"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).

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

Notes on

2 TIMOTHY • TITUS • PHILEMON
1 THESSALONIANS • 2 THESSALONIANS
and REVELATION

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EDITORIAL

Concerning prayer we sometimes sing, "What various hindrances we meet!" Such hindrances affect us in all our labours in the Lord, and in our study of the word of God, for the adversary seeks to hinder us in word and work. We therefore seek to encourage our fellow-students, assuring them that we are aware of some of the difficulties that confront some of them in seeking to continue in regular study with us. These days in which we live require much diligence on our part, and we would exhort all to labour much in the Lord (Romans 16. 12). In our joint studies, as in all labour in the Lord, if our work is a labour of love (1 Thessalonians 1. 3), evidence will surely be forthcoming that it is so, and much blessing will accrue.

We have commented in this vein, because several of our former contributors have now resumed. We welcome them and rejoice to see them represented once again in Bible Studies: we hope the Lord will enable them to continue with us and to contribute regularly. This may involve a measure of personal sacrifice; but diligent study of the word of God is very profitable and necessary for the spiritual growth of the child of God, and if through our year's study we are enabled the better to serve our God, the sacrifice will be more than worth while.

This year's subject covers the wilderness journey of the children of Israel, and the things that we shall have to examine "happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10. 11). God brought these things about for our profit as well as for Israel's; God the Spirit moved men to record them for our admonition. If then such be the Source, purpose and authority of the things which we now undertake to study, we ought to apply ourselves with becoming diligence, that we may gather profitable knowledge of the will of God for this present day.

We are happy to present this month the opening pages of "Notes on the Book of the Revelation" by Mr. J. Miller. These will enhance the value of this year's Bible Studies, both for present reading and for future reference. We commend these Notes to our readers for close study, and to God for His blessing.  

J. B.
NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

The book of the Revelation is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, not of St. John the divine. God gave to Him this revelation of events which must shortly (shortly or speedily as God speaks of time) come to pass. The object was to show to God's bondservants in the seven churches in Asia, first of all, the course of coming events, events which had primarily to do with the time immediately prior to the millennial reign of Christ and afterwards stretching on into eternity. This outline of events is preceded by things which John saw, as in chap. 1, and which were then existing, as outlined in the seven messages or letters which were written in one book, which was to be sent to the seven churches in Asia.

Jesus Christ sent it by His angel (17. 1; 19. 10; 21. 9; 22. 8, 9), and signified (that is, gave it by signs or symbols) to His bondservant John. John was a faithful witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all things that he saw. He with Peter said earlier, " We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard " (Acts 4. 20).

Blessed is he that readeth. This evidently is public reading, for the hearers also are blessed by the reading, but reading and hearing fail in their purpose unless there is the keeping of the things of this prophecy.

John to the seven churches. The seven churches were in the Roman province of Asia, not the Continent of Asia, nor what is called Asia Minor. These are not seven churches selected from among other churches in Asia. John addresses this book " to the seven churches " (Tais Hepta Ekklesiais). The churches of God in Troas (Acts 20. 5-7), Colossae and Hierapolis (Colossians 1. 2; 4. 13) were churches in Asia at one time, but were no longer in existence, or perchance no longer acknowledged by the Lord, when the Revelation was written. Laodicea, which formed with Colossae and Hierapolis a group of churches in the south east corner of Asia, was, alas, in a wretched state (Revelation 3. 14-17), and unless they repented would be disowned as a church of God by God.

Grace to you and peace. This salutation of grace and peace is from the Trinity. ' God the Father is here described as the self-existing, eternal Jehovah, One who is, who was, and who is coming, a Being Ineffable, to whom past, present and future are an eternal NOW, and as is the Father so are the Son and the Spirit. Jehovah is a name proper to all three Persons.

The Spirit is described as " the seven Spirits which are before the throne", seen in Revelation 4. 5 as seven Lamps of fire. Again in Revelation 5. 6, the seven Spirits are the seven Eyes of the Lamb sent forth into all the earth. There is one Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4. 4). Seven, it has been suggested, shows " His plenitude and perfection," though it is wiser betimes not to use words to cover our ignorance. Seven in Ephesians forms a unity or oneness; the unity of the Spirit is (1) one body, (2) one Spirit, (3) one hope, (4) one Lord, (5) one faith, (6) one baptism, (7) one God and Father of all. Henotes (unity) is derived from Heis neut. of Heis (one). So the seven Spirits are, I judge, one Spirit. The mystery of the Divine Being shall in time to come be more fully understood by us. We do well in these our childhood days (1 Corinthians 13. 9-12) not to darken counsel by words without knowledge (Job 38. 2). We feel that much of what has been written about the book of the Revelation comes within the meaning of the LORD'S words in Job. The seven lamps upon the Lamps-stand in the tabernacle are, we judge, symbolic representations of the seven Lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits. No book in the Scriptures has so many groups of sevens: seven Spirits, seven churches, seven angels, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven heads of the beast, seven angels which have the seven bowls with the seven last plagues.
Jesus Christ is described in a threefold way, which is of universal application: (1) "the faithful Witness," (2) "the Firstborn of the dead," and (3) "the Ruler of the kings of the earth." He is the faithful Witness conveying a world-wide message to men, which, as Luke shows in Acts 1, He continued through the apostles and prophets (Hebrews 2. 3, 4; Ephesians 2. 20) after His resurrection. He is the Firstborn of the dead, that is, the Firstborn of all the dead. He is also the Firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1. 18), that is, He is the Firstborn of all the blessed dead who shall be raised prior to the millennium. He is also the Ruler of the kings of the earth, being King of kings, and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6. 15). "Firstborn" describes one who is supreme, pre-eminent, who has priority in rank (Psalm 89. 27). The Lord is Firstborn of all creation (not the first to be born, as though He were Himself a creature), for in Him, through Him and unto Him were all things created (Colossians 1. 16; John 1. 3). He is the Cause of all creation. He is also the Cause of all resurrection. " For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive " (1 Corinthians 15. 22). He is also the Firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8. 29). " Unto Him that loveth us:" the present participle for "loveth" describes the characteristic action of Jesus Christ; He is the loving One who loves His own and will for ever love them (John 13. 1). "Loosed" in the original is an aorist participle which shows that He is the One who loosed or freed us in the past from our sins. The loosing from sins is a past event but the loving is present and continuous.

And He made us to be a kingdom. In this note of praise we have definite allusion to what took place at Sinai, in Exodus 19. 24, in its anti-typical meaning, when the terms of the covenant which God was about to make with Israel, who had already been redeemed, were read in their hearing. Upon their acceptance thereof, they were to become a kingdom of priests, as well as a peculiar people and a holy nation. This same truth is implied here in Revelation 1. 6. We have in Titus 2. 14, and in 1 Peter 2. 5-10, a peculiar people and a holy and royal priesthood. The seven churches, though a people in much failure and weakness, were still owned by Him, and the Lord walked in their midst and ruled over them. Whilst we believe all born-again persons have a birthright to priesthood, as the sons of Aaron had, not all who are born again are gathered together according to Acts 2. 41, 42, subject to the Lord's will and authority (Matthew 28. 18-20). Consequently they are not a kingdom and priests to God. Those who have a birthright to priestly service should be together, as in 1 Peter 2. 5-10, as a holy and royal priesthood to be built up as a spiritual house. Of old the priesthood of the house of Aaron served God in His house and temple and could not render service to God apart from His house. Kingdom, priesthood and house are linked together both in the past and present dispensations. It should be carefully noted that it was those who were gathered together in the seven churches in Asia who were made a kingdom and priests by the Lord to God His Father.

Behold He cometh with the clouds. Here we have graphically portrayed the coming of the Son of Man to earth in judgement, of which Matthew 24. 27-31, Revelation 19. 11-16, and many other portions, speak. Every eye of men on earth shall see Him then, and the Jewish people shall look upon Him whom they pierced, as we learn from Zechariah 12. 10; and besides the mourning Jews all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him. Many, alas, will be ill prepared for His coming, for many in that day shall call on the mountains and the rocks to fall on them and hide them from His face and His wrath (Revelation 6. 15-17).
PREPARING TO DEPART  
(Exodus 12. 8-11)

When the firstborn of the children of Israel had escaped death on that memorable night, and when Pharaoh and the Egyptians lost their firstborn, they were told to take the lamb (the blood of which had sheltered their firstborn) and eat the flesh roast with fire (Exodus 12. 8). The eating of the roast lamb corresponds, in our day, to feasting upon our Passover, even Christ (1 Corinthians 5. 7). He will sustain us throughout our night while we make ready to meet Him on that glorious eternal morning.

We wait to see the Morning Star appearing  
In glory bright;  
This blessed hope illumines with beams most cheering  
The hours of night.

Our nourishment for the new man is found in the word which testifies of Him, the Lamb of God, the One who passed over the houses on which was sprinkled the blood of an unblemished male lamb under one year, to protect them from the destroying angel. He it was who became our Passover at Calvary, for His shed blood covers for ever our guilt of sin, and protects us from the wrath of God. " For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ" (1 Corinthians 5. 7). Let us not only read the word, but, more important, let it dwell in us richly in all wisdom (Colossians 3. 16).

With the roast lamb they ate unleavened bread which corresponds to holiness. Sin must not only be confessed, it must be also forsaken (Proverbs 28. 13), if we would obtain mercy. Malice and wickedness are leaven; sincerity and truth are the unleavened bread (1 Corinthians 5. 8).

Bitter herbs (Exodus 12. 8) correspond to repentance (Luke 15. 10). The children of Israel were to eat the foregoing with their loins girded (12. 11). This corresponds to habits controlled; see 1 Peter 1. 13, 14, where the apostle warns us against fashioning ourselves according to our former lusts in unsaved days: " Be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living" (1 Peter 1. 15).

"Your shoes on your feet" (12. 11) corresponds to gospel testimony in our walk before the world. The church of God at Corinth was credited by the apostle with being an epistle of Christ written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God (2 Corinthians 3. 3). The feet of those that bring glad tidings of good things are beautiful (Romans 10. 15).

" Your staff in your hand " (Exodus 12. 11) denotes their early departure from Egypt for ever. For God's children today it speaks of our pilgrim character. We should be ready to depart at any moment to meet the Lord in the air. If we have treasure laid up in heaven, then our heart will not be occupied with the things of this life. True, the things of this life have their pull, but they are only temporal: the unseen treasures laid up by us in heaven are eternal.

The last of the seven requirements, in preparation for the departure in the morning, was that they should " eat it in haste " (Exodus 12. 11). Here are the words of the soon-coming One: " Yea: I come quickly." * Therefore we ought to be ready to meet Him, like the five wise virgins (Matthew 25). " Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is " (Revelation 22. 12).

S. Stoope.
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

The Exodus and the Passing through the Red Sea: the Song of Moses

(Exodus 13. 1—15. 21)

From Lerwick. —In a day when Abraham was yet without an heir, God said to him, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;... afterward shall they come out with great substance... they shall come hither again" (Genesis 15. 13, 14, 16). We here find God's prophecy in process of fulfilment. The time had arrived for the children of Israel to come out. Their own strength and wisdom could not avail to deliver them from the house of bondage; hence this was no movement of human emancipation, but by strength of hand (13. 14) the LORD performed the greatest act of deliverance the world till then had ever seen, which foreshadowed that greater work which was to be wrought through His Son in delivering men from the power of darkness and of Satan (John 10. 36, Colossians 1. 13, Acts 26. 18).

Not only is the LORD here seen in salvation, but also in judgement, for setting free always entails the breaking of that which restrains. Pharaoh, whose heart was changed towards God's people (14. 5), the LORD in judgement overthrew with his host and captains in the Red Sea (15. 4), portraying the work of Him who will yet take vengeance on them that know not God (2 Thessalonians 1. 7-9) [1]. Then could Moses and the people who had been redeemed and baptized unto him in the cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10. 2) sing with joy, " He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation " (15. 2 A. V.). D.S.

From Birkenhead. —The children of Israel were redeemed by blood in Egypt and set free from bondage in order that they might become servants of God. Their deliverance marked the commencement of a pilgrimage. A land, chosen by God and promised to their forefathers as an inheritance, was their objective. The way to the land lay through a wilderness. That memorable journey with all its perils and perplexities affords valuable instruction as to the ways of God and as to the frailties and failures of men.

The entire project instigated by Jehovah was staggering in its conception. No man was more acutely aware of the immense problems of that journey than was Moses, the servant of the LORD. But God not only conceived the plan, He chose and trained the leader. Divine guidance and protection were assured, and symbolized in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

It was God's desire that the memory of their bondage and the means of their deliverence should be perpetuated throughout future generations. This was to be done in two ways: firstly, in the yearly observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread; and secondly, by the setting apart (R. V. margin, "cause to passover") of the firstborn males of man and beast (Exodus 13. 12). God's claim to the firstborn sons of Israel is most important. Its significance and sequel will concern us later in our studies.

Pharaoh's pursuit of Israel is an example of the mad folly which infects those tyrants, who, swollen with pride, lift their hand against the God of heaven. His end was full of ignominy; he broke himself against the Rock of Israel. His case stands in Scripture as a solemn warning. Like some others since his day, he dragged down his people with him. History and prophecy alike attest the futility of rebellion against the Most High.
The significance of Israel’s passage through the Red Sea is interpreted for us in 1 Corinthians 10. 2. Baptism in water lay at the very commencement of their journey. They " were all baptized ": no unbaptized person was present among them. Again, the Red Sea cut them off from their former manner of life; the way back was completely barred. Moreover, it was at the Red Sea that they committed themselves to the leader of God’s choice who led them through its dark depths to victory and song. " Baptized unto Moses " should be compared with " baptized into Christ " (Romans 6. 3, Galatians 3. 27). This New Testament use of Old Testament typology is a striking example of its utility and accuracy. T.M.H.

From Greenock and Port Glasgow.—The people of Israel were to remember the day they left Egypt, and to remember that the LORD with a strong hand brought them out. The month Abib was indeed a special month to them, being the month of their redemption from the bonds of Egypt and the commencement of their position as a separate people for God: it became the first month of the year. This should bring to our remembrance the day of our salvation, when we passed from the bondage of sin and became free men in Christ. We should all remember the day of our redemption.

The exodus was to be brought to their remembrance yearly by the Passover Feast and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. One passover they had partaken of initially in Egypt, whilst sheltering under the blood of the lamb or kid as the destroying angel passed through the land. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was kept after leaving the land. The unleavened bread would, no doubt, remind the people of the bitterness of their experiences in Egypt. This feast was to be a sign to them: it was suggested that Exodus 13. 9 means that this sign would cause remembrance and discussion on the law and works of God, and this is distinct from Deuteronomy 6. 8, 9, according to which the people were to bind the words of the law for a sign upon their hand, and write them upon the door posts. (Help on this point of difference would be appreciated) [2].

Exodus 13. 8 shows the parents' personal responsibility to tell the children of the great things that the LORD had done for them. Surely a lesson for us today!

R. P. Hansen.

From Southport.—During Israel's last night in Egypt God slew the firstborn of the Egyptians, both of men and of beasts; consequently God claimed the firstborn of the Israelites for Himself, both of men and of beasts, which were males. God later took the males of the tribe of Levi in place of the firstborn ones of Israel, that they might do the service of the LORD, because of the service they undertook for Him in the matter of the golden calf.

The people feared when they found themselves with the Red Sea before them and the pursuing army of Pharaoh behind—to natural eyes a hopeless position. We were struck by the assurance given by Moses (14. 13, 14), " The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. " Then follow the very practical words to Moses, exhorting him not to cry to God, but to go forward. We could well take encouragement from these words. We are told in the Scriptures how we are to walk as God's people. Why do we so often halt to question this or that? We should press on in His service. When the children of Israel were before the Red Sea, the angel of God and the pillar of cloud removed from before them and stood behind them, so that they stood between the two camps to protect the Israelites. The six hundred chariots of Pharaoh and the other chariots were powerless;
what a comfort! Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 10. 2 that the people were "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The people followed their God-chosen leader out of Egypt (representing the world) towards Canaan, a place where they could serve God in the way He desired. This has a lesson for us today. The miracle of the Red Sea crossing was observed by other peoples who were not God's people. They were the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites and Canaanites, as the Song of Moses tells, and they trembled at the power of God. "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Corinthians 4. 20).

