no law (Galatians 5. 22, 23). The gospel of the glory of the blessed (or happy) God proclaims the need of new birth to men ; this message of divine glory is totally against human sin and corruption. It opens the door to a new way of life, a divine and heavenly mode of living in a world which is waxing worse and worse.

Verse 12 : *I thank Him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that He accounted me faithful, appointing me to His service ;*

" I thank Him," or " I am thankful to Him " (*Charin Echo* can correctly be rendered " I am thankful." See 2 Timothy 1. 3 ; Luke 17. 9 ; Hebrews 12. 28) who strengthened or empowered me ; such was the appreciation of Paul in regard to the grace which he had known and which was not found vain in him (1 Corinthians 15.10). It produced in him a spirit of thankfulness. He speaks of the Lord counting him faithful, appointing him to his service (*Diakonian*). The Lord makes no mistakes, for His gifts and calling are without repentance on His part (Romans 11.29). He knew Paul perfectly when He saved him on the Damascus road ; He had separated him even from his mother's womb (Galatians 1. 15), and long ages before that, in times eternal, there was a purpose and grace given to him in Christ Jesus, which became manifest through his being saved and called with a holy calling (2 Timothy 1. 9) ; this calling became evident to men in Acts 13. 1-3.

J.M.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

Our subject for January was "The End of the Journey." Ends often but introduce beginnings of greater and better things. The end of Israel's journey brought them to the borders of the promised land and near to actual enjoyment of all its possibilities for good : for them God still had rich blessings in store.

This issue brings us to the end of our journey, so far as our present study of the book of Deuteronomy is concerned. We understand some have found the journey difficult and trying : the subjects were not easy, and we feel that there remains much in Deuteronomy that calls for careful examination and prayerful meditation. We trust that our year's joint study has provided thought-provoking exercise and a desire for continued reading in this delightful book.

We appreciate the work of all our contributors, and invite others to follow their example and join us in our new subject, the book of Hebrews. We give God thanks for help and light in the past, and we pray for His continued blessing upon our studies in Hebrews.

"Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles 20. 20). J.B.

THE MAN JOSHUA IN DEUTERONOMY

Though Joshua is mentioned by name only nine times in Deuteronomy (eight times as Joshua and once as Hoshea), he is seen in a place of present prominence and future promise.

At the first mention of his name (1. 38) he is associated with Caleb, who with Joshua stood firm in unflinching faith while their fellow spies spoke in unbelief and led the people into disobedience. The LORD signified His approval of these two men by allowing them to enter the land, by giving Caleb an inheritance associated with his faithful service, and by naming Joshua as successor to Moses. Joshua is here referred to as "Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee (Moses)," which is in line with Exodus 24. 13 :—"Joshua his (Moses') minister." The future leader of Israel knew what it meant to serve, to be the immediate personal servant of Moses the man of God, waiting on him and ready to obey his every command; in this he was serving the LORD. That he worked in close and harmonious fellowship with Moses is seen in that he was joined with Moses in speaking all the words of the Song (32. 44). He would appear to have been a worthy man who prized his place in the LORD'S service. This was not true of all who stood before men of God : Gehazi the servant of Elisha, in spite of the privilege and advantage of being much in the presence of Elisha the man of God, sinned in covetousness (2 Kings 5. 20-27). Younger men in the Fellowship (including those recognized in the elderhood) should be subject to the elder, showing willing and ungrudging deference to them, and should serve

the Lord and them in humility (1 Peter 5.5). This Christ-like behaviour becomes disciples of the Lord Jesus, who washed the disciples' feet, and becomes also men who may yet lead and care for the little Flock.

Moses was commanded to do the work of an aged leader about to be called hence (1. 38) : " encourage thou him." A younger man accepting new and weighty responsibilities in the things of God needs to be encouraged. Moses in godly fear did not fail in this : he encouraged Joshua by reference to divine help in the past in the destruction of Sihon and Og (3. 21), by the great prospect of things future (3. 28, 31. 3), and by assurance of the strengthening presence of the LORD (31. 7, 8). Thankful as Joshua would be for the encouragement given him in the presence of the people, he had cause for deeper gratitude, for the LORD called him with Moses to the tent of meeting, and there, after giving Moses commandment as to the Song (31. 14-22), in one brief sentence gave him a direct charge : " Be strong and of a good courage : . . . and I will be with thee " (31. 23). The LORD ever stands by His faithful servants to strengthen them.