W. S. Holden.

EXTRACTS

From Cowdenbeath. —The redemption of the ass illustrates, simply and lucidly, the truth of the gospel, because, in order to redeem the firstborn of unclean animals, a lamb without spot or blemish had to be slain in its stead. Christ the Spotless One has been slain for the redemption of the unclean—the sinner. Failure to redeem the ass by the blood of a lamb necessitated the breaking of the animal's neck. This would remind us of the fate of sinners who fail to accept God's redemptive offer.

Although, from Etham, Israel could conveniently have by-passed the Red Sea, God commanded them to retreat to a position on the western shore. Pharaoh, whose heart God hardened, pursued them to this vulnerable position. God there displayed His greatness to a most ungrateful people who were terrorised by the seeming hopelessness of their position (14. 11, Psalm 106. 7, 8). Moses comforted them: "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord... the Lord shall fight for you" (14. 13).

Faith—and faith alone—gave them courage to pass between the towering walls of water (Hebrews 11. 29); the overshadowing cloud completed the picture of baptism (1 Corinthians 10. 1, 2).

Separated from Egypt and its environment, Israel sang a song of triumph and exultation to the omnipotent Redeemer. Miriam and the women joined in the song.

C. Ross.

From Belfast. —It is important to notice how Moses, acting under God's instructions, made the people turn back and encamped them in the seemingly hopeless position between Migdol and the Red Sea. Thus they had Pharaoh and his army in the rear and the sea ahead. At this stage God's people remembered not the multitude of His mercies; and, already forgetting His wonders in Egypt, they murmured against God and His servant Moses. Yet to this rebellious and ungrateful people came the gracious message, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord... the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." We have in chapter 15 the first recorded song in the Bible, a glorious song of victory, not exalting Israel's own achievements, but the mighty power and triumph of Jehovah. It includes the prophetic utterance (verse 17) as to God having a dwelling place on earth. This victory song of Moses and the children of Israel reminds us of that coming day when the redeemed shall sing the song of Moses the servant of God (Revelation 15. 3).

D. Mawkinney.

From Nottingham. —Israel were to "remember this day," the day of divine deliverance (13. 3). Deuteronomy 5. 15 calls upon Israel to remember their servile days; they were to remember what the Lord did to Pharaoh (7. 18), also to "remember the day when thou earnest forth out of the land of Egypt" (16. 3). Note here the added words "all the days of thy life." In Deuteronomy 8. 2 we have a further telling exhortation to remember.
Their song is a fruit of victory. In Isaiah 53 we have the sufferings of the Lord, and the next chapter begins with "Sing..." We remember too that, when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also (2 Chronicles 29. 27). We read in Revelation 15 of those who will sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. The theme will be the same, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty."

R. Hickling.

From Melbourne. —Like as Israel was saved out of the hand of the Egyptians, so the Lord has saved us by His grace through faith that He might bring us to His house to worship and serve Him acceptably. The world, of which Egypt is a figure, must be counted by God's redeemed people today as unworthy of their friendship (James 4. 4). The world headed by its god, Satan, is a vast camp at enmity with God. God's children therefore are called to go forth unto Jesus without the camp bearing His reproach (Hebrews 13. 13).

The number of people that left Egypt was six hundred thousand men, beside children. Also a mixed multitude went up with them. They went out with a high hand in the sight of the Egyptians who were engaged in burying all their firstborn (Numbers 33. 3, 4), but later they lifted up their eyes and saw the marching Egyptians and they were sore afraid (14. 10). With the sea before them and Pharaoh and six hundred chosen chariots and all the chariots of Egypt behind them, Israel murmured. They took fright, but the command was "go forward" (14. 15). The sea was their only way of escape and Israel's salvation proved also to be Egypt's judgement. "Thy way was in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters..., Thou ledest Thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Psalm 77. 19, 20).

From Vancouver. —The exodus of the children of Israel had to be in faith in their God. The awesome might of their enemies, and the seeming impassable expanse of the Red Sea revealed their own helplessness and their complete dependence upon God. The parting of the waters, Israel's safe arrival on the farther shore, and the destruction of Pharaoh (a type of Satan) took place that the children of Israel might know their God, and also that Egypt and all the nations might know the God of Israel.

Chapter 15 begins with triumph and song unto the LORD. The same God who triumphed gloriously over Israel's foes is our God also: He is the God of the house of God. We should ever be a people with a song of triumph upon our lips, that the nations may know that our God liveth, and that He is very great indeed.

S. Carp, F. Lundwill.

From Edinburgh. —According to 1 Corinthians 10. 1, 2 Israel were all under the cloud, all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. God led His people outward and onward, with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night so that they might travel either by day or night. He guided them too in the best way: not the direct way (via the way of the land of the Philistines), but by the way of the wilderness and by the Red Sea. The crossing of the sea displayed the greatness and the power of God, who was leading His people. The people have been estimated to number from two to three million. They are seen buried by baptism and upon the other side of the Red Sea in resurrection.

It would seem from the words of the song, "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel, "that the song was sung in what is known as antiphonal singing, i. e., Moses sang the first part and the people answered. Likewise Miriam answered the women who went out after her. Like one of a later day, they should have gone on their way rejoicing [3].

Alex. Hope.
From Kingston-on-Thames. —Pharaoh is typical of Satan, very subtle. We remember how Satan argued with Eve in the garden; and Pharaoh, whilst allowing the children of Israel to leave Egypt, suggested that their flocks and herds should be left behind (10. 24); but Moses replied, "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind" (10. 26). There was to be a clear-cut separation from Egypt. If the cattle had been left, the children of Israel would have had them in mind and their thoughts would still have been interested in Egypt, a type of the world. God also separated Israel from the nations.

In the Old Testament Scriptures we see instances of the principle of separation. In creation God divided the light from the darkness; also, the LORD said unto Abram, "Get thee out of thy country" (Genesis 12). We are also a separated people. "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6. 17).

What a song of deliverance was sung by Moses and the children of Israel! (Exodus 15). Have we not a song to sing? The psalmist said, "O sing unto the LORD a new song" (Psalm 96). Truly, "The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad" (Psalm 126. 3).

W. H. Humphris.

From Toronto, Ont. —We noted that all leaven was removed from Israel's borders. Not only was leavened bread forbidden, but so also the leaven itself. Leaven, we have been taught, is often used to portray sin. Sincerity and truth are seen in the unleavened bread. A festival of unleavened bread was to be kept unto Jehovah throughout their generations.

The Lord led Israel not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although it was near. There were wars in that way, which might cause them to repent and return to Egypt. Not that there would be no war by the more circuitous route of the wilderness of the Red Sea. These would come, but not until God would have had further occasions in which to display the strength of His arm in deliverance and protection. Was the sun too hot by day? Jehovah was over them in a pillar of cloud. Was the darkness too intense at night? Jehovah was over them in a pillar of fire to give them light. Were there foes pursuing to re-enslave? The angel of God who went before removed and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud removed from before them and stood behind them between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel. The protection of God was a guiding light to Israel, but cloud and darkness to the Egyptians.

But Israel lacked faith. The people who had bowed their heads and worshipped, when Moses spoke the words of God to them (4. 31) now tried to say that their preference had been to serve the Egyptians. Left to themselves, they should have died at the hand of the Egyptians. That is the portion of all whom God delivers: "Reckon yourselves dead to sins; crucified unto the world—but alive unto God." Israel were dead to the Egyptians that they might serve God.

S. K. Seath.

From Middlesbrough. —Joseph at the end of his great life prophesied of the coming deliverance, "God will surely visit you." The redemption of Israel from Egypt was indeed the result of divine visitation. The strong hand of God provided the way of escape, and brought destruction upon their enemies.

Reverence, through the Passover, of the deliverance that Israel had known became a feature of their national life. Remembrance was also kept alive in the family circle in the redemption and sanctification of first-born sons by the payment of five shekels. The firstborn of clean beasts were to be offered in sacrifice and the firstborn of unclean beasts were to be either redeemed or destroyed.
It is only to be expected that these matters would cause questions to arise in the minds of children of later generations. It was the responsibility of priests and Levites to teach in Israel statutes and judgements. It was the responsibility of parents to uphold the law of God within the family circle. This still holds good amongst God's people today. In order that parents should discharge this responsibility satisfactorily, they would need to be well versed in the gracious dealings of God with their nation. Questions were to be answered according to the word of God.

D. T. Hyland.

From Ayr Y. P. M. — The magnitude of the task of bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt is something which may not always be realized, but a very rough estimate of numbers would be between two and three million souls besides flocks and herds. According to the A. V. marg. they went out in orderly fashion, in ranks of five, so, allowing the distance of a yard between each rank, the procession would be some sixty miles in length. It speaks volumes for the leadership and organising ability of Moses, albeit we must not lose sight of the fact that this was a mighty movement of God: "God led them," we read, "not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near;... but... by way of the wilderness by the Red Sea." They were just beginning on their walk of faith and were not yet ready for war. Then as now, God does not bring His people into circumstances or trials which they are not able to face. Warfare will come in due time. Further, He had many things to teach His people in the wilderness which they could not learn elsewhere. So it is today.

Jack Miller.

From Glasgow. — "The Egyptians were urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste" (12. 33), and "Egypt was glad when they departed" (Psalm 105. 38). So on this night much to be observed unto the LORD, the children of Israel turned their backs on Egypt, its people and its gods and bade farewell for ever to the scenes of their slavery. They had not marched very far when they were (alas) back there again in thought (16. 3).

With them went the bones of Joseph. At least four times in the Scriptures Joseph's bones are mentioned (if "they" of Acts 7. 16 refers to them). Joseph expressly declared that God would visit Israel and said, "Ye shall carry up my bones from hence" (Genesis 50. 25). The fulfilment of this charge took place hundreds of years later.

In a way this reminds us of the statement concerning the Lord Jesus, "A bone of Him shall not be broken" (John 19. 36, Exodus 12. 46). Although many hundreds of years were to pass, God watched over His word to perform it, and at the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus it is recorded that "they brake not His legs" (John 19. 33).

Exodus 15 contains the first recorded song or psalm of the Scriptures. It was sung by a people saved: it was sung to God their Saviour. They saw, they believed, and then they sang (14. 31, 15. 1).

J. H. P.

From Wigan. — Many things had happened since God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob (2. 24) and had appeared to Moses, saying, "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (3. 10).

Their deliverance was always to be had in remembrance. When they should taste of the sweetness of the passover lamb, they would call to mind the night when, through the shelter of the blood, they were saved from judgement. The unleavened bread (the bread of affliction) and bitter herbs would remind them of their bitter experiences in Egypt.
The death and judgement from which Israel had been saved overtook the Egyptians. After such a deliverance well might the children of Israel raise their voices high in praise to Jehovah. Their mouths were filled with laughter and their lips with singing, for the LORD had done great things for them whereof they were glad (Psalm 126. 2, 3).

J. Caldwell, J. H.

From Brantford, Ont. —The instructions about the Feast of Unleavened Bread were given before Israel left Egypt. In the passover Israel remembered their deliverance and the bondage from which they were freed by the power of God. We too should look back on our deliverance and remember it: further, 1 Corinthians 5 teaches that our festival, which compares with Israel's festival of unleavened bread, should continue throughout the week; it should arise from the Remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some thought the teaching associated with leaven is always the same, that it always speaks of sin. Others thought it is necessary to take into account the way in which the type is applied [4].

Alex Sproul, David Philp.

From Hamilton, Ont. —While it is true the whole nation of Israel was redeemed, we felt that, in a special way, the firstborn in each family was redeemed. This aspect of Israel's redemption was to be continually brought to mind each time the firstborn of man or animal was redeemed with a lamb. We wondered why the ass was singled out among the animals, and suggest it is a type of mankind in general, who are depicted in Job 11. 12 as being born as a wild ass's colt. We also note here that whether the animal lived or died depended on a personal choice—" If thou wilt."

Regarding Joseph's bones, we wondered why it was requested that they should be taken to Canaan. We realize that it showed Joseph's faith (according to Hebrews 11): when they were carried up, it was the fulfilment of an oath. But was there some other reason? Would it speak of the resurrection in any way? [5].

John Young, Jim Young, N. MacKay.

From Liverpool. —There is for us a New Testament parallel to the Feast of Unleavened Bread: "Let us keep the feast... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth " (1 Corinthians 5. 7, 8). This is not a " once a week " keeping, but a continuous keeping in the spirit of that which finds full expression in the Remembrance on Lord's day morning.

There was but one pillar, not one pillar of cloud and another of fire, but one which was cloud by day and fire by night (14. 20, 13. 21, 22, Numbers 9. 15). Thus Jehovah led His people by day and by night; He guided and guarded them (13. 18, 40. 38).

We note the import of the words, " Thus the LORD saved Israel... Israel saw the great work which the LORD did... and the people feared the Lord: and they believed in the LORD, and in His servant Moses. " This was Jehovah's triumph over His enemies. Could a people thus redeemed and saved from destruction fail to turn in thankfulness to laud the One who had thus worked so mightily for them? Indeed they might well ask, "Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? " (15. 11). Moses, a man " mighty in his words and works " (Acts 7. 22), was in all probability the author of this victory song.

We should rejoice in Him who has given us in His word these pictures which are a foreshadowing of the victory won for us. We have brought before us in these chapters redemption, sanctification and separation.

T. Miller, A. H.
From Crowborough. —In connexion with their going out, Israel would remember deliverance from death (12. 27), and redemption from bondage (13. 3, 14). There were certain things that marked the exodus of Israel from Egypt: judgement of death, sacrifice of the LORD’S passover, the application of the blood, and the month in which this took place, which was to be the beginning of months, the first month of the year to them. Also in connexion with the exodus certain things were to be observed when they reached Canaan: they were to keep the passover, the seven days of unleavened bread, to set apart all that opened the womb, and every firstling which came of beast, and every firstling of an ass was to be redeemed with a lamb, so also the firstborn of man among their sons (13. 1-16).

The Red Sea was in God’s purpose. Instead of being a barrier to them it became the means of their severance from Egypt. Egypt, a type of the world, was left behind, and they were "all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

The people who had sighed and groaned under bondage of cruelty now sang in their glorious liberty a song of triumph to their God. Purchased, redeemed and separated unto Himself, He would bring them in and plant them in the mountain of His inheritance. In Psalm 105. 37 we read, "He brought them forth... and there was not one feeble person among His tribes."

From Atherton. —We considered that the import of Exodus 13. 15 is that the slaying of the firstborn in the land of Egypt affected the males only; for, as a sequel to this remarkable event, God called for the firstborn of man among the sons of Israel to be sanctified to Himself, apparently as a thank-offering for all that had been wrought for them.

The insight of Joseph with reference to the purposes of God was commented upon, for he gave commandment concerning his bones, which were carried out of Egypt, finally to be laid at rest at Shechem.

The giving of signs and wonders at this early stage of Israel’s history, and later, in the days of the ministry of the Lord Jesus, does not appear to have produced the spiritual benefits that God intended. Time and again, Israel clamoured for signs, only to prove themselves "a crooked and perverse generation." The crossing of the Red Sea ranks as one of the greatest miracles in the Old Testament. In type, it completes the cycle of redemption, baptism and separation, which the apostle so clearly outlines (1 Corinthians 10. 1, 2, 11). The destruction also of the great adversary and his hosts, with the outcome of freedom and liberty to serve God collectively, all indicate the tremendous advantage to be derived from the comparisons (rather than the contrasts) of type and antitype.

The Song of Moses was evidently given to Israel by Moses’ instruction; the women, as in other instances, were not slow to extol the triumphs of their Redeemer (see 1 Samuel 18. 6, 7, Judges 11. 34). J. K. S., E. B.

COMMENTS

[1] (Lerwick). —The destruction of those referred to in 2 Thessalonians 1. 7-9 is part of what we have set forth in type at the Red Sea. We must not overlook that triumph of Hebrews 2. 14 and the powers of darkness at Calvary.—J. M.

[2] (Greenock and Port Glasgow). —The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a sign, and therefore the words of Exodus 13. 9 must be taken in a figurative sense, for you cannot bind a sign on your hand, a sign which
was implied in eating unleavened bread. A sign implied in eating is one of the most forceful of signs, as witness the Lord’s Remembrance each first day of the week, and all the feasts of Jehovah were signs to remind Israel of important matters. The binding of parts of the law on their hand, as in Deuteronomy 6. 8, 9, and writing them on their door posts were literally interpreted and applied. —J. M.

[3] (Edinburgh). —I see nothing in the brief statement in Exodus 15 that there was any antiphonal singing, one part singing and followed by another. The word "answered" in "Miriam answered them" (the women) would not prove this, as it would seem that the women continued the singing, after, presumably, the men. We do not know how the words of Moses’ song were circulated to this host of a few millions of people. —J. M.

[4] (Brantford). —Whilst, generally speaking, the teaching of leaven in the Scriptures is that based on leaven’s corrupting power, it is not so in Matthew 13. 33 with reference to the kingdom of heaven, and Luke 13. 20, 21 regarding the kingdom of God. These are not corrupting influences, but irresistible powers for good. These kingdoms are not evil things. —J. M.

[5] (Hamilton, Ont.). —Joseph buried his father in Canaan in the cave of Machpelah, and, perchance, in prophetic vision he saw that his brethren would not be able to bury his body in Canaan till after their deliverance of which he prophesied; hence he gave commandment concerning his bones. Christ was coming to the land of promise, and these holy men wanted to be there, so far as their dust was concerned. I see nothing more than this in the matter of resurrection. It would seem, from Acts 7. 15, 16, that each tribe took their dead ancestor, so that the bodies of Joseph’s brothers were also carried to and buried at Shechem. —J. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Greenock and Port Glasgow. —Please explain what is meant by "... and gathered some more, some less... he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack "(16. 17, 18). Is there any connexion in 2 Corinthians 8. 14?

Answer. —The manna after being gathered was measured by an omer measure. Thus, he that gathered more than an omer of manna got an omer, and he that gathered less than an omer had his deficiency made up to him. So, when all was measured each got an omerful, and there was nothing left over each day: truly a miracle! How this measuring took place we are not told, but there would be an orderly system. 2 Corinthians 8. 14 is a very suitable scripture to show that distribution and not hoarding is the way of God. —J. M.

Question from Nottingham. —Is the first part of Exodus 13. 9 to be applied literally? A similar question applies to verse 16.

Answer. —See Comment [2]. This is figurative language. —J. M.

Question from Brantford. —The arrival of delivered Israel on the other side of the Red Sea is usually taken as a type of resurrection. Can it be proved that they arrived there on the third day?
Answer. —No scripture specifically says that Israel stood on the other side of the sea on the third day, but it seems to me that the three times in which the three days' journey into the wilderness is mentioned has this in view ( Exodus 3. 18; 5. 3; 8. 27). —J. M.

Question from Crowborough. —Is the crossing of the Red Sea a type of believers' baptism?

Answer. —Yes (1 Corinthians 10. 1, 2; Romans 6. 3): "unto (Eis) Moses ": " into (Eis) Christ "—J. M.

NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

CHAPTER 4

Verses 1, 2: I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

Paul charged (earnestly testified) Timothy before God and Christ Jesus to preach the word. Christ Jesus is about to judge the living and the dead. It is difficult to decide between the A. V. " at His appearing, " and the R. V. " by His appearing. " This is one of the places where there is a difference in the Greek text. It seems that His appearing and kingdom are connected with the judgement of the quick and the dead. This appearing is when the Lord comes as Son of Man to the earth. How vitally necessary it is that those who have the word of God committed to them should preach it in the light of that day of judgement! If men do not preach the word privately and publicly the blood of other men, not only of sinners, but also that of erring saints, may lie at their door. Timothy was to proclaim the word, to be urgent in season, out of season, to convict, rebuke, exhort, in all long-suffering and teaching. The cause for this urgency is shown in what follows.

Verses 3, 4: For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.

The process of apostasy is here clearly indicated. Men simply would not have the sound, healthful teaching. They wanted to listen, not to the sober truth of God, but, having itching ears, that is, a longing desire or appetite for something fanciful, they heaped up teachers suited to their lusts. Is not this very thing manifest in this and in all lands? These are the fewest in number who have any desire for the plain truth. Those who gain the ears of the masses must, generally speaking, coat their message with the entertainment of song. It is all so very different from what took place in the house of Cornelius, in which Cornelius said of those whom he had gathered together to hear the word of the Lord: " Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord " (Acts 10. 88). The speaker, in this case Peter, not only proclaimed the gospel of faith in Christ, but he also commanded them when they had believed to be baptized (Acts 10, 43, 47, 48). There was no such
course followed by Peter as that of simply preaching salvation by faith in Christ, and hiding all that the Lord had commanded about baptism and all else (Matthew 28.18-20). Many preachers do not even preach salvation by faith alone; to proclaim, "Ye must be born again," would mean the end of their stipend, and they know it. For filthy lucre's sake they are unfaithful to the Lord and His truth, and so the mischief goes on apace. Even so it was in the past. "They will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables."

Verse 5: But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.

Paul's work was that of the pioneer to cut his way and make roads through the forest of men and to bring the gospel and the truth to them. Timothy's work was to endeavour to keep the roads good so that there might be the free flow of the divine message. Both things were vigorously opposed by Satan. By persecutions and sufferings he sought to hinder the hardy pioneer, and through false teachers he sought to fill the highway with boulders and debris of all kinds. It mattered little what it was, so long as the road was blocked and the work of God hindered. Timothy's work was difficult, but he was to suffer hardship, to evangelize, and to fulfil his ministry.

Verses 6, 7, 8: 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: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing.

The Lord said, "The night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9.4). The day of Paul's service was drawing swiftly to a close; the shadows of night were gathering round the valiant and scarred warrior. Soon that hand to which we are indebted for so much of divine truth would no longer hold the pen which had traced the sacred letters upon the papyrus. Can we picture Timothy, as the news, with a sledgehammer blow, smites his affectionate heart, that Paul's end is drawing near? His spiritual father and the friend and companion of youth and through life's wanderings will soon sail for the harbour in the land of fadeless glory. One thinks one hears the falling of the great salt tears upon Paul's letter and sees the bodily frame of Timothy shiver and shake. Paul gone! The world for Timothy would be an empty place! As one thinks of Paul, the words of the hymn keep ringing in one's mind—

I've wrestled on toward heaven, Deep waters crossed life's pathway;
'Gainst storm and wind and tide; The hedge of thorns was sharp;
Now, like a weary traveller, Now these lie all behind me:
That leaneth on his guide, Oh for a well-tuned harp!
Amid the shades of evening, Oh to join Hallelujah
While sinks life's lingering sand, With yon triumphant band,
I hail the glory dawning Who sing, where glory dwelleth,
From Immanuel's land. In Immanuel's land!

Paul says, "I am already being poured out as a drink-offering" (R. V. Marg.). He had written to the Philippians earlier, "Yea, and if I am poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." (Philippians 2.17, R. V. Marg.). This was the spirit in which he had lived since the Lord revealed Himself to him on the
Damascus road; pouring himself out in the service of others. Was his life misspent in so doing? No! it was sure to reap the greatest reward. "The time of my departure is come," he says. He also wrote to the Philippians, "But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart to be with Christ; for it is very far better" (Philippians 1. 23). Now that earnest desire is about to be granted. He writes, striking a note of triumph, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." His task was completed and his reward sure. He says, "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day." This is the day of Christ" (Philippians 1. 10), the day of His coming to the air (1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17), when the judgement seat of Christ will be set up, before which saints of this dispensation of grace will be made manifest (2 Corinthians 5. 10). Few men, if any others there have been, have known on this earth that theirs would be a crown of reward. There are three crowns mentioned in the New Testament which are rewards for faithfulness, (1) the crown of righteousness, for such as love the Lord's appearing, (2) the crown of life, for such as endure temptation, whether from their own flesh (James 1. 12-15), or from tribulation (Revelation 2. 9, 10), and (3) the crown for the faithful shepherds of the flock (1 Peter 5. 1-4).

Verses 9, 10, 11, 12: Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas forsook me, having loved this present world, and went to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is useful to me for ministering. But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus.

Demas who is mentioned with Luke in Colossians 4. 14, who was with Paul in Rome, had gone by the time of writing of 2 Timothy. He forsook Paul. Perhaps he saw Paul's end approaching and thought only of himself and the present life—he "loved this present age"—and he went off to Thessalonica. He has left a black mark against his name in Holy Writ. Others went off in the Lord's work under the Spirit's guidance, Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia, and Tychicus went to Ephesus, perhaps to relieve Timothy whom Paul wished to come to Rome. Mark was to be brought with Timothy. He is mentioned in Colossians 4. 10, 11 as being among Paul's fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God. Though he was restored from his act of departing from the Lord's work earlier, he must have looked back on that episode in his life with considerable heart-burning; it was the cause of the cleavage between such great men as Paul and Barnabas. How careful the servants of the Lord need to be that their acts do not make wounds, which, though they may be healed, may for ever leave their mark. Let us each humble ourselves and learn. The brief facts, as given here, afford us an insight into the movements of the Lord's servants of those days. Paul touchingly says, "Only Luke is with me," his faithful medical attendant, the beloved physician (Colossians 4. 14). Paul who healed others did not heal himself.

J. M.
"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).

EDITORIAL

This month we look into the varied experiences of liberated Israel on the journey through Marah and Elim and into the wilderness of Sin, and several profitable lessons have been gathered therefrom by our contributors. The bitter waters of Marah, the restful pleasantness of Elim, the murmuring and the manna all received much prominence in almost every paper sent to us, and it was encouraging to observe the marked agreement in the teaching derived from them.

The general argument of Exodus 16, Numbers 11. 4-10, 31-35, Psalm 78. 23-35, 106. 13-15, would suggest that the manna of itself would have been sufficient for the sustenance of the people, but the quails were added on account of their murmuring. The description of the manna would suggest a simple food, pure, wholesome, sustaining and adequate. But Israel lusted after the stronger-tasting foods of Egypt. Is this not a matter in which many children of God stumble today? Not satisfied with the simple and pure doctrine of the Lord, they are led aside by the pageantry and showiness of the services of certain religious sects, and give their ears to pleasing but vain sophistries foreign to the Scriptures of truth. From this it is an easy way back to downright worldliness and a wasted life so far as serving God is concerned. We must ever be on our guard that we are not in any way seeking our sustenance and satisfaction in things contrary to the will of God. God's present-day people, led out and gathered together, with their minds full of gratitude for their deliverance and their hearts set on the coming again of the Lord Jesus, should find full and complete satisfaction in the Lord and in the pure word of doctrine and the simple practices set forth in the Scriptures. Assiduous study of the word of God and strict obedience to the teachings God is pleased to reveal should be characteristic of the present-day Israel of God, for the Scriptures are the only authoritative source of true doctrine.

Through Moses God led Israel out of Egypt, not that they should perish in the wilderness, but that He might bring them into the land He had promised aforetime. This God did through Joshua. Above all, God brought them out that He might bring them unto Himself (19. 4), and it would be Aaron's work to stand before God on behalf of a worshipping people. The murmurers in Israel would appear to have lost sight of the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey, and to have failed to appreciate their standing before the LORD. They murmured against Moses and against Aaron (16. 2). Murmuring among the Lord's people may hinder the work of leaders, whose work compares with that of Moses, and it may also have an adverse effect on enjoyment of priestly privileges. Murmuring brings discord where praise should be.

"Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good" (Psalm 106. 1).

J. B.
NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

I am the Alpha and the Omega. These are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. If we place the letters of the alphabet in a circle and place A over Z, then whichever way we move round the circle we come to A and Z. So that if we go backward in thought over the ages then God is there, and forward, God is there also. David the psalmist said, "Thou hast beset me behind and before" (Psalm 139. 5). "In Him we live, and move, and have our being," said Paul (Acts 17. 28). Happy are those who can say with Moses that "The eternal God is thy dwelling place" (Deuteronomy 33. 27; Psalm 90. 1). The One who is the Alpha and the Omega is the eternal Jehovah, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. What is true of the eternal Father, is true of the eternal Son, and of the eternal Spirit. The Son also says in Revelation 22. 13, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

I John, your brother. This describes the abiding relationship of all who are born again, they have all one Father. John was also their companion, fellow or fellow-partaker. Whilst all born-again persons are brethren, not all such are companions or fellow-partakers in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus. Those in Christ, new creatures or a new creation in Him, are united to Christ their Head by ties of life and love which never can be severed, but in Jesus shows saints on earth in a scene of tribulation, trial and temptation, for the kingdom of God in such a scene ever involves suffering (2 Thessalonians 1. 5, 6). Truth, we are told, is in Jesus (Ephesians 4. 21), the blessed One who is the Truth and who taught it during the days of His earthly sojourn and also suffered for it (John 18. 37, 38). John was knowing that tribulation which comes through obedience to the truth, for he was in the Isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He adhered to what God's word said and to what Jesus testified. He was in God's kingdom, though for the time being he could not meet with God's gathered saints. The kingdom of God, that favoured position which Israel occupied as His people under His rule, was taken from them upon their rejection of the Lord and given to another nation, as we learn from Matthew 21. 43, which should bring forth the fruits thereof. That nation was the little flock of Luke 12. 31, 32, to which the Lord said, "Howbeit seek ye His kingdom," (the kingdom of God, A. V.; R. V. margin) "and these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Of the kingdom of God Paul reasoned and persuaded in the synagogue in Ephesus, but because of Jewish opposition Paul had to separate the disciples from the synagogue (Acts 19. 8, 9). Paul says again in Acts 14. 22 that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. The kingdom of Revelation 1. 9 is the same as that of verse 6, "He made us to be a kingdom." As in Acts 14. 22 and 2 Thessalonians 1. 5, tribulation and suffering are connected with the kingdom of God which those are called upon to endure who are subject to the Lord's authority. Thus in Jesus shows saints on earth in the place of suffering in obedience to the authority of Christ, whereas in Christ applies to saints of this dispensation, who, by baptism in the Spirit, are members of His Body (1 Corinthians 12. 13), and in God is true of all men, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17. 28).

John, according to tradition, had been banished to the rocky Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. Why he was there he states was because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
I was (became) in the Spirit on the Lord's day. " In the Spirit, " according to Romans 8. 9, is true of all believers in Christ; " Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. " " In the flesh " describes that naturally sinful, immoral state in which all unbelievers are; but at the time of regeneration believers are delivered from being in the flesh to being in the Spirit, when the Spirit of God enters into them, making their body His temple (1 Corinthians 6. 19).

"In the Spirit, "in the Revelation, was that ecstatic state into which John entered (became), something he was not in before (on the Lord's day). It was not in spirit, denoting merely a condition of mind, nor was it in his own spirit, but " in the Spirit, " that is, the Holy Spirit, to whom his whole being was tuned and in harmony; he was alive to spiritual realities of which men contiguous to him were entirely unaware. Paul's experience as he lay on the ground, stoned, outside the city of Lystra (Acts 14. 19), at which time it is thought he was caught up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words, as he tells us in 2 Corinthians 12. 1-4, seems to be a somewhat similar experience to John's. Peter's experience in Acts 10 seems to be similar also. Daniel too, in Daniel 10, tells us of his experience when he was brought into contact with intense spiritual realities. In Daniel 8. 27 we are told of the physical effects of Daniel's experience in receiving divine revelations: "I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days."