Deuteronomy 34. 9 shows Joshua fully established and recognized as leader of Israel after the death of Moses. He was filled with the spirit of wisdom, a gift from God ; and the people obeyed the LORD'S command through Moses and hearkened unto Joshua. It is seemly that God's people should give due place to God-given leaders, who seek to lead them in the fear of the LORD . Our glorified Leader, of whom Joshua is a type, is worthy of our unquestioning obedience, arising from grateful love, and our complete devotion, for He is our Redeemer and Saviour. Through His grace we may enjoy sweet foretastes of the great and eternal inheritance to which He shall surely lead us.

J.B.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY THE BLESSING OF THE TRIBES

(Chapter 33. 13-29)

From Birkenhead.—We note the comprehensive character of the blessing of Joseph, who was prince among his brethren. Majesty and strength are to be his portion. His sons are named in their correct order, the ten thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh.

Of Zebulun Moses said, " Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out." In 1 Chronicles 12. 33 we read of the men of this tribe going out to fight, they " could order the battle array, and were not of double heart."

Issachar was to rejoice in his tents, and call the peoples to offer sacrifices of righteousness on the mountain. It is recorded of the descendants of the tribe that they were " men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do " (1 Chronicles 12. 32).

In Genesis 49. 19 Jacob describes the character of Gad as that of the Overcomer; this is confirmed by Moses who describes him as a lioness that teareth the arm. Fulfilment of the blessing of Gad is seen in 1 Chronicles 12.8.

Strength is seen in the blessing of Dan. The tribe of Dan was the first to have a paid priest (Judges 18). We note that this tribe finds no place in Revelation 7.

Jacob in blessing Naphtali spoke of him as one who giveth goodly words. Moses said of him that he would be " full with the blessing of the LORD." Such a blessing maketh rich, and the Lord addeth no sorrow therewith. In the record of the tribes in 1 Chronicles one cannot fail to observe that the tribe of Naphtali produced most captains.

Asher's blessing was very precious ; blessed with children, and acceptable unto his brethren. One of Asher's children was Anna the prophetess who in the temple gave God thanks, and spoke of the babe Jesus to all them that were looking for the redemption of Israel (Luke 2. 38).

In summing up, Moses reminds Jeshurun (Israel) of the majesty of God, and of their dwelling place and safety in the eternal God. No people had been blessed like Israel, none had a god like their God.

L. Bowman, R. L. Sands.

From Halifax, Bradford and Leeds.—The centre portion of the chapter (verses 13-17) is taken up with the blessings of Joseph and his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Joseph's blessings seem more precious than all the blessings of his brethren. We thought this would speak of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blessings excel the blessings of all God's children.

We were puzzled with a statement in verse 16, where Moses, after having enumerated the blessings of Joseph, adds, "and the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush." Does this imply the further good will of God or of Moses himself [1].

Of Joseph's blessings mentioned here, many have been seen in the subsequent history of Israel, but there yet remains the fulfilment of one great blessing (23. 17), which speaks of his influence over all the earth. The view was expressed that this is still future, and will be fulfilled in Christ's millennial reign. Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, in this context speak of the whole house of Israel.

Jeshurun (33. 26) was a name given to Israel by God : it means "dignity and honour"—a fitting name for God's representative people on the earth. We should love the place where God chooses to dwell, and rejoice in the words of Moses (33. 27), "The eternal God is thy dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms."
J. R. Butler.

From Southport.—Joseph's blessing appertains to his land, and every feature specified is "precious," or "chief." Joseph did not live unto himself: he was separate from his brethren, and by his individual faithfulness brought down a blessing that devolved upon his children unto many generations. The precious things of heaven may refer to the early and latter rains. The dew, which in one era was the sole source of moisture, needs no further explanation. "The deep that coucheth beneath" could refer to the moisture essential to agriculture in times of drought. There are underground streams, but there is also a level, at varying distance below the soil, known as the "water table"; and when the height of this table is just right, the land is well watered indeed.