The day on which John became " in the Spirit " was the Lord's day. The word rendered " Lord's" here is only twice used in the New Testament. This word in the Greek is an adjective, not a possessive noun. It is used here to describe the day, and in 1 Corinthians 11. 20 to describe the supper; the day and the supper are linked together, the latter is proper to the day. The word " Lordly " has been used to give the meaning of the Greek adjective. " The Lord's day " is not " the day of the Lord, " which is referred to frequently in both the Old and New Testaments and is of more than a thousand years in extent (2 Peter 3. 10); it commences with the Lord's coming as Son of Man and continues till the judgement of the Great White Throne.

I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet: This trumpet-like voice commanded John to write what he heard in a book and to send it to the seven churches. There was but one book for all the seven churches, but in chapters 2 and 3 there was a special message which was given by the Spirit to each from the Lord who walked in their midst. Whilst it was the Lord who spoke to the churches, it was equally true that the Spirit spoke, as we read, " He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches " (Revelation 2. 7).

The seven churches in the province of Asia are specifically mentioned as located in seven well known cities at the time of the writing of this book. Some have embarked on a system of exposition based on the interpretations of the meaning of the names of these cities which were given to them by pagans, names which have no spiritual significance whatever. Again, what is said in certain of the messages to the churches is spiritualized, as, for instance, Jezebel of chapter 2. 20 is made to mean the church of Rome, whereas, quite evidently, she was a woman in Thyatira, who taught the same doctrine as certain in Pergamum held, even the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.
May we mention what has been written by certain expositors? In dealing with the name Philadelphia it is said, "Philadelphia signifies brotherly love;" and brotherly love is one of the special features of the acting of the Spirit of God as formative of the Philadelphian church. Smith's Bible Dictionary (Book 2, page 830) says this about Philadelphia: "A town on the confines of Lydia and Phrygia Cataceumine, built by Attalus II, king of Pergamus, " it is " still represented by a town called Allahshehr (city of God). " Philadelphia received its name from its founder Attalus Philadelphus, and what king Philadelphus, who lived before any apostle came to Asia with the message of divine love, had to do with Christian brotherly love leaves one in bewilderment. This method of interpreting the word of God is simply grasping at shadows and losing the literal, plain and evident meaning of the Scriptures.

Think also of the exposition based on the meaning of Laodicea: — " Laodicea probably means righteous people. " The seventh and last church corresponds with the seventh parable in Matthew 13—the parable of the net. There are two things which characterize the last stage of the Church's history—outwardly, increasing activity in Gospel work; inwardly, self-righteous, spiritual pride, and lukewarmness as to the truth and authority of Christ. " Righteous people" by a strange juggling with words becomes " self-righteous people. " and, stranger still, the name Laodicea has some connexion with an implied spiritual significance with " the last stage of the Church's history. " But what church can this be ? Is it Christendom, that Babel of confusion which with lip service acknowledges Christ, but does no more? or is it the Church which is Christ's Body ? It cannot be the latter, for the sins of self-righteousness and spiritual pride can never enter there, for that Church will be presented by Christ to Himself "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing " (Ephesians 5. 27). We are left to guess what church was before the writer's mind, and what is meant by the church's history. It is this loose method of using the word " church " that has led to the hopeless confusion that exists in regard to church truth.

How did the city of Laodicea get its name? The answer is, it " derived its name from Laodice, the wife of Antiochus II, king of Syria. " Here again the name comes from pagans who had no connexion whatever with " the last stage of the Church's history. " Then as to the Laodicean church answering to the parable of the net, in Matthew 13, it has no similarity to that parable whatever, other than that they are the seventh in order in each case.

Let us adhere to and state unequivocally the fact that the book of the Revelation was sent by John to the seven churches which were in Asia at the time that John wrote the book, and were located in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, and so forth, cities which were well known in the world then. The book was not written to and sent to seven stages, epochs or developments of what expositors have been pleased to call " the church, " a use of the word " church " which is nowhere found in the New Testament. Christendom is no church at all. If God's children would be right as to church truth let them study the uses of the word church in the New Testament, and they will find that there are no such ideas there, such as that the church is composed of people who make a nominal profession of Christianity, or that the church is composed of all believers on earth at any one time, or that because they are not together therefore the church is in ruins. If believers would be right they require to see the clear distinction between the Church which is Christ's Body, which includes
all believers from Pentecost until the coming of the Lord for that Church, and the church of God which is ever a local gathering of God's separated saints, such as were the seven churches in Asia.

The book of the Revelation is first of all a book which contains messages to the seven churches concerning their state at that time. But like all Scripture, which was written to people who lived when the books were written, it contains a message for all time. The principle on which the Scriptures were given is laid down by Paul in Romans 4. 23, 24: " Now it was not written for his sake alone..., but for our sake also. "

And I turned to see the voice which spake with me: As was natural John turned in the direction whence the voice came, and what met his gaze were seven golden lampstands, not candlesticks. There was one lampstand in the tabernacle and ten in the temple. The lampstand had six branches and a central stem, on these were set seven lamps. These with the lampstand and the vessels thereof were made of a talent of pure gold. The lamps were dressed and filled in the morning at the time of the morning sacrifice and of the offering of the incense on the golden altar, at the hour of prayer. They were lit at the time of the evening sacrifice. " Candlestick " for " lampstand, " " bishop " for " overseer, " and " baptism " for " dipping, " are some of the defects in translation in our English Bibles. Gold lamps signify children of God, such as are born again. Alas, many who are children of God, who strenuously uphold the need for the new birth, are not so careful about seeing that they are set on a gold stand (gold speaking of that which is divine and of divine glory); a silver, brass or wooden stand serves well enough for them. But children of God should not be satisfied with anything less than being in a church of God. Gold speaks of the divine character of each of the seven churches. Children of God and churches of God—" of God " shows their divine origin and character. In the New Testament children of God are not contemplated as being in anything else than a church of God, but alas, the devil has scattered the children of God in almost all the sects of Christendom. Though the seven churches were equal in preciousness as to their position, they were very diverse as to their condition. Condition may vary greatly in different churches and in the saints therein, but position admits of no variation, the position is either divine or it is not. A church is either a golden lampstand or it is not. The seven lampstands were the seven churches of God in Asia.

In the midst of the lampstands One like unto a son of man: The Lord appeared to John like a son of man. In Philippians 2. 7 we are told that He was " made in the likeness of men. " He was clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. As the high priest of old was to judge God's house and to keep His courts (Zechariah 3. 7), even so the Lord in the midst of the seven churches, in Revelation 1-3, is viewed as judging God's house, as seen in the seven churches. All judgement has been given by the Father to the Son, because He is Son of Man, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father (John 5. 22, 23). In due time He will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17. 31; Matthew 25. 31-46), but judgement begins at the house of God, " at us " who are described as a spiritual house (1 Peter 2. 5; 4. 17).

It is not His loins, the seat of strength, that are girt with a golden girdle, but His breasts, the place of affection. Of old the breastplate of judgement was upon the breast of the high priest; he bore the names of the children of Israel upon his heart continually. The Lord's judgement
of His own is ever tempered by love. His head and His hair were as white wool, white as snow. Such was the appearance of the Ancient of Days to Daniel (Daniel 7. 9). This bespeaks infinite purity and holiness. The mind of Christ is infinitely pure and holy as is the mind of God. The thought of sin never enters the mind of Deity. His eyes were as a flame of fire. In the Lord's case, unlike that of men, it is not light from without that enters and illuminates Him; He sees by light from within. He is Himself Light (John 1. 4). He is the Light of the world (John 8. 12). From His eyes proceed rays of divine fire piercing and entering into the recesses of the heart, and all the processes of human thought, hidden from human sight, are naked before Him. Paul describes such divine sight in the words, "There is no creature (angelic or human, fallen or unfallen) that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4. 13). His feet were like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace. Brass speaks of judgement, and righteousness is intimately associated with this. Whilst on earth the Lord walked in the paths of judgement (Proverbs 2. 8), and in the paths of uprightness (verse 13), and in the paths of righteousness (Psalm 23. 3). He loved righteousness, and hated iniquity (Psalm 45. 7; Hebrews 1. 9). His feet were beautiful upon the mountains (Isaiah 52. 7). There was no defilement in His walk on earth. Now as Judge His feet are as refined brass. Who has the right to judge but One who is Himself perfectly just? In matters of judgement Paul exhorted Timothy, "Keep thyself pure. " A judge who judges others but practises the same things will not escape the judgement of God (Romans 2. 1-3). His voice was as the voice of many waters. Such was the sound of the voice of the Almighty, in Ezekiel 1. 24, and the voice of the God of Israel, in Ezekiel 43. 2. Such a voice keeps the ear listening and is indicative of the infinite mind and depth of thought which lie behind such a voice. David, in Psalm 29. 3, 4, describes the voice of the LORD thus:—

"The voice of the LORD is upon the waters:
The God of glory thundereth,
Even the LORD upon many waters.
The voice of the LORD is powerful;
The voice of the LORD is full of majesty."

J. M.

"THINGS WRITTEN AFORETIME"

"For our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10. 11).
"For our learning" (Romans 15. 4).

The immense value of things written aforetime should be recognised as we ponder the above statements. The Holy Spirit has left us in no doubt whatever that the Old Testament has a message of vital importance to each one of us. We desire briefly to look a little into the "why" and "wherefore" of the things written aforetime.

For our admonition

Admonition (Gk. Nouthesia) means a putting into the mind. The context of 1 Corinthians 10 outlines Israel's sad failures, and these are recounted by way of example. The apostle would, in effect, point to their failure, so that we might learn not to fall after "the same example of disobedience"
(Hebrews 4. 11). The day of Christ may reveal that many a one has been saved from spiritual wreck by having been "put in mind" by the failure of another. To rejoice in, or gloat over, others' failures is utterly reprehensible. Rather should we take note of the exceedingly solemn watchword, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10. 12).

For our learning

Learning (Gk. Didaskalia) means teaching, instruction.

Here we are taken to the Person of the Lord. "Christ also pleased not Himself." Pre-eminently in the Old Testament Scriptures we should seek to trace Christ, His Person, work and worth. As we are admonished by the failure of Israel, so we learn by perfection in Christ. Perfection in Him teaches us by the highest example. Admonished not to follow Israel's dark path, we are taught and instructed to follow the wondrous pattern in Christ. He said, "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11. 29).

"As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted, and builded up in Him, and stablished in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (Colossians 2. 6, 7).

G. A. Jones.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

TO HOREB (1), MARAH, ELIM, THE WILDERNESS OF SIN, THE MANNA

(Exodus 15. 22—16. 36)

From Kingston-on-Thames. —The children of Israel began their new life well; they sang praises to God for His deliverance, but as soon as difficulties arose they rebelled against their God-given leader. Moses rightly said, "Your murmurings are not against us, but against the LÖRD" (16. 8). It is a serious thing to harbour a rebellious spirit against overseers. The apostle Paul told the elders of Ephesus that they had been made overseers by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20. 28), so that we need to take care that we are not found speaking against God.

Whilst in Egypt, the Israelites sighed by reason of their bondage. They thirsted for freedom, and when in the mercy of God they left their cruel taskmasters behind, the infertile surroundings of their wilderness pilgrimage caused them to crave for bodily sustenance. Since their hunger and thirst were due to the natural requirements of the body, it was right and proper that they should seek to satisfy them; but they failed to ask God to supply their need and, forgetting the rigours of their former captive existence, they longed for the flesh pots of Egypt. In like manner we have been released from the bondage of sin, but we still experience a legitimate need for inward satisfaction. God forbid that we should look for this in the short-lived and shallow delights of worldly things. How much more lasting and deeply satisfying are the delights that are to be found in Christ!
At the bitter waters of Marah Moses cried unto the LORD, and he was shown a tree which, when cast in, made them sweet. This speaks of the cross of Christ [1]. Let us cry unto the Lord that He may show us Christ in all the Scriptures: then we shall never long to drink of any other waters. Thoughts of Christ and of His sufferings can transform the bitterest experiences of the Christian pathway into joy and blessing.

Exodus 15. 26 shows that there is also an obligation, neglected by many Christians today, to hearken to the voice of the Lord our God, to give ear to His commandments and to keep His statutes. The Lord is ever gracious and, if we are willing to be led by Him, we can experience the delights of Elim following times of trial.

The manna was called "angels' food," the "bread of the mighty." It was sufficient for the complete sustenance of the body, but the Israelites longed for flesh, so God gave them what they lusted after. He sent the quails and even while the flesh was still between their teeth they were smitten with a plague. We read in Psalm 106. 15 that "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." Their experience should warn us to be careful what we pray for. If we ask for material benefits, God may grant them, but the cost to our spiritual lives might be great. Riches may cause us to forget God. Much better it is to seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God (Colossians 3. 1).

From Crowborough. —"Marah" means "bitterness." Israel were in a sad plight, having been three days in the wilderness and having found no water (15. 22). But God had the remedy at hand, and soon the bitter waters were made sweet. God was proving His people, and here revealed Himself to them in the words, "I am the LORD that healeth thee."

Elim, with its water and shady palm trees, must have proved refreshing. Alas, Israel soon forgot Elim, and in the wilderness of Sin we find them once again murmuring. God was pleased to manifest His glory in the cloud. What a wonderful sight!

Bread from heaven was provided by God for His people. This continued every day (with the exception of the seventh day of the week) for forty years. Every morning it fell with the dew; this small and round thing. It would seem that it could be cooked in some way before being eaten (Numbers 11. 7, 8). A pot with an omerful of manna was laid up before the Testimony: it spoke to future generations of the faithfulness of God. It was felt that, like God's ancient people, we are going through a barren wilderness. We feed by faith upon the Lord Jesus in the Scriptures. He is the true Bread that came down from heaven (John 6. 31-40). We need to gather from the word of God our spiritual food, morning by morning. Meditation upon our daily portion is vital, if we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus. May we be satisfied with God's provision for us, and not lust after the onions, leeks, cucumbers, and other food so easily to be found in Egypt, figuratively speaking.

From Hamilton (Ont.). —Israel began their journey with the song of redemption upon their lips. After three days in the wilderness they murmured against Moses. "They sang His praise. They soon forgot His works" (Psalm 106. 12, 13). We were reminded of the apostle's words to the Galatians: "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from
Him that called you" (Galatians 1. 6). It was suggested that murmuring was one of the national sins of Israel, even until the time of Christ. Human nature is seen in their lack of faith and of dependence upon God; the memory of Egypt was still in their hearts. In contrast, Moses and Aaron were humble men, and pleaded their cause before the LOUD. God's purpose in bringing Israel to Marah was to prove them; such trials and difficulties on their journey were only to reveal to them God's leading hand and his boundless grace.

Marah must precede Elim, as suffering must precede glory (Romans 8. 18). We thought the bitter waters were but a picture of Israel's own condition of soul. They themselves needed healing, as is suggested in the title by which God revealed Himself to them: "I am the LORD that healeth thee." The "I AM" is still His people's healer. Solomon wrote: "The healing of the tongue is a tree of life" (Proverbs 15. 4, Margin). There is a permanent cure for all sin and murmurings in the cross of Christ. He knew the bitterness of sinking in the deep waters of judgement, so that the sweet waters of salvation might be ours (John 4. 14). There is no need for God's people to ask, "What shall we drink?" for David said, "They shall be watered with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures" (Psalm 36. 8, Margin).

We, too, are pilgrims and strangers in this wilderness of sin, and oftentimes God may prove His people. Through Israel's failure at the outset, the lesson we may learn is that God is our sufficiency" (2 Corinthians 3. 5), and, as the apostle again states, "My God shall fulfil every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4. 19). It is through many tribulations that God's people in this day must enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14. 22). His desire is that the proof of our faith, "being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1. 7). T. Ramage, W. Beck.

From Toronto (Ont.). —The miracle of the giving of the manna proved an engaging study. The reason for the manna being sent is emphasized in both Exodus 16 and Deuteronomy 8. He suffered them to hunger and fed them with manna which they knew not, that He might humble them and He might prove them to the end that He might do them good in their latter end. Thus God prepared a table for His people, and rained manna from heaven. Man did eat the bread of the mighty; it was a wilderness bread, peculiar to the time of their sojournings, and ceased only when Israel ate of the corn of Canaan.

The manna came with the dew. It would appear from the reading of Numbers 11. 9 that the manna lighted on the dew, "the manna came down upon it" (LXX). Thus the food from heaven, though on earth, was not actually in touch with the ground. The manna was a God-sent provision.

As to its appearance, we read it was a small round thing, small as hoar-frost, like coriander seed, and in appearance as bdellium, which is classified as a mineral. The marginal reading suggests the "eye" of it. Bdellium has the appearance of rock crystal, suggesting a translucency. Also in Eden it is classified with the other precious metals. Thus bdellium would speak, not only of transparency or purity, but also as to its Antitype, of exceeding preciousness.
Israel called it "Manna"—"What is it?" Its taste is described as of wafers made with honey. Later it is described as tasting of cakes baked with oil (R. V. M.). What effected this vast difference? Was it their attitude of mind towards the manna [2]? They said, "We have nought save this manna to look to," or "our eyes turn to nothing but to the manna" (LXX), and also, "our soul loatheth this light bread" (Numbers 21. 5).

The manna in its smallness spoke of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, its colour of His purity, and in its taste we are reminded of the words of the psalmist, who said, "Oh taste and see that the LORD is good" (Psalm 34. 8), and also of the words of one describing her beloved, "His mouth is most sweet: yea, He is altogether lovely" (Song of Songs 5. 16).

All types of the Lord Jesus Christ are incomplete. The manna, we read, because of disobedience on the part of some of the Israelites bred worms and stank. But in Him was no corruption, either in life or in death, for in life He did no sin neither was deceit found in His mouth. In death, His precious body saw no corruption (Acts 2. 31).

The manna sustained life in the wilderness, but it sustained life already given. Thus we read in John 6. 49, "Your fathers did eat the manna in the wilderness, and they died." Of Himself He could say, "I am the living Bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." —Norman Kernaghan.

**EXTRACTS**

From Brantford. —Israel's first difficulty after the Red Sea was lack of water, and when they found water it was bitter. On the Christian pathway there are many bitter waters. It is not God's desire that they should make us bitter, but should cast us on our heavenly Father, who desires to prove our trust in Him. Peter exhorted the saints that they should not consider trial strange, but remember that these things come upon us to prove us. He then points out how light are our sufferings compared with the sufferings of Christ. Oftentimes in bitter experiences we are drawn closer to the Lord, and it proved so in this experience of Israel.

With refreshed hearts they moved on again; and a month after leaving Egypt, as they journeyed in the wilderness of Sin, they began to be concerned as to food for themselves and their little ones. Their memory was too short to remember God's provision at Marah; their thoughts went back to Egypt. They forgot the taskmasters and the whip, and remembered only the flesh pots. How prone we are to recall the pleasures of sin and forget the slavish chains of Satan! Perhaps it was as a rebuke for their thinking of the flesh pots of Egypt that God miraculously brought up the quails to feed them with flesh.

God has made wonderful provision to sustain us all our desert journey through. The written word and the Living Word are to be our spiritual food day by day, until we reach the promised land. Sad it is if any should fail to enjoy the sweetness and refreshment that come from reading the word of God, which glorifies the Bread of God which came down out of heaven.

—G. Thompson, J. C. Bell.
From Southport. — Not many days after they had sung to the LORD their thanks and praise for delivering them from the Egyptians, the children of Israel came to Marah and there found bitter water; and, forgetting all about their salvation from Egypt, they murmured about their trial. How like children of God today! — one day giving thanks to God and praising Him, the next complaining. Paul tells us that he learned, " in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content " (Philippians 4. 11). This should be true of us too.

We note that, though the murmuring of the children of Israel at Marah is recorded, there is no record to tell us that they were thankful at Elim — again a picture of ourselves, so often complaining and so infrequently giving thanks.

They had not long left Elim when they were again complaining. Do we too sometimes look back to the " flesh pots of Egypt, " the things we once enjoyed but now have left for Christ? No wonder we speak of God as One " gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy" (Psalm 103. 8)! Trial is not taken away from us, but He " will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it " (1 Corinthians 10. 13).

N. B.

From Edinburgh. — Soon after Israel left Elim their murmuring started again, this time in the wilderness of Sin. The cause was hunger. Perhaps it is significant that the first occasions of murmuring were caused by thirst and hunger, showing how physical needs can so easily divert the entire reasoning and weaken faith in God. Paul knew what hunger meant; he learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry: the secret was, " I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me " (Philippians 4. 12, 13).

Manna invites comparison with the word of God and with Christ Himself, on both of which the disciple must feed if he is to live. The Lord Jesus Christ emphasized this in His words to His disciples when He described Himself as the Bread of Life and made reference to the manna (John 6). Also the feelings of Israel at Sin must have been well known to Him when answering Satan (Matthew 4. 4), for He quoted from Deuteronomy 8. 3, in which it is clearly stated that the people were hungry and the manna given that they might know that man lives not only by bread, but, if his life is to be of any value, by every thing which proceeds from the mouth of God.

A. C. B.

From Wigan. — The bitterness of Marah's waters and the subsequent God-given remedy serve to provide us with another of those things " which bear witness of Me " (John 5. 39). The setting is that of a redeemed and baptized people in the first stages of the wilderness journey. The efficacious work of Christ upon the cross not only avails for salvation, but in resurrection He ever liveth to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7. 25). The people of God today, in seeking to walk in the way of the Lord, will in turn know something of His healing power, the refreshing draughts of living water and the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity in the heat of the day under the sheltering palm of His grace (15. 26, 27).

It is evident from Deuteronomy 8. 3 that the prime purpose in the giving of the manna was not apprehended by Israel nor by their descendants (John 6. 31-58). The natural was given first to illustrate the spiritual (1 Corinthians 15. 46). The manna was God's provision; it sustained life but could not give it. It foreshadowed the Bread of Life
which came down out of heaven, which if a man eat thereof he shall never die. He, by the word of His power, creates our ruined souls anew, and makes us heirs of heaven (1 Corinthians 15. 45). "Belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10. 17); and again, "Hear, and your soul shall live" (Isaiah 55. 3). The dew invariably speaks of blessing; the manna came with the dew (Numbers 11. 9).

J. Sherratt, H. Caldwell.

From Cowdenbeath. —God had a purpose in bringing Israel to Marah. They knew the diseases of Egypt (Deuteronomy 7. 15) and were afraid of them (Deuteronomy 28. 60), but when they went forth there was not one feeble person among His tribes (Psalm 105. 37). In His providential care over them God had kept them immune from those dread diseases, but now at Marah He made for them a statute and an ordinance which promised them immunity consequent upon their obedience. The sweetening of the waters demonstrated God's power to heal His people. Marah shows that God can make sweet with His own presence the bitter experience. The tree would, doubtless, speak to us of Christ. The bitter experiences of life were made sweet for the apostle Paul, because Christ was in them with him (2 Corinthians 12. 9, 10).

The daily provision of the manna to feed a nation of perhaps about two million people is a most remarkable miracle. The manna was bread from heaven (16. 4) and speaks of our Lord who is the Bread of God which cometh down out of heaven (John 6. 33). When the manna came it was not seen to fall. It fell with the dew in the night (Numbers 11. 9). In the morning it was seen to be there. As they looked upon it they wondered. It needed Moses to tell them what it was. This speaks to us of the coming of the Lord. Jesus into the world, and of how, when He was here, men questioned as to who He was (John 6. 42) and of how His true identity can be known only by divine revelation (Matthew 16. 17). The manna is described as a small round thing, thus speaking both of the lowly humanity and the eternity of the One who came. It was like coriander seed. The word "coriander" comes from a root meaning "to cut" (Dr. Strong) and is so named because of its furrows. This seems suggestive of the thought that He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53. 3). Its whiteness bespeaks His purity, and its delightful taste His superlative sweetness, which all may know who partake of Him.

The manna was given to sustain life which was already there, but Christ came to give life (John 6. 33). Whoso eats of Him as the Bread of Life will live forever (John 6. 51), but we are invited to continue to eat in order that we may abide in Him and He in us (John 6. 56).

J. Bowman.

From Vancouver. —Elim suggests a foretaste of that which Israel was to enjoy in Canaan, an oasis to refresh them and give them courage for their journey onward to Canaan, which journey took them by way of the wilderness of Sin and Sinai (16. 1). It hushed the murmurings of Marah, and we suggest that today the spiritual parallel to Elim lies in ministry. From the Gospels we draw the thought that the numbers twelve and seventy who were sent forth by the Lord indicate ministry. Happy are they who give heed to ministry of the word of God which draws them nearer in spirit to their blessed Lord.

In chapter 16. 4 we note "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you . . . that I may prove them." By their later despising of the manna from heaven Israel showed that their hearts were not removed from Egypt, and this condition of heart was to result generations later in the judgement
of captivity in Babylon. It indicated a carnal mind, a worldly heart, which was not disposed to being weaned from this present evil world, of which Egypt is a type.

The dependence of Israel upon this manna for their physical sustenance presents a simple and readily understood illustration of the Christian's need to feed regularly upon Christ, who said, "I am the living Bread which came down out of heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever" (John 6. 51). Failing to feed upon Christ is as much spiritual suicide as it would have been physical suicide had Israel failed to eat the manna. It was suggested that the gathering of the manna in the morning is a voice to the Christian to rise early, that he may commence the day right by feeding upon Christ.

From Glasgow. —Israel's attitude in bondage was indeed good (4. 31), but having been freed (15, 16) how much more ought they to have looked unto the LORD to meet their need! There is a way of asking: ask in faith, nothing doubting. God truly is very near. On their journey from Elim to the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron. They were suffering hunger. Whatever were the thoughts of Moses and Aaron at this time, we know not; but God spoke unto Moses and said, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." What met their eyes in the morning made them ask in wonderment, "What is it?" Moses said, "It is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat." Instructions were given as to the gathering. Nothing was to be left over until the morning. On the sixth day double had to be gathered, the extra being for the seventh day, as there would be no manna on the ground on that day. Some disobeyed in the daily gathering, and what was left over bred worms and stank; but of that which was gathered on the sixth day whatever was over did not stink. Some even went out on the seventh day. Need we wonder at the words of Jehovah, "How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?"

Mark G. McKaig.

From Birkenhead. —It is permissible to use Israel's wilderness journey as a type of our pilgrimage through this world to our heavenly inheritance. This seems to be the view adopted in 1 Peter 1. 3-5; and it is widely and properly employed in our hymns. In another sense, of course, God's together people may be viewed as already "in the land." The flexibility of Biblical typology should be carefully noted by the thoughtful student of the Old Testament.

Elim, with its palms and springs of water, was a brief foretaste of the joys to come. Frequently young believers, at the outset of their spiritual pilgrimage, rest in supreme content in the oasis of an Elim experience, unaware of the rigours and hardships that lie ahead. But they must move on from Elim. The time for final rest is not yet. Beyond is a wilderness to be encountered. As with Israel so with us.

T. M. H.

From Middlesbrough. —Some prominence is given to the leadership of Moses in the opening verse of our study portion. Moses had been sent by God to accomplish the task of leading Israel out from bondage to a glorious freedom (3. 10), in the enjoyment of which freedom they could serve the LORD without hindrance. In their baptism Israel were identified with their leader Moses, and continued subjection to his leadership could only result in blessing. Moses had before his mind Horeb, the mountain of God. His faith was resting on a promise from God, made in the
Salvation and baptism must precede service. Do we not perceive in the experience of Israel a pattern for the believer today? In submitting to be baptized the believer owns the authority of Christ and identifies himself with the Lord as his Leader. True subjection to the Lord's leading will cause the believer exercise with regard to the truth of the Lord's words uttered on the mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28. 16-20). Here again the order is the same. Salvation and baptism must precede service.

Robert Ross.

From* Nottingham. —At Elim, having tasted the bitterness of the waters of Marah, Israel were brought to rest. This may give a miniature of Israel's history. Today they are experiencing bitterness through departure from God, but He will lead them in the millennium to the water springs that are in Christ.

God provided Israel with the manna, which must have been highly nutritious to permit of its sole use, together with the quails, for the wilderness journey. In our experience, Satan offers an attractive variety to keep us in bondage, but God in His Son, the Bread of Life (John 6. 31-35), provides all necessities for our pilgrim journey.

The manna was small, and a certain amount of work was necessary in its collection. Labour may be entailed in our daily gleaning, but the results are rewarding.

What preserved the manna for the sabbath day, and also that found in the Ark of the Covenant? It is interesting to note this association between the manna and the sabbath, for there is no record of the sabbath or the rest connected with it during the days of the Patriarchs or in Israel's time in Egypt. Sin which had not been dealt with had broken the rest of the sabbath. The manna is a type of Christ, and when He came He did the work necessary to restore the sabbath rest.

R. D. Williams, D. Berrisford.

COMMENTS

[1] (Kingston). —It might be better put, that the tree, which was cut down and cast into the bitter waters of Marah, speaks of the Lord, who was cast into the bitter waters of death for us.

All deliverances and changes from natural bitterness to miraculous sweetness come from the Lord; hence He is set forth as a tree which grew in the wilderness, indicative of Him who grew up before God as a shoot or sucker—the Man Christ Jesus. —J. M.

[2] (Toronto). —It may be that as it came from God the manna was like wafers made with honey, but when baked or seethed (boiled) it had the taste of fresh oil. They were given instructions to bake or seethe it (Exodus 16. 23), which they did (Numbers 11. 8). God did not keep the people always eating food of the taste of honey. There is a great difference between the taste of honey and fresh oil, so that in the manna there was variety to suit the tastes of the people. —J. M.

The reference to the taste of fresh oil (Numbers 11. 8) does not appear to be a derogatory description of the manna. The oil would indicate high nutritive value. Oil was much used in cooking among the Israelites. The description of the taste as "like wafers made with honey" (Exodus 16. 31) would show that manna was very palatable. —J. B.
NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

CHAPTER 4

Verse 13: The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments.

Some who have argued against the inspiration of the Scriptures have inveighed against a statement about a cloke as being too insignificant a matter to be regarded as inspired. There are things of much lesser importance than that, which form part of the Holy Scriptures. This verse reminds one of the similarity to what is contained in a letter written by that noble martyr, William Tyndale, to whom the English speaking races owe a great debt. The letter was written, shortly before his martyrdom, from the castle of Vilvorde in Belgium.

"If I am to remain here during winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession, a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from the cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in the cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings; my overcoat is also worn out: my shirts are also worn out. He has a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thick cloth for putting on above: he also has warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also to have a candle in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit in the dark. But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with the study."

Paul’s request to Timothy is briefer regarding his cloke, books and parchments, but it is of the same nature as William Tyndale’s. It is easy enough for the comfortable infidel, who can toast his toes at the fire on a cold winter’s night and then retire to a warm and comfortable bed, to criticize men and their writings and the divine character of the Scriptures, men who suffered so much to bring untold blessing to untold multitudes. We can write over the memory of such men—"Of whom the world was not worthy." All honour, we say, to these illustrious, yet suffering, servants of God! They shall yet shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.

Verses 14, 15: Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works: of whom be thou ware also; for he greatly withstood our words.

Alexander is perhaps the same as in 1 Timothy 1. 20, and if so, he was still at his former evil work of opposition to the work of Paul, who says, "He did me much evil." He withstood the apostle exceedingly. We have also an Alexander, a Jew, mentioned in Acts 19. 33. Timothy was warned against Alexander. He will, like all else, be rewarded according to his works, possibly here, and certainly hereafter.

Verses 16, 17, 18: At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.
At Paul's first defence before a court (it cannot be dogmatically held that this was before Nero) all his friends deserted him, but, says he, "May it not be laid to their account," or reckoned to them. If forsaken by men, the Lord did not forsake His worthy servant, He stood by him and empowered him. What a comfort the Lord's presence must have been to Paul! Paul set forth his case before his judge or judges, that the gospel might be fully proclaimed and that all the Gentiles might hear. The news of what Paul said in his defence would stream out throughout the Empire. Paul said that he was delivered from the lion's mouth. Ancient writers understood the lion to be Nero. It is thought that Paul being a Roman citizen would be exempted from being thrown to literal lions. It may well be left, that what Paul means is that he was delivered at that time from a martyr's death. He was confident in the delivering power of the Lord Jesus from every evil work, who would also preserve him unto His heavenly kingdom. This was his consolation, and is that of us all. To the blessed Lord be glory unto the ages of the ages!