That the sun is essential in good measure, is common knowledge, but we may yet have something to learn of the moon's value to agriculture. It is already known that the moon is an influencing factor, both day and night, on the tides the world over.

Both mountains and plains were to serve Joseph's descendants well; but valuable as these blessings might be, they were excelled by the blessing "of the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush."

Zebulun, Issachar, Gad, Dan, Naphtali and Asher had each a portion of one kind or another, but there seems no doubt that Joseph's blessing surpassed them all. To each man according to his work, is a divine principle, and Joseph was indeed a chief by every standard.

The combined blessings of all the tribes which sprang from the loins of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were an inheritance indeed with which to enter into the promised land ; but again surpassing all was the comfort that the eternal God was their refuge and underneath were the everlasting arms. Well might Moses the Man of God conclude, " Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, a people saved by the LORD, the Shield of thy help, and that is the sword of thy excellency ! " *L. Jones.*

EXTRACTS

From Willington Quay.—The children of Israel were about to enter the land of promise ; soon they were to inhabit the place of God's choice and were to dwell within set borders. In the light of this Moses gave unto the tribes his blessing. To understand a little concerning these blessings it is needful to have before one a map showing the borders of the tribes.

Of Zebulun and Issachar it was said that they would " suck the abundance of the seas, and the hidden treasures of the sand." The promise in Isaiah 60. 5 was, " the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee."

Gad was linked in a special way with the ruler, David, as we see from 1 Chronicles 12. 8. They were men of renown, " valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war " (1 Chronicles 5. 18).

Little did Moses think, when he blessed the tribes in the lovely words of verses 25 and 27, that such words would echo around the world and from generation to generation be to the comfort and strength of so many. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be. . . . the eternal God is thy dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms." *C.B.*

From Edinburgh.—There is a close connexion between the blessing of Jacob and the blessing of Moses in relation to Joseph. In the former, mention is made of fruit (he was the son of a fruitful tree) and of the blessing of heaven. In the latter, many years later, the blessing of the LORD is on his land. The fruit is now borne, the original tree is now increased, and the land calls for blessing. This speaks with no uncertain voice of the spiritual land to which we are travelling. First the land and then the precious things of heaven. The lesson for us in our day is found in Colossians 3. 1 : "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above." Heavenly things carry the dew of heaven with them. As to the precious things of the sun, all fruitfulness depends upon the sun, but the moon also exercises her power over growth upon the earth. So that night and day the harvest is being increased and brought to fruition. Night and day we increase our growth and thereby prepare for the great harvest.

"The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush " has been manifested today in the Gift of His Son. *W. Muirhead.*

From Crowborough.—Joseph's blessing would seem to be associated with his separation from his brethren. He walked a separated pathway before them.

In comparison to Joseph little is said of the rest of the tribes. The spoil of the sea and the treasures of the sand were to be to Zebulun. Dan and Gad would appear to be warlike tribes. Naphtali was to be " satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD." If we are full with the LORD'S blessing, we are full indeed. *J. Robertson.*

From Barry.—The wealth of blessing associated with Joseph is wonderful to contemplate and shows how pleasing to God the life of Joseph must have been. Five times we have the word "precious" used in connexion with Joseph, and our thoughts were directed to the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1.19) and to the wonderful blessing we have received through Him.

Both Jacob and Moses speak of the one who was separate from His brethren. The Hebrew word "nazir" is the word used for "nazirite". Joseph truly was separated unto God. Again our thoughts turned to the Lord Jesus Christ who could say, "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8. 29). Compare also John 14. 31 and Isaiah 50. 4-7, which show the subjection of the Son to the Father. Christ was a true Nazirite.

Reference was made to Matthew 4. 13-16 : Zebulun and Naphtali were wonderfully privileged to have the Son of God dwelling in their midst.

Jacob speaks of Issachar as a strong ass. Judges 5. 15 and 1 Chronicles 12. 32 were referred to, but our thoughts turned primarily to the lowly Jesus who rode upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass (Zechariah 9.9). Moses speaks of Dan as a lion's whelp, but Jacob says, "Dan shall be a serpent in the way." Although it is true that the tribe of Dan were brave, there seems to have been a good deal of subtlety about them.

D. H. Butler.

From Glasgow.—The tribes of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) received a great blessing from Moses, because of Joseph, who submitted himself to the will of God. He was tried by the word of God and came out refined as gold is refined in a furnace. We can learn many lessons from the tribes of Joseph who failed to be faithful to their God.

We see in the blessings through Moses that he was a great prophet in Israel, but unto a greater Prophet he commended a future generation, that they should hearken unto that Prophet, the Prophet of the Most High. God has blessed His present-day people with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. What a contrast to the blessings of the tribes ! The one is an earthly inheritance while the other is far greater, because it is an eternal inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for us. Let us therefore be found as faithful as Moses was, "Be thou faithful unto death" (Revelation 2. 10).

Fred Harvey.

From Ilford.—"The precious things of the growth of the moons" (33.14) might refer either to the phases of the moon or to the succession of months with their influence on the products of the earth. It may be that allusion is here made to the crops, which came in successive months, or several times in the year, in contrast to those fruits which were matured but once each year (Ezekiel 47. 12 ; Revelation 22. 2) [2].

"The hidden treasures of the sand" (33. 19) were several. Glass was known to the ancients through the Phoenicians from the glassy deposits in the sands of the river Belus, which discharges itself into the sea at the Bay of Acre in the territory of Issachar. From these deposits they produced mirrors and vessels of glass. In addition, there was an abundance of shell-fish for food, and from certain shells they obtained purple dye.

It is unlikely that the words, " there was the lawgiver's portion reserved " (33. 21) refer to the place of Moses' burial, since this was not in Gad but in Reuben. More probable is the suggestion that it means that Gad's portion was to act as lawgiver to the tribes. This is corroborated by the last clause of verse 21.

John Lightfoot.

From Melbourne.—The tribe of Joseph is particularly singled out for blessing, because of his godly life. There is nothing displeasing to the LORD recorded of his life. He was a beautiful type of Christ as the One loved of His Father, but rejected of His brethren. In the pit and dungeon experiences we see shadows of the cross and the tomb of the Lord Jesus. In his remarkable exaltation we are reminded of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, who was highly exalted by God and seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

We felt that these blessings upon the tribes have had a partial fulfilment in past history, but will be seen in all their fulness in millennial times. The land will then bring forth abundantly : verses 13-16 indicate tremendous natural wealth and so it will be that Palestine will become " the glory of the nations."

Some of the great leaders of Israel were descendants of Joseph : Joshua was an Ephraimite (Numbers 13. 8), and Gideon was of Manasseh (Joshua 17. 2, Judges 6. 11).

P.W.A.

From Cowdenbeath.—Joseph's blessing was indeed a precious one : his land was to be bountifully blessed. In millennial times, the earth shall know a literal blessing, the curse shall be removed (Isaiah 35).

Moses' prophecy regarding Ephraim and Manasseh seems to be a confirmation of Jacob's prophecy for he too indicates that Ephraim would be the greater (Genesis 48. 18, 19). Joseph, as the firstling bullock, receives here a double portion through his two sons, the horns of verse IT.

The blessing of Zebulun and Issachar may show that God is willing to bless us in our going out in open testimony for Him and to bless us also " in our tents " (at home). Zebulun and Issachar deserve mention for the fact that they would lead others to God and also serve Him. From the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar there came many men of renown who, as Judges 5. 14 would show, were those who handled the marshal's staff and were " princes of Issachar." Zebulun were a people who jeopardized their lives unto death.

Gad did not neglect God in his choice and God had pleasure in what he did (Numbers 32). The men of Gad were men of action. Gad, it would appear, took the lead in the approach to Moses for their possession—not Reuben. (We note : verse 1, Reuben—Gad, but in verse 2 Gad—Reuben). It must have been a great sacrifice for those men (Numbers 32. 18) to leave their families and to fight for the possessions of their brethren. Gad was like a lioness, fierce and mighty in battle (1 Chronicles 12. 8), men of valour whose faces were like the faces of lions.

Dan resembles the lion's whelp, one who at first appears quite harmless ; but the wild nature of the lion is seen in that later Dan leapt forth from Bashan to capture a portion of land for himself (Judges 18. 27).