Verses 19, 20, 21, 22: Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus. Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus I left at Miletus sick. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus saluteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. The Lord be with thy spirit. Grace be with you.

Prisca and Aquila are better known to us than many saints who are now alive. How much Paul owed to them! (Romans 16. 3, 4). See reference to the house of Onesiphorus in chapter 1. 16. Erastus: an Erastus the treasurer of Corinth sent greetings to Rome (Romans 16. 23); these may be the same, or he may be the Erastus who went to Macedonia with Timothy (Acts 19. 22). We may know better about this in due time. Trophimus was an Ephesian (Acts 21. 29-36), whose presence with Paul in Jerusalem caused Jewish rioting. He is mentioned with Tychicus in Acts 20. 4, one of that party of great men who accompanied Paul from Macedonia to Asia, and who broke bread on the first day of the week with the church of God in Troas. Paul did not heal all sick people he came across, nor yet did he heal all the sick among the servants of Christ, if he healed any, for he left Trophimus at Miletus sick, and Timothy suffered often, yet Paul did not heal him. Nowhere else in the New Testament do we read of these Roman saints, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus and Claudia, who with all the brethren saluted Timothy. Timothy was to endeavour to reach Paul before the winter, bringing Paul's cloak, books and parchments, and accompanied by Mark.

Then Paul ends his epistle and his inspired letters, for this is his last, and, as seems fitting, is written to his beloved child, Timothy. He closes with—

"The Lord be with thy spirit. Grace be with you."
EDITORIAL

In this issue we continue our consideration of the things that happened to the children of Israel after their salvation from Egypt and before the giving of the law at Sinai. Exodus 18. 13-16 makes it abundantly clear that, even though the law had not yet been given, Israel was not a people without effective rule and government, for they looked to Moses to make known the will of God and to judge "between a man and his neighbour" (18. 16). Evidently there were at that time personal strifes and troubles in Israel, and these might have involved offences against a man's person or his possessions. Among God's chosen people of that day the devil was using such things to create internal troubles. Is it otherwise today? No, indeed; we must therefore be ever careful lest differences of opinion as to material or temporal things become so magnified that the life of an assembly might be endangered, for it is not always major differences of opinion on doctrinal matters that cause the most harmful strife.

As to Moses' method of judging, even though it might be adversely criticized on account of the overstrain on Moses himself, we must honour the man for the way in which he was definitely in a God-fearing and God-guided way keeping the people together. Thus, in that early day we have illustrated a worthy objective for every overseeing brother in the Fellowship, namely, that fearing God and loving His people he should keep them together. The maintenance of this God-pleasing unity without compromising the truth is one of the main burdens of the few men whose lot it is to lead the little flock of God of this present day. We may all help them in this by our prayers.

Mark well the fact that, whether under Moses as sole judge or under the system suggested by Jethro, causes arising within Israel were judged within Israel. This would seem to have been true even in Egypt (Exodus 2. 11-14), and after the giving of the law it would remain so. It is most definitely a principle of the Fellowship today, for the Spirit through the apostle Paul says, "Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbour, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?" (1 Corinthians 6. 1). It would be most reprehensible to afford to the world the slightest grounds for pointing the finger at any company or individual in the Fellowship, for in the will of God adequate provision has been made for judgement within the house of God.

"The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul:... The judgements of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19. 7, 9).

J. B.
NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

He had in His right hand seven stars. These, we are told, are the angels or messengers of the seven churches (verse 20). They are in En, in) His right hand (verse 16), but in (Epi, upon) His right hand (verse 20), as though He had opened His hand to show them to John. Out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword. When the Lord comes to earth in judgement He is called "the Word of God." In John 1 He is shown as the Word in three ways. (1) In verse 1 He is shown as the Word in the beginning in full fellowship with (Pros, towards) God. (2) In verse 2 He is seen as the Maker of all things, the One through whom all things became, that is, came into being. (3) In verse 14 it is said that the Word became flesh, that is, He was born of a woman to be the Kinsman-Redeemer. He appeared in grace so that men might of His fulness receive grace for grace. Then last of all He will appear as the Word of God in judgement. Then shall He speak unto men in His wrath (Psalm 2. 5). "Out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations" (Revelation 19. 15). "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11. 4; 2 Thessalonians 2. 8). How different it will be then from His lowly earthly life, when He moved about as the Man of sorrows and the One who was well acquainted with grief! He said, "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah 50. 6). Men may be as stars in His right hand, lights to be seen and to give light in this world's night, but the Lord's countenance was as the sun shining in its strength: before this light, intense, strong and beautiful, all other lights are as nothing, even as stars disappear in the light of the sun. Here indeed is the glory that excelleth.

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. This is the same One in whose bosom John lay at the last supper in the upper room, but how different He is now from then! As it was with John, so was it with Daniel, who, when he saw the vision by the river Tigris, said, "There remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength... then was I fallen into a deep sleep on my face, with my face toward the ground" (Daniel 10. 8, 9). If such was the effect on human flesh in John and Daniel, how true must be the words of the LORD to Moses!—"Thou canst not see My face: for man shall not see Me and live" (Exodus 33. 20). Here is One who dwells in light unapproachable; "whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Timothy 6. 16); who veils His glory in His Manhood so that men may bear the glory in His manifestation as the Divine Son. He laid His right hand upon John and told him not to fear, for He was the first and the last. Here is one of the many "fear nots" of Scripture, the first of which was spoken to Abram: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15. 1). The Lord said to John, "I am... the Living One; and I was (became) dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." 

Millions follow Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, and venerate popes many in number, but they are all dead. Jesus Christ is alive. Here is an infinitely important and vital difference. What can the dead do for either living or dead men? Nothing, absolutely nothing! Our case is most pitiable if Christ is not raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15. 19). The Lord became dead by an act of His own will; He laid down His life of
Himself, no one took it from Him (John 10. 17, 18). The living One has the keys of death and of Hades; He has complete control and authority over the dead in the realm of the unseen. ("Hades" is a Greek word composed of the negative A and Eido—I see, and means literally "what cannot be seen, the place of the unseen, where the sight of man cannot penetrate."

It is not the grave, the place of the interment of the body; that we can easily see. Hades is the invisible abode of the souls of the dead.) None of the saints of the Church which is Christ's Body go to Hades at death; when they are absent from the body they are at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5. 6-8); they are with Christ, which is very far better (Philippians 1. 23). Old Testament saints were delivered from it, from the place therein called Paradise, by the Lord (Luke 23. 43; Ephesians 4. 8-10; Hebrews 2. 14, 15). See also Psalm 16. 8-11, quoted by Peter in Acts 2. 27, where the Lord says that His soul would not be left in Hades (that is, He Himself, see verse 31, R. V.). Saints of both Old Testament and New Testament times who have died, are now in heaven.

Write therefore the things which thou sawest: Here we have a threefold division. (1) The things which John saw were the visions of the Lord, the lampstands and the stars. (2) "The things which are": these were the things which were existing in the seven churches, as revealed by the Lord to John, contained in chapters 2 and 3. (3) "The things which shall come to pass hereafter" are the things which will transpire after the Church which is Christ's Body is complete, and the Lord has come to the air for all in Christ, the living and the dead. Then churches of God will cease to exist; for though the Church which is Christ's Body is an eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ (Ephesians 3. 4-11), churches of God are local gatherings of God's gathered people, which may come into being or cease to exist, and they will certainly cease to exist when the Lord calls His saints away from this earth to meet Him in the air.

Much has been written which is spurious and thoroughly unscriptural as to this dispensation of grace being divided into seven periods, beginning with the Ephesian period and closing with the Laodicean. One expositor writes thus:—

"A special, but by no means exclusive, application of the first three chapters to the Asiatic assemblies named must be admitted. Thus, John greets 'the seven assemblies named which are in Asia' (verse 4); he has them equally in view in verse 11; while to each of the seven a special epistle is addressed (chapters 2 and 3). But while a primary application to the seven Asiatic assemblies is undoubted, it is equally clear that they are representatives of the whole Church, not only at any given moment, but also in the successive moral stages of her history."

Here we have three propositions placed before us by this writer: (1) the primary application to the seven churches in Asia existing at the time of the writing of the book of the Revelation; (2) that the seven churches in Asia are representatives of the whole Church at any moment in this dispensation of grace; and (3) that these churches represent seven successive moral stages in the history of the Church throughout its entire history, from Pentecost, I presume, until the Lord's coming.

We differ entirely from this writer, and others also who have repeated the same thing, as to there being any application other than the primary one. It would be foolishness to deny that the book of Revelation was written to the seven churches in Asia, two of which are referred to elsewhere in the New Testament (Ephesus and Laodicea). Then, by a strange
confusion of thought which we cannot accept, the writer alluded to gives two further interpretations in points (2) and (3), for if the seven churches show the Church (one Church) " at any given moment, " then they cannot show seven successive moral stages in the Church's history as well. For instance, if we are now in the Laodicean stage we cannot also be in the Ephesian stage. What is this Church which has a history to which this writer refers? The Church which is Christ's Body has no history whatever. This Church is comprised of all believers from Pentecost who have been baptized in the Spirit into the Body. Most of these are in heaven, and many of those members still on earth, even in the same town, are quite unknown to one another. It has been described by theologians as the invisible Church. What is the visible church which has a history? Where is this history? Where was this church prior to or at the time of John Huss of Bohemia and Martin Luther of Germany, or even after the Reformation? Is this the union of professing Christians, many of whom are not born again? It is this unscriptural use of the word church which has led to all the confusion as to church truth which exists among would-be instructors of the uninstructed, leading to such ideas as that the church is in ruins. There is no such idea in the New Testament Scriptures as that "the whole church" is composed of believers who are scattered in almost every sect in Christendom. As this is a most important line of truth, we plead with the reader to examine the use of the word church in the New Testament. These first three chapters of the Revelation have a simple, primary meaning, namely, that they were written by John in Patmos and sent to the seven churches in Asia to correct certain disorders therein: the remainder of the book was to make known to God's servants the things that must come to pass hereafter.

The mystery of the seven stars: The seven stars are said to be the angels of the seven churches. Who were those stars or messengers? (1) Were they angels and not men? (2) Was the angel a bishop over each church? (3) Were they the elders (or overseers) of each church viewed as one, each church being ruled by a plurality of elders together? (4) Do they symbolize the ministry (in the hands of the elders and deacons) in each church? (5) Was the angel a man who acted as the messenger of the church to which he belonged? We may dismiss (1) in the light of the fact that the angel who was written to by John was a person who belonged to a church. We may also dismiss (2), as nowhere in the New Testament is a church (of God) ruled by one bishop or overseer. Even Peter the apostle, in his capacity of ruler, calls himself a fellow-elder (1 Peter 5. 1). As to (3), while a lampstand shows a number of lights placed together to shed one light, stars are individual lights; thus we judge that a star or angel does not speak of a group of overseers acting together. (4) The ministry of a church in the hands of the elders and deacons is too impersonal and could not be written to; so we judge that the angel does not refer to the ministry of a church. (5) The book of the Revelation does not contain general ministry of the word, but is a book of special revelation from God which was committed to persons to be conveyed to the seven churches in Asia, as in chapter 1. 4: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia." The angels were as definitely indicated as the churches. It seems to me that some help on this subject may be derived from the case of Epaphroditus who came from Philippi to Paul at Rome with the bounty of the Philippian church. Paul calls him "your messenger (apostle) and minister to my need" (Philippians 2. 25). He also calls him his "fellow-worker" and "true yoke-fellow": "I beseech thee also,
true yoke-fellow, help these women, for they laboured with me in the gospel" (chapter 4. 3). Such a reference seems to support the generally-accepted view that Epaphroditus carried back to Philippi this wonderful epistle, in which Paul acknowledged with gratitude the tangible expression of their thought for him. Without seeking to fill in what God has left out, it seems, from the case of Epaphroditus, a reasonable view to take of those angels or messengers, that they were men sent by the seven churches to John, whether for spiritual help or with a material gift to meet his need; and that they carried back to the churches from which they came the book of the Revelation, and caused its contents to be read in each of the seven churches, special emphasis being given by each messenger to the particular epistle for the church to which he belonged. See Matthew 11. 10, Mark 1. 2, Luke 7. 24, 27, 9. 52, James 2. 25, where the word angelos (angel) is applied to a human messenger. Had this been done in Revelation 1, 2, 3, it would have saved much confusion of thought among commentators on the book of the Revelation. "Angel" in these chapters means a human messenger.

J. M.

THE VOW OF THE NAZIRITE

(Numbers 6)

Jehovah had redeemed unto Himself a people, consisting of many individuals, but all hearts were not enjoying the same measure of close fellowship with Him. Thus in Numbers 6 provision is made whereby the God-fearing man or woman might know something more of the joy of the LORD. The keeping of the vow of the Nazirite, which was open to women as well as men, resulted in great spiritual recompense. A strict measure of separation was involved that the Nazirite might be secluded and dedicated to the worship and service of God.

Every person so devoted during the time of his vow was to drink no wine nor anything made from the grape-vine, so that his mind might be in a fit disposition for the worship and service of God. The keeping of this command involved self-denial, which would, in turn, teach self-control, for Israel was a wine-drinking nation. The error of inordinate drinking of wine is seen in the cases of Noah (Genesis 9. 20), Lot (Genesis 19. 32), and priests and prophets (Isaiah 28. 7). Wine is a symbol of natural joy, and also a type of that which is infinitely more full, hence the exhortation in Ephesians 5. 18.

No razor was to come upon the head of the Nazirite. His long hair was an outward testimony to the fact that he was "holy unto the LORD." It is recorded in 1 Corinthians 11. 14 that "if a man have long hair, it is a dishonour to him."

Further, "he shall not come near to a dead body," for defilement with the dead made men unclean seven days, so that they were not able to approach the place of divine worship. His devotion to God must take second place to none, his affections for his nearest and dearest relations must occupy second place. So vital is the separated position, that even the unexpected cannot be permitted, even that of a man dying very suddenly beside him. Death results from sin (Romans 5. 12), but the God whom he served dwells in intense holiness (Psalm 22. 3), and there is no unrighteousness in Him (Psalm 92. 15).

Once the Nazirite had become defiled, the locks were to be removed, and were to be burned (cp. John 15. 6, Numbers 6. 18). Only the days of his separation were acceptable to God. It was intended that Jerusalem, the
place of the Name, should, at a later date, fill the place of being a Nazirite
city, but she sinned grievously, became unclean, and was told, "Cut off
thine hair (thy crown) " (Jeremiah 7. 29, R. V. M.; Amos 2. 11, 12).
There is little evidence in the Scriptures of men or women listed by
name, who voluntarily consecrated themselves in this way. Men like Samuel
and Samson were peculiarly devoted to God from birth. The life story of
Samson is an interesting study in relation to Numbers 6.
David, who knew much of abiding in the secret place of the Most High,
wrote, " But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for
Himself " (Psalm 4. 3).

H. Caldwell.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
TO HOREB (2), REBELLION AT REPHIDIM, PROVOCATION AT
MASSAH AND MERIBAH, AMALEK, JETHRO'S ADVICE TO MOSES
(Exodus 17. 1—18. 27).