The last words celebrate the triumph of divine goodness for Israel, before whom all their enemies are helpless. Their guardian is the God of Jeshurun, who moves about the heaven for their help. He is their refuge and

their support (33. 27). Moses (33. 28) envisages the plenteousness of the land which is about to be Israel's for a possession. Israel should be a happy people ; their God is their shield for defence and their sword to smite.

Iain T. H. Hunter.

From Atherton.—The original word for " good will " (33. 16) is used three times in this portion (rendered "favour," verse 23, and " acceptable," verse 24), and here implies divine pleasure and favour towards the tribes.

As in Genesis 49, the younger son of Leah (Zebulun) precedes the elder (Issachar). " In thy going out " and " in thy tents " (33. 18) seem to indicate the contrast between the district of Zebulun, with its commodious sea-shore, the fisheries of Tiberias, and its shipping enterprise and commerce, and the district of Issachar, a fertile, agricultural inland area which involved work at home. The references to Issachar in the blessings of Jacob and of Moses, in Deborah's song, and in the later historical account are instructive. Under the figure of an ass, the beast of burden, he is seen as a " servant under taskwork " (Genesis 49. 14, 15), or the worker. Again, "They shall call the peoples unto the mountain ; there shall they offer sacrifices of righteousness" (Deuteronomy 33. 19), shows him as worshipper. "As was Issachar, so was Barak ; into the valley they rushed forth at his feet " (Judges 5. 15). Here he is the warrior. The men of Issachar were men that had an understanding of the times and knew what Israel ought to do (1 Chronicles 12. 32)—wise men.

The expressions " satisfied with favour " and " full with the blessing of the LORD " seem to be associated with the geographical position of Naphtali. The whole of the coast of Galilee, a well watered expanse near to the springs of Jordan, was the most fertile land in Palestine.

Asher's blessing seems to have two possible interpretations : " blessed with children," or " blessed above the sons." Their record in connexion with the house of God in Jerusalem is conspicuous; "divers of Asher . . . humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem " at the invitation of good king Hezekiah with a view to keeping the passover of the LORD. The riches and plenty of Asher appear to be associated with oil and mineral wealth (8. 9). Ephraim (meaning "doubly fruitful"), blessed with Joseph's blessing, would seem to have gained a much more fruitful land than Simeon, who had known declension and failure.

A comparison of Isaiah 9. 1, 2 and Matthew 4. 12-16, indicates the prominent place Zebulun and Naphtali held territorially. Here the Lord Jesus made His home, and here many of His mighty works were done. From Galilee the Lord's disciples came (Acts 1. 11). The Pharisees erred when they said, " Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Jonah the prophet came from Galilee (2 Kings 14. 25, Joshua 19. 13).

E. Birchall, G. A. Jones.

From Nottingham.—It is interesting to note that the words "separate from his brethren " (33. 16) are also used in Genesis 49. 26. Joseph was separated by hatred on the part of his brethren, who hastened him into the pit; but separated too by God who was overruling to give him a place above his brethren and to work out His divine purposes. He was separate from his brethren that he might do the work of God. Is this not a precious picture of the Blessed One who said, " I am not of the world " ? It is gladdening to know that in a future day Joseph will be saved (Zechariah 10. 6-12).

Naphtali was like a hind let loose. It would seem that the thought here is that of being freed from all hindrance ; and the apostle's words of 2 Corinthians 3. 17 and Philippians 3. 14 are brought to mind.

Dan was a serpent in the way. Their sad failure is recorded in Judges 18. 30 : they knew practical idolatrous worship all the time the house of God was in Shiloh. It is significant that Dan is not mentioned in the 144,000 of Revelation 7. May it be because of their early idolatry ? The name means "judgement," and it may well be that God's judgement will be upon them because of their sin.

It was thought that there may be in Asher's blessing some prophetic aspect, symbolic of the glory that will yet be Israel's in the future day of the Lord's reign. The name means "happy," and their lot was indeed a happy one. They had that part of the land richest in mineral and natural wealth. They failed in the day of Deborah and Barak, but came out boldly in Gideon's day (Judges 6. 35). Of all the tribe whose name was "happy" was there ever one more happy than Anna, of the tribe of Asher (Luke 2, 36), when she beheld the babe Jesus in the temple ?

Some thoughts were exchanged over the name Jeshurun, meaning "the darling upright." It was thought this was Israel, but Deuteronomy 33. 5 presented some difficulty. It was taken that the reference to Moses as king in Jeshurun was in a figurative sense, although the R.V. marginal reading may be more correct, "There was a king in Jeshurun." *R. Hickling.*

COMMENTS

[1] (Halifax, etc.)—This is the goodwill or favourable acceptance of God, who appeared to Moses in the bush (Exodus 3. 2), commissioning him to lead God's people out of Egypt. One commentator says it may be translated, "the good will of the shechinah (signifying 'that which dwelleth') in the bush." Here Moses, about to die, remembers that the One who spoke to him was the "I AM"—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, thus pointing forward to the resurrection of the dead (Luke 20. 34-38). The favour and good will of God vouchsafe many blessings, not only to Joseph, but also to us.—*Jas. M.*

[2] (Ilford.)—"The precious things of the fruits of the sun," signifies that which is most excellent of its kind brought forth by the heat of the sun. Similarly "the precious things of the growth of the moon," or "put forth by the moon" (A.V.) would suggest the cool moisture of the evening, perhaps the dew.

What our friends suggest is held by some commentators.—*Jas. M.*

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question from Crowborough.—Who is referred to in verse 16 : "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush" ?

Answer.—The person referred to is, we suggest, the LORD : and most of our contributors would seem to be of the same opinion. When the LORD appeared to Moses in the bush, He came to deliver His people : "I have surely seen the affliction of My people . . . and have heard their cry . . . I am come down to deliver them . . . and to bring them unto a good land . . . I will send thee" (Exodus 3. 7-10). When God so visits men in their extremity He is acting in divine good will that transcends the favours of all others. The heavenly host gave glory to God, when He visited man in His supreme act of good will in giving His Son (Luke 2. 13, 14) ; so great is the grace and kindness of God our Saviour (Titus 2. 11, 3. 4).—*Eds.*

NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY
CHAPTER 1.

Verses 13, 14 : *Though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious : howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

The record from the pen of Luke of Paul's actions prior to his conversion, and what he says of himself in the Acts and elsewhere, fully confirm what he says here, that he was indeed to the full extent a blasphemer, not only one himself, but he sought to make the saints who suffered at his hands blasphemers also. He persecuted the saints even to foreign cities (Acts 26. 11), and he laid waste the church of God in Jerusalem, haling men and women to prison (Acts 8. 3; 1 Corinthians 15. 9; Galatians 1. 13). How deeply Paul felt in his conscience the memory of those past days ! But God had mercy on him, because, he says, " I did it ignorantly in unbelief." The Lord prayed for those that killed Him in the words, " Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do " (Luke 23. 34). Peter said to the Jews in Jerusalem, " Brethren, I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers . . . Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out " (Acts 3. 17, 19). Ignorance and unbelief were far from being good qualities in Paul. They did not provide merit so that God had mercy on him, but show the justice of God in discriminating between what may be done in ignorance and the terrible evil of rebellion, of sinning against light. Paul evidently was one of those to whom the Lord referred in John 16. 2, when He said, " The hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God." The grace and love of the Lord abounded exceedingly in Paul's case, for which he was truly thankful to Christ Jesus his Lord. " Which is " is the English rendering of the Greek singular definite article *Tes* and refers to the love which is in Christ Jesus. The passage indicates Paul's faith and Christ's love.

Verse 15 : *Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief :*

Here it is clearly stated that the purpose of the Lord's coming into the world was not to set up His millennial kingdom and to reign over Israel and the world. No such kingdom was offered to the Jewish people, as some interpreters have erroneously explained the words of John the Baptist and of the Lord, " Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand " (Matthew 3. 2, 4. 17). It is also said, " For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him " (John 3. 17). We know from many scriptures that the judgement of the world precedes the millennial reign of Christ, and had He come with the intention of reigning, and not suffering, then must He have come to judge the world. But the Lord is most emphatic that He was not sent to judge, but to save the world. The words of John 3 were spoken at the commencement of His public ministry and those of Matthew 20. 28 near the close of His life. He said, " The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." He is the Saviour of the world, and He had not come to save Israel from the power of Rome, but from their sins (John 18. 36; Matthew 1. 21). He came, as Paul says, to save sinners from the penalty and also from the power of sin. Of the vast concourse of sinners Paul puts himself first and chiefest of all.