From Edinburgh. —This portion provides us with a sharp contrast,
on the one hand the unbelief and murmurings of the human heart, and on
the other the never-failing grace and power of God. The bread of angels
had recently been given to a people treading the desert wastes, but, when
they were faced with no water to drink, they were ready to stone their
leader and to doubt the presence of the LORD. Rephidim means "a support."
Here Israel failed to find support in the God of Israel, and great was their
loss. The LORD would most certainly have provided for His people. " It
is good that a man should hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the
LORD" (Lamentations 3. 26). The hardening of heart at Meribah and the
tempting of God at Massah brought out the warning and the exhortation
in Psalm 95. 7, " Oh that ye would hear His voice ! "

Moses was told to take the rod in His hand. The power that prevented
the Egyptians from drinking, by turning their water into blood, was now to
be used to give Israel to drink. The power did not lie in the rod, but in the
God who stood before them upon the rock. Perhaps the purpose of the rod
was to give visual evidence of the power and might of God. We are reminded
of a greater Rock and a greater smiting—the Rock of Ages that was smitten
at Calvary that life-giving waters should flow out to all mankind.

In this same place, Rephidim, Israel were called upon to fight. It would
almost seem that there is a significant order here. Israel were given bread,
then water, and then called to battle. The Lord will always provide for
and strengthen those who fight His battles. Not anybody went forth to war,
but only chosen men, men trained and able to use their weapons well.
With valiant men in the plain, and the man of God on the top of the hill,
could the people fail ? God has provided us today with all that we require
for our spiritual warfare. A full provision has been made in Christ, the One
who is the Bread of God and the Living Fountain. Men are required to use
the sword of the Spirit to good purpose. We have a never-failing, never-
wearied Man on high, our Lord Jesus Christ. In the great work of leadership
He has undertaken He requires no support: His hands never grow weary,
as did those of Moses.

Martin Dyer.

From Glasgow. —The provision of bread from heaven should surely
have convinced the children of Israel that God would not fail them in the
matter of water to drink. In this, as in other things, they limited the Holy
One of Israel (Psalm 78. 41). Moses was again passing through one of those
experiences of which the journey through the wilderness was so full—murmuring against the LORD and His servant Moses. As the manna marked a unique occasion in their history, so did the water out of the flinty rock. They 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, 4).

We judge that Moses kept in perfect line with the word of God on this occasion, in that he struck the rock once only with the rod, and the water gushed out, beautifully foreshadowing the streams of blessing that have flowed from the Smitten One, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amalek found Israel an easy prey. Deuteronomy 25. 17, 18 says, "Remember what Amalek did unto thee... how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. " It was because of this characteristic of Amalek that the LORD swore that He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Everything depended on the intercession of Moses on the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand. Our warfare day by day, striving against the flesh, is, no doubt, an all-in one, for if we live after the flesh we must die, yet we rejoice in the effectiveness of prayer in the struggle. We hasten to say, "We know not how to pray as we ought; but the the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8. 26, 27). We too can say, "The LORD is my banner. " Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We thought that some of the things said and done by Jethro, showed that he had a remarkable knowledge of the ways of God. His advice to Moses would seem to be good, since at a later date Moses was directed by God to appoint seventy men to bear the burden with him (Numbers 11. 14-17, Deuteronomy 1. 12-18).

From Wigan. —From Psalm 81. 7 we learn that God did prove Israel at the waters of Meribah; in Exodus 17 we see the proving and the sad result. They murmured against the LORD. There was striving and doubt in their hearts. They revealed a rebellious spirit. "Wherefore I was displeased with this generation... But they did not know My ways" (Hebrews 3. 10). Their rebellion was brought home to them when Moses named the place Massah and Meribah, "Proving " and " Strife. "

We see from many scriptures how God looks upon the sin of rebellion. He says it is as the sin of witchcraft (1 Samuel 15. 23). But God's faithfulness was once more revealed, when the rod of God did smite the rock and the water gushed out in life-giving streams.

Israel met their first enemy, Amalek, when they were faint and doubt filled their hearts. We have the counterpart in Galatians 5. 16, 17. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit. These are contrary the one to the other; a warfare is going on day by day in the life of the believer, therefore we are exhorted to make no provision for the flesh (Romans 13. 14).

King Saul in a later day failed by disobeying God's word concerning Amalek. He saved Agag king of Amalek, and lost his own place in the kingdom (1 Samuel 15). We can only have victory over the flesh by the power of prayer, the lifting up of holy hands (1 Timothy 2. 8), by being led by the Spirit, for if by the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body we shall live (Romans 8. 13).

J. Hurst.
From Cowdenbeath. —At the command of God, Moses with certain of the elders of Israel passed on to Horeb (17. 5). The people were still in Rephidim. Only these elders witnessed the smiting of the rock, the people did not; but all drank of the streams which flowed to them from the smitten rock. When later Moses was told to speak to the rock and struck it instead, the scene was witnessed by all Israel (Numbers 20. 8-13). The typical teaching is plain, for the Rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10. 4). "When on the cross Christ was smitten of God and afflicted, no mortal eye witnessed what took place.

Amalek was discomfited, but a final and complete victory was not obtained. The warfare would go on from generation to generation. We would concur with the generally held view that Amalek speaks of the flesh. God never comes to terms with the flesh. We are no longer in the flesh, but the flesh is with us. No one travels far on the Christian pathway before experiencing its first attack. In the warfare against the flesh complete and final victory is never obtained while we remain in mortal body (Romans 7. 24). Do we not long for that day when we shall be changed and the flesh shall trouble us no more (Romans 8. 23)?

James K. D. Johnston,

From Wembley. —In the battle with Amalek Joshua comes on the scene for the first time: his battles continued right into the promised land. We see the eye of the LORD on Joshua in Exodus 17. 14. In the same verse we get the first mention of writing for a memorial. It was stated that Genesis 5. 1 literally reads, "This is the written book of the generations of Adam..."

Chapter 18 appears to be out of order chronologically for the following reasons: —(1) Verse 5 says "at the mount of God." Israel did not arrive there before the third month after leaving Egypt, and the narrative so far has been referring to the second month. (2) As they were about to depart from Horeb, Moses stated that the burden of ruling was too much for him and he appointed rulers over thousands, and so forth (Deuteronomy 1. 6-15). In Exodus 18. 25, 26 we read that he established it [1].

(3) When the Israelites were about to depart from Horeb (Numbers 10. 11, 29) Moses addressed one called Hobab (who, we assume, is Jethro) and asked him to go with them as guide, but he declined and went to his own land (see Exodus 18. 27) [2].

(4) In 18. 16 Moses mentions the laws and statutes of God, yet the law had not then been given.

C. A. B

From Southport. —It was the will of God to prove Israel by thirst, as He had before humbled them by hunger (Psalm 81. 7). The rock was turned into a pool of water, and the flint into a fountain of waters (Psalm 114. 8), also, "He caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them" (Isaiah 48. 21).

The perpetual enmity between Israel and Amalek is like the opposition between Christ and Belial, and light and darkness (2 Corinthians 6. 14-16), which must be at war continually one with another until all Christ's enemies are made His footstool.

Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel (18. 9) whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. " Now
I know, "seems to be the expression of one who had wavered in the past, but was now fully convinced that Jehovah was the one true God. Moses hearkened to the advice of his father-in-law, thus showing meekness and humility. We learn from this not to despise true counsel through whomsoever it may come. 

Thomas Brown.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —Immediately following the rebellion at Rephidim came the cowardly attack by Amalek on the hindermost and feeble of the people (Deuteronomy 25. 18). "The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (17. 16). The words of Paul to the Corinthians concerning the happenings to the children of Israel were that they "happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10. 11). In the language of the New Testament, the world, the flesh and the devil are three powerful foes. The expression "the flesh" is used on many occasions to signify our unregenerate nature; in Galatians 5. 17 and other scriptures, we see that there is a continual conflict between the flesh and the Spirit: they are contrary the one to the other. The flesh may attack the feeble and young in the faith and cause a wasted Christian life, but no one is immune from this foe.

F. E. Jarvis.

From Crowborough. —As we trace the history of Israel we find what a great thorn in their side was this cunning, evil and powerful enemy, Amalek, of whom were Agag and Haman, who were used by Satan to seek to oppose the purposes of God. Just as Israel were commanded to fight with Amalek (Exodus 17. 9), so we are exhorted to crucify the flesh that lusteth against the Spirit. We are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.

It is sad that Jethro should choose to go back to his own land rather than ally himself with the LORD'S people. His excellent advice, given with good heart, showed great wisdom: so today, God has not given all wisdom or gift to one, but desires that able men together should lead and direct His people.

B. V. F.

From Ayr. —Pharaoh, who sought to hinder all who would escape the bondage of Egypt, is a type of Satan. Likewise, Amalek speaks of the old nature within, which hinders the believer in his walk. Amalek's attacks were subtle, as we see from this portion, striking from behind and at the weakest. God never forgave them for this and commanded Israel to have war with them throughout all their generations—a perpetual warfare—so it is with the believer in this dispensation.

Jethro's advice was good and he qualified it by "and God command thee." Thus was Moses relieved of a vast burden of responsibility in judging the lesser cases which arose in the government of God's people in the wilderness.

Les. Parker.

From Middlesbrough. —Moses set us an example when he cried to the LORD in his distress. The smiting of the rock with the rod speaks of 1 he death of Christ. The stroke of judgement fell on Him that blessing might flow to many. The death of Christ has brought healing to those who place faith in Him.
When Moses stood with his arms raised Joshua and his men prevailed. This surely speaks of prayer, which is of vital importance both to the individual and to the collective testimony of God’s people.

Derek Goodwin.

From Birkenhead. —We noted that Amalek was the first enemy that redeemed Israel met, that they attacked the weakest from behind (see Deuteronomy 25. 17, 18), and that there was to be continual war with Amalek until God fulfilled His promise to blot them out from memory. Amalek is a type of the flesh.

Moses allowed Jethro to depart from them. This is in contrast to his pleading with Hobab (Numbers 10. 29) to go with them. Was it by the guidance of God that Moses allowed Jethro to depart? [3]. He had taken part in a sacrifice to which he had no right, as he was not one of the redeemed people [4]. Moreover, there may be some significance in the change of names by which he is known. Reuel means "Friend of God," while his later name, Jethro, means "Pre-eminent one." Possibly he had lost something of his character as a friend of God and was beginning to love his own pre-eminence. For such a man there would be no place among the people of God. Amongst the leaders of God's people today pre-eminence of one man would be dangerous; all need to walk in humility before God, whatever burdens of leadership they may bear.

J. T., R. L. S.

From Lerwick. —Few of the physical requirements of man can be more distressing than the need of water in a time of thirst (Psalm 69. 21, John 19. 28). Thus the trial which befell Israel at Rephidim was not an easy one. The rod which had been used in bringing a plague upon unbelieving Egypt (7. 20) was the means used in order to give drink to "My people, My chosen" (Isaiah 43. 20, 2 Corinthians 2. 16).

Amalek's attack was typical of the attack of the lusting flesh against God's people. Amalek, warlike dweller in the vale, attacked at a time when Israel had little resistance, having passed through a severe trial: but Moses' intervention with uplifted hands brought about a victory to be remembered (17. 14). We must lift up holy hands in prayer (1 Timothy 2. 8) at the approach of every temptation.

D. S.

From Brantford, Ont. —Like many other things in life, physical movements are the outward effects of inward motions. This would apply to Israel's question, "Is the LORD among us or not?" It must have been very displeasing to God to hear such words coming from the people for whom He had done so much.

Some discussion centred around Jethro. Was Moses right in accepting the advice his father-in-law gave him? If so, what can we learn today from this? Most of us were of the opinion that Moses was very wise in accepting Jethro's advice: it can be justified in the light of later events.

We wondered whether the ark of the Testimony, when constructed, took the place of the rod of God as the symbol of authority. The rod, prior to the ark, was used of God before the children of Israel as the sign of His authority vested in Moses.

David Philp.
From Liverpool. —Numbers 33. 12-14 show that Rephidim was reached in three stages. Rephidim means "rest" or "refreshment." Israel came to a place of refreshment, and made it a place of murmuring. God in His wisdom made it a place of trial, and also, in His grace, a place of blessing. The lack of water seems to have caused the trouble. This is understandable, and we can appreciate the attitude of the Amalekites, a nomadic people depending on such places for water, and who would resent any intrusion such as this [5].

It is good that we consider ourselves in the light of Israel's experience, for, having lost faith, they had lost direction, they had lost sight of their objective. A wise man said, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3. 6). Romans 5 reveals clearly the need of patience and experience, but upon the principle of faith in God.

During forty years Moses must have recounted to Jethro much of his experiences, and an impression must have been made upon him. Who was this priest of Midian?—a heathen priest who would weigh the evidence concerning Israel's God and His mighty acts on their behalf. Jethro rejoiced, blessed the LORD, and confessed, "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods" (18. 11).

G. S. Webster, A. H.

From Atherton. —The name Rephidim means "resting places". The positive spiritual blessing that "godliness with contentment is great gain" should ever be an incentive here and now to the people of God.

The combined work of Moses (the prophet), Aaron (the priest) and Hur (royal tribe) on the hilltop portrays the work of One whose intercession is invaluable whenever the flesh (in which there is no good thing) seeks to gain the advantage.

Moses served Reuel (Jethro) as a shepherd for forty years in the desert, simultaneously learning the will of God. Moses and Paul provide two outstanding examples of the value of time spent in solitude and in communion with God, eventually to emerge as chosen vessels.

The appointment of men with varying degrees of responsibility does not conflict with the later appointment of the seventy elders (Numbers 11. 14-17). These elders had equal rank and responsibility in service relative to the tent of meeting at a much later date, when the law and the testimony were in existence.

J. B., E. B.

From Nottingham. —According to Dr. Strong the word used in Exodus 17 for "rock" indicates a small rock or boulder, while the word used in Numbers 20 indicates a lofty or high rock.

Amalek is a type of the flesh and their history is instructive. Amalek was a grandson of Esau (Genesis 36. 12), his mother a Horite (Genesis 36. 21, 22). Amalek hated Jacob and his descendants. Some historians suggest that the race was fused with an earlier race referred to in Genesis 14. 7.

Jethro was the priest or prince of Midian. Perhaps both offices were combined. In view of his high position it is difficult to understand why more respect was not afforded his daughters at the well (2. 17). It seems that Jethro was aware of the position (2. 18), and it is suggested that this attitude was born of the generally low rank granted to women in those times.
It was considered that Jethro, being a priest of Midian, was priest to a heathen people following a heathen ritual. Yet this man seems to have had some desire to know the true God. No doubt, Moses had already imparted some knowledge to him (4. 18). Later, when God's works had been recited in his ear, he made the declaration recorded in Exodus 18, 11 and offered an ascending offering and sacrifice to God. He then had the outstanding experience of eating bread in the tent with Aaron and the elders. It was thought that the term "to eat bread" (18. 12) indicated fellowship, and that "before God" showed the character of the gathering. Perhaps this was associated with Jethro's declaration concerning God.

R. Hickling.

From Toronto, Ont. —One of the main points of discussion in this chapter was, whether or not Moses should have accepted advice from Jethro, who was not of the children of Israel. Jethro was a Midianite, and was therefore a descendant of Abraham through one of the sons of Keturah. Hence there is reason to believe that the Midianites would not be ignorant of the God who had filled the vision of Abraham. Jethro is first introduced to us as Reuel, which name means "The Friendship of God" and signifies some close association between his father's house and God. The name Jethro means "Pre-eminent." This was taken by some to indicate that Reuel had had aspirations beyond the blessing of God's friendship.

In seeking to assess the right or wrong of accepting advice from an "outsider," we asked: "Would we, or could we, accept advice from outsiders relative to the welfare of those within?" [6]. We all agree that this must be answered in the negative. The people of God today are cared for through the ministrations of gifts by the Holy Spirit. What principle has been changed that would forbid today what was permitted in that day? We observe that we do not read of Moses ever being appointed as a judge between men. This seems to have been a responsibility that Moses assumed, rather than one that he received from God [7]. Further, the advice of Jethro set a pattern that was carried on through many generations, even to the present time. It recognizes varying capacities among men and assigns responsibility in proportion to that capacity. "A man's gift maketh room for him" (Prov. 18. 16). Then we must notice that Jethro did not ask that advice be taken from him alone. His advice was to be brought to the LORD for guidance (18. 23).