Verse 16 : *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ shew forth all His longsuffering, for an ensample of them which should hereafter believe on Him unto eternal life.*

The purpose, emphasized by Paul, why the Lord had shown mercy to him was that He might show forth in Paul an ensample of His longsuffering mercy with sinners. Need we say that Paul is not here speaking of his suffering for Christ and the gospel's sake as an example for others to follow, but that he was an ensample of the Lord's longsuffering with men who in the hardness of their hearts kick against the goads of divine reproofs, so that they might know the way of God's salvation? Surely divine mercy waited on Saul of Tarsus, who was fitting himself to be a vessel of destruction. Here in the chief of sinners we see the longsuffering of the Lord magnified. Peter says that the Lord is longsuffering to usward, not wishing that any should perish. He also refers to the longsuffering of God in the days of Noah (2 Peter 3. 9; 1 Peter 3. 19, 20).

Verse 17 : *Now unto the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

The redeemed soul of Paul, as he thinks of God's abundant love, grace and mercy to him, a one-time persecutor and now an apostle of Jesus Christ, bursts out in praise to God, the eternal King and only God, who is incorruptible and invisible, of whose infinite kindness he had known. Instead of languishing in torment which his sin deserved, he, in the joy of salvation, praises God whose hand in mercy had been stretched out toward him. Shall we not ever do likewise when we too take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord?

Verses 18,19,20: *This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare; holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.*

After the digression Paul has made, first to speak of the purpose of the law and of God's mercy to himself, a law-breaker, he returns to the charge referred to in verse 3. He writes to Timothy in the endearing term of "my child," not "my son." He refers to the prophecies connected with Timothy's call to the ministry, first as a fellow servant with Paul. This is referred to in 4. 14, where Paul says, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." God had spoken by the mouths of persons, perhaps the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, as we read in Acts 16.2: "The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium." Whilst the minister of Christ is one who feeds the lambs and sheep, and the flock of God, he is, in another sense, to be a warrior who will face and fight those who are enemies of God's flock. David the shepherd-king of Israel was such. He fed his father's sheep, but when a lion or a bear took a lamb out of the flock he went after him, and slew him and delivered the lamb. Later, when he cared for the flock of God, he slew Goliath and other enemies besides. Timothy was to take sword and shield and to be a good soldier of Christ Jesus and to war against false teaching and false teachers. There are times for soft words and times also for words that are strong and powerful. The Christian soldier must hold faith and a good conscience; otherwise he will

be weak before the enemy. Some had violently thrust these essentials from them, little realising their immense value, and were as a vessel without chart or rudder, a plaything of wind and wave. Shipwreck was the result. Few things present such a hopeless and melancholy sight as a shipwreck. What once had been a noble vessel, perchance the pride of the seas, at last becomes a wreck, mere scrap for the furnace, or worse, to go gradually to pieces as it sinks daily to oblivion beneath the waves. Of such as made shipwreck concerning the Faith (not concerning salvation) were Hymenaeus (perhaps the same as in 2 Timothy 2. 17) and Alexander (perhaps Alexander of 2 Timothy 4.14). These two men had been guilty of blasphemy. (Blasphemy literally means hurtful speaking, to speak injuriously, evil speaking. In things pertaining to God, it means, "to speak of God and divine things in terms of impious irreverence.") These men had been excommunicated, that is, they had been delivered to Satan for their evil speaking. (See 1 Corinthians 5, where the man there was delivered unto Satan for immoral conduct). In both cases the judgement of the apostle, which was God's judgement, had been given effect to in the respective churches.

CHAPTER 2.

Verses 1. 2 : *I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men ; for kings and all that are in high place ; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.*

Here begins that section of the epistle which deals with the behaviour of men and women, of overseers and deacons, in the house of God (2. 1-3. 16). Of this part Paul writes, " These things write I unto thee . . . that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God " (3. 14, 15). Any movement that is of God, whether in an individual or among a people, begins with and is maintained by prayer. If men have no living, continuous contact with God, then there can be neither light nor power. This dispensation began with prayer : " These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren " (Acts 1. 14). The powerful witness of the apostles continued on similar lines : " Now, Lord, look upon their threatenings : and grant unto Thy servants to speak Thy word with all boldness . . . And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus : and great grace was upon them all " (Acts 4. 24, 29-33). Great power and great grace were the result of much prayer.

Here in 1 Timothy right behaviour begins with prayer. Supplication, prayer, intercession, are words which convey ideas much akin to each other. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word translated supplication conveys the idea of graciousness, a seeking of grace. Gesenius says that properly it means the cry for mercy. This seems to be borne out in the first use of the word in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the house of the LORD. He uses the word frequently (1 Kings 8. 28, 30, 33, 38, 45, 47, 49, 52, 54, 59). Note particularly the words of verse 52 : " That Thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of Thy servant, and unto the supplication of Thy people Israel, to hearken unto them whensoever they cry unto Thee." The Greek word for supplication in 1 Timothy 2.1 means a petition, a begging as the result of need, an asking. Prayer means a wish, entreaty made to God only, or a vow. Intercession means a meeting with, an interview, inter-

course with the object of interceding for someone. Thanksgiving is the expression of gratitude, the use of grateful language to God. These words are all in the plural, showing that there is to be a continuance in their exercise. Such are to be made for all men. In the matter of prayer there is gross darkness in many hearts in many lands, and there are many lying vanities. The Buddhist turns his prayer wheel and cries, "O, Jewel of the Lotus, Amen." The Moslem prays to Allah, Mahomet's god. The Romanist ceaselessly repeats "Hail Mary." Protestants pray betimes to Almighty God without reference to Jesus Christ, the one Way of reaching the ear of God His Father. They, at least, should know better. There are prayers in plenty, but most who pray know neither the Lord Jesus nor His Father. Such prayers are vain. The Lord said to His disciples in the matter of prayer, "In praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matthew 6.7). Surely there is much need for prayer by those in whom is the Spirit of God and who know Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, for men steeped in ignorance and unbelief who are drifting on to hell and eternal misery.

Particular prayer is to be made for kings and all in eminence or dignity in human affairs, so that things may be overruled by God that we may be able to lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and gravity. The Christian should be a godly and grave person, not gloomy and dejected: he has everything to make him happy and cheerful in the present joy of the Holy Spirit and the future inheritance in glory.

Verses 3, 4 : *This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour ; who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.*

God is not ignorant of the need of the souls of men nor does He need to be stirred to concern and activity concerning that need. So great was His love for the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die on Calvary (John 3. 16 ; 1 John 4. 9, 10). He has also sent forth His Spirit to convict men of sin and to bear witness concerning Christ (John 15. 26 ; 16. 7-11). What more could He have done ? His will is that saved illuminated men and women should be His witnesses in the world, each in his own sphere, shedding their light in the darkness. God is the Saviour, saints are His messengers, the instruments He uses, but they must be in touch with Him, hence the need for prayer. God willeth, that is, he desires, all men to be saved. God's desire is equal to the provision He has made, for there is one Mediator between God and men, and that Mediator is the redemption price as well. Saved men should not stop at being saved. Alas, many do. They should go on to the knowledge of the truth. Coming to the knowledge of the truth does not mean coming to know the way of salvation from hell. It means coming to know the way of the truth for believers, for God has a way in which they should walk as well as a way for them to be saved. See the following passages where the phrase "the knowledge of the truth" is mentioned : 2 Timothy 2. 24-26; 3. 7; Titus 1.1; Hebrews 10. 26. If the knowledge of the truth was synonymous with being saved, then we should certainly have the falling away doctrine taught in Hebrew 10. 26-31. That believers can fall away from the living God and from a place in divine service is plainly taught in the word, but they cannot fall away from grace and be lost eternally. Believers should not remain ignorant of what the will of God is. The Lord revealed in John 7.17 the principle on which God works, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching." If the believer is willing to do God's will then God will teach him. *J.M.*