These considerations have led some to conclude that Moses was in the mind of the LORD in accepting counsel from Jethro. It was agreed that when God, at a later time established Israel as a nation with a law, He made every provision necessary for the maintenance of peace within the nation. Consequently, after that time, to follow the counsel of any one, either outside or inside, would be tantamount to seeking to improve the perfect law of God.

S. K. Seath.

TO HOREB (1)
(Exodus 15. 22—16. 36)

From London, Ont. —Those who take a stand for God always find the adversary ready to put obstacles in the way. Israel found themselves without water for three days. Then, when water was found at Marah, it was bitter and they could not drink it. They were young in their walk as a separated people and murmured. Satan turned the tide of their discontent against Moses the man of God, but he in his extremity did as they should have done: he looked to God for help.
The tree **cast into the** waters **causes** us to think of **Him** whom they slew, **hanging** Him on **a tree** (Acts 5. 30). A young believer **in** his weakness may find it difficult to accept the truth of separation **as** set forth **in** the word of God, but it makes **a** great difference **if we** view these things **in** the light of Calvary and remember the **desire** of the Lord **Jesus in His death.** He gave Himself for **us,** "that He might redeem **us** from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself **a** people for **His** own possession, zealous of **good works"** (Titus 2. 14).

**COMMENTS**

[1] (Wembley). —Both Horeb and **Sinai are** called " the mount of God " (Exodus 3. 1, etc.; 24. 13). Horeb would **seem** to cover a larger **area** than Sinai; the latter would **seem** to be a particular peak in the area of Horeb. Biblical **maps** are, like ourselves, hazy in their identifying particular places in the movements of Israel in the wilderness. I do not see that Exodus 18 is out of chronological order in the events of Exodus; certainly Moses' review of **events** in Deuteronomy 1 would not prove it.

How Moses wrote the book of Genesis, whether from collected records left by, say, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or by others, or in **what way** he wrote, is quite unknown, and conjecture, either our own, or that of others, in no way provides stable ground for us to assert how this inspired book **came** to be. " This is the book of the generations of Adam," **should not be** read, " This is from the book of the generations of Adam." What Moses wrote was " the book," not an extract from another book. When we do not know we are better to say nothing. —**J. M.**

[2] (Wembley). —**Numbers** 10. 29 shows that Hobab was brother-in-law to Moses, he being the son of Reuel (Jethro), Moses' father in law. —**J. M.**

[3] (Birkenhead). —" Moses let his father in law depart" would appear to indicate that the urge to leave was Jethro's, and Moses could not keep him. —**J. M.**

[4] (Birkenhead). —The words of Exodus 18. 12 are, "And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God." Thereafter Aaron and the elders **came** to eat bread with him. There is no evidence that Jethro and Israel offered sacrifices together, or that Jethro took part in a sacrifice to which he had no right. —**J. M.**

[5] (Liverpool). —There is no evidence that Rephidim was a watering place for desert peoples. " There was no water for the people to drink," we are told. —**J. M.**

[6] (Toronto). —There should, I think, be seen a difference between ourselves with the full revelation of God's word in our hands and the time of Moses, before, I judge, any of the Scriptures were written. Then again the words of Jethro are important—" If thou shalt do this thing, and God commend thee so" (Exodus 18. 23). I presume, from what is said in Deuteronomy 1, that God had commanded Moses to do what Jethro counselled him to do. —**J. M.**

[7] (Toronto). —I am doubtful about this remark. Everything is not recorded in the Scriptures. —**J. M.**
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions from Nottingham. — (1) When and why did Moses send his wife away (Exodus 18. 2) ? (2) What is the significance of the statement, " the LORD met him, and sought to kill him " (Exodus 4. 24) ? Was it to bring home to Moses the importance of circumcision and God's warning in Genesis 17. 14 ?

Answer (1). — We can only presume that Moses sent his wife and their sons home to Midian because of the dangers and difficulties that lay before him in the work of delivering the children of Israel. It was a gigantic task he had on hand, which must have called for labour early and late, and in which he would have little time for family life.

Answer (2). — It seems to me that the trouble between Moses and Zipporah was over circumcision. She being a Gentile would possibly have an abhorrence of this rite and her son had not been circumcised. One can see at once how inconsistent it would be for Moses, the leader of Israel, not to have his sons circumcised, when this was one of the first of commandments relative to all male children (Genesis 17. 10; 21. 4; Exodus. 12. 44, 48, 49). — J. M.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS
CHAPTER 1

Verses 1, 2, 3: Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal; but in His own seasons manifested His word in the message, wherewith I was intrusted according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

Paul writes of himself as a bondservant of Jesus Christ, in Roman 1. 1, of himself and Timothy as bondservants of Christ Jesus, in Philippians 1. 1, and here of himself as a bondservant of God. All angels, save those who are fallen, and all redeemed men, are bondservants of God (Revelation 19. 10). Paul was also an apostle (one who is sent) of Jesus Christ. He was an apostle " according to the faith of God's elect. " Is this " faith " or " the Faith " ? We think that it is the former. There is no definite article before " faith". Even though persons are elect before the foundation of the world, they must exercise faith in the message that Paul was chosen to bring to them, for salvation is through faith. To this end Paul said that he endured all things for the elect's sake, that they might obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory (2 Timothy 2. 10). Paul the herald of the divine message must reach the elect, some of whom were in prison and some free, for they must hear and believe the gospel in order to be saved. " Belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of (God or) Christ " (Romans 10. 17). " And the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness: " Paul joins two things together here, faith and the knowledge of the truth. This he does again in 1 Timothy 2. 4, where he says that it is God's will that " all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. " These two statements cover the apostle's work among men: (1) faith and salvation, (2) the knowledge of the truth. The truth known and acted upon by believers results in godliness of life.
Paul, as we have seen, was an apostle according to (1) the faith of God's elect, and (2) the knowledge of the truth. Then he says that it was "in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal." "In here is in the Greek Epi — " upon "; of this one has said, "The condition under which the apostolic mission rests." How useless would have been Paul's apostleship, if it was not in the fulfilment of a promise of One who cannot lie, who promised eternal life to all believers before times eternal, namely, from eternity! Though the words "the hope of eternal life " in Titus 1. 2 and 3. 7 are alike, yet the connexion in which they are found is different, and consequently their meaning is different. The promise of eternal life, which is the same as " His word," was manifested in the message or proclamation with which Paul was intrusted. This message was to be manifested in His, or its, own seasons. All this was according to the commandment of God our Saviour. Here is stretched out before us the promise of eternal life before times eternal and the fulfilment of the promise in time in the message of the word of God which is received by faith on the part of God's elect.

Verse 4: To Titus, my true child after a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour.

Paul calls Titus his true (genuine) child after a common faith; he described Timothy also as his true child in faith (1 Timothy 1. 2). "In faith" and "a common faith" means the same kind of faith, not "the Faith." It is faith common to all believers. Paul's salutation is, grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour. God is our Saviour in verse 3.

Verse 5: For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge;

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus, and Titus in Crete. Each was given his charge as to the need existing in the churches in those places. The work of Titus was to set in order things that were wanting, and the lack of recognised elders to care for and rule in the flock must have been outstanding amongst the things that were wanting in the churches in Crete. Some have postulated that, since we have today no apostles to appoint elders, as in Acts 14. 21-23, and no apostles' delegates, as Timothy and Titus, we can have no men recognised as elders now. Surely the work of feeding and shepherding the flock of God still exists, as in the time of the apostles, and there is the need for men being recognised who are fitted to do this. Also, what use would there be today for such portions of the word of God as 1 Timothy 3. 1-7 and Titus 1. 6-9? None at all! There is no hidden satanic poison in the words "elder" and "overseer" that we should need to avoid their use, and substitute some other word coined by men in modern times to describe elders and overseers, the shepherds of the flock. We definitely believe that the Scriptures teach the recognition and appointment of elders to care for the flock, and that such elders form an elderhood or presbytery. These are addressed collectively in a much wider sphere than the elders of an individual church. See in proof of this 1 Peter 5. 1-11, where the elders of the churches of God in five provinces in Asia (1 Peter 1. 1), which formed a spiritual house (of God) and a holy and royal priesthood (1 Peter 2. 3-5, 9, 10), are addressed as a whole: "The elders therefore among you I exhort... tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight."
Verses 6, 7, 8, 9: If any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. For the bishop (overseer) must be blameless, as God's steward; not selfwilled, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, a lover of good, soberminded, just, holy, temperate; holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.

Here again is a picture, as in 1 Timothy 3. 1-7, of the character and conduct of an elder or overseer. Having already, in 1 Timothy 3, remarked on "the husband of one wife," I suggest that this should be read. An elder must be blameless, one against whom no charge can be laid. He has to have but one wife. If he has believing children, they are not to be loose in behaviour or morals or unruly, that is, insubordinate. The overseer, as God's steward in His house, must be free from any charge. He must not be selfwilled or headstrong, not soon angry or passionate when his views and judgements are not accepted. He is not to be given to wine, and consequently not a brawler, not a striker, not greedy of base gain: so much for the negative side of his life. As to the positive, he is to be hospitable, that is a lover of strangers, a lover of good, sober-minded, of sound mind, that is, discreet or self-restrained, just and holy (pious), temperate; holding to, or fast clinking to, or not letting go, the faithful word, which is according to the teaching which he had been taught. In consequence of his holding to what he had been taught, he would be able to exhort or encourage others in the sound and healthful doctrine, and also to convict or refute the gainsayers, such as question or contradict.

Verses 10, 11: For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

Whilst we shall be for ever indebted to men of the Jewish race, such as the apostles and others, for the work they did at the beginning of this dispensation, and for the New Testament Scriptures which they left behind, we cannot fail to see in the New Testament how much the work of God suffered, both from Jews (they of the circumcision) who were in the churches of God, and also from Jews outside, who persecuted Paul and his fellow-workers continually. Here in these verses they of the circumcision are seen, with others, at their deadly, damaging work. They were insubordinate, men who would not be subject to authority, vain talkers and deceivers; a trio of badness which would ruin any community. Paul said that their mouths must be stopped. Though their mouths could not well be stopped in private, their mouths must be stopped in public by a public statement that such men were not allowed to speak. They were to be silenced in all gatherings of God's people. What serious work is indicated in the fact that they overthrow whole houses by teaching things that are not befitting, that is, that they teach what they ought not to teach, and they do it for the sake of base gain! J. M.
"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).

EDITORIAL

We now reach that point in the history of Israel at which the law was delivered to them through Moses. This should have been to them a significant and momentous stage in the separation of Israel from the nations, and their conduct should have been in accordance with the solemnity of the occasion. Their remarkable failure serves only to underline the ingratitude of the human heart, and the need for a law which would reveal to man his true standing in the sight of God. It was the purpose of God that "through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful" (Romans 7.13).

It cannot be denied that God does speak to men through things seen. He spoke to Israel by His signs and wonders in Egypt and in the wilderness. The Lord Jesus also sought to appeal to men through His wonderful works, and said, "Believe Me for the very works' sake" (John 14.11). Nicodemus was attracted by the Lord's signs—things seen (John 3.2). Again, the Lord offered to convince Thomas by things visible (John 20.27), but He also pronounced a blessing on those that believe apart from seeing (John 20.29). The fault lies with man: "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2.14). Even with their present-day possession of much knowledge of the wonders of the universe, men fail to see beyond these great things and find the Author. Only the Spirit of God can enlighten men, and for want of this enlightenment men may worship the created things rather than the Creator (Romans 1.25).

To privileged Israel God spoke orally at Sinai (Exodus 19.19), through the prophets, and lastly through His Son (Hebrews 1.1, 2). God continues to speak to all men through His Son. God's called present-day people are richly blest with a full revelation of God through Christ.

The havoc wrought by idolatry in Israel causes our minds to go to our brethren who labour in Nigeria and Burma. There they see at first-hand the enslavement of men's souls in idolatry, and its awful dreadfulness must be evident to them. Perhaps, if we were to learn some of their experiences, we should better appreciate the affront to God implied in idolatry. While guarding ourselves from idolatry, we should pray earnestly for those enslaved in idolatry and for those who labour among them to bring to them the glorious light of the gospel.

J.B.
NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION
CHAPTER 2.

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: As the church in Ephesus was a definite group of saints, capable of loving and hating, working and enduring, hearing and repenting, so it seems that the angel of the church was a man who could be addressed. In each of the several epistles the Lord presents Himself in a special character. Here He speaks of Himself as One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, and walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. Being present in the midst He knew exactly the condition of the Ephesian church. He says, "I know" (Oida, I see, not Ginosko, I learn); He saw with eyes as a flame of fire, therefore He knew perfectly their works, labour and endurance. He knew that they could not bear evil men, and had tried those that said that they were apostles, perhaps by such tests of apostleship as Paul applied to himself (1 Corinthians 9. 1, 2; 2 Corinthians 11. 5-15), and found them liars. They had borne with endurance, had laboured and not grown weary. All this was to their credit, and the Lord ever praises and will praise that which is worthy in His saints. Alas, there was that which overshadowed all the good that they had done; they had left their first love. There are some who think that the leaving of their first love means that they had left their first Lover, the Lord. I am of the opinion that "love" here means a state, not a person, though it must be conceded at once that leaving their first state of love must affect their relationship with their Divine Lover. Ephesus had had a great past, from the days when Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully (Acts 18. 24-28). Then came Paul and found the twelve disciples who were following the teaching of John the Baptist, as Apollos had been, and Paul brought them up to date in the progress of the work of God. Paul continued in the work of the Lord in the synagogue until he found it necessary, because of the opposition of the Jews, to separate the disciples from the synagogue. After this he continued to reason in the school of Tyrannus. Special miracles were wrought by Paul, diseases departed, evil spirits went out, and books of magical arts, valued at fifty thousand pieces of silver, were publicly burned. The Spirit's comment through Luke is, "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed" (Acts 19. 1-20). But, alas, other days fell upon Ephesus, as Paul prophesied in Acts 20. 29, 30, when from among the elders, men arose speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them, and grievous wolves entered in, not sparing the flock. Paul's three years' work was attacked by Satan. Later, Timothy was left by Paul in Ephesus to charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine (1 Timothy 1. 3). Then came the separation of 2 Timothy 2. 21, when those who were faithful to the Lord and the truth which they had learned were called upon to purge themselves out from the false teachers and their followers, such men as Hymenaeus and Philetus. Whilst there can be no valid excuse for leaving one's first love, yet we need to have the whole picture of the Ephesian church before our mind to see possible causes why such a condition had befallen them. We are all liable to look back on the past and to say that "the former days were better than these" (Ecclesiastes 7. 10). The darker the day and the harder the way the more we should lean on the strong arm of our Beloved. Men change, times change, but He changes not. Changes in Ephesus had told their sad tale. Paul was now with the Lord, and also most, if not all, of the other apostles had gone, like Paul, to a well-earned rest. The aged John was confined in Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. The days were grim, both within
and without the Ephesian church, and the once sparkling lustre of the love of the saints had grown dim. Though many had gone and their loss was sadly felt, the Lord was still present, walking in their midst. If the mighty happenings and the powerful preaching of past days were gone, yet the Lord was near to love and be loved. He felt the loss of their love. The atmosphere of the assembly was cold and clammy. He would leave unless there was a change. The lampstand would be removed. They would be unchurched. To remove the lampstand does not mean that He would remove all the saints by death from earth, the scene of testimony. The Lord compares the loss of first love to a fall; "Thou art fallen," He said. Their inward attitude to the Lord was changed, as was the attitude of Adam and Eve, who when they sinned no longer walked and talked with the LORD as formerly. The Lord calls upon the Ephesian church to repent (that means, to change their mind and their whole attitude to Him), and to do the first works; these are the works wrought in the power of first love, the strongest and sweetest emotion which fills the breasts of God's people.

The Lord commends them for their hatred of the works of the Nicolaitans, "which," He said, "I also hate." Who were the Nicolaitans? Some in early times said that they were the followers of Nicolas of Antioch (Acts 6. 5), but others deny this. There is no certainty whence these people sprang, but there is a general agreement on this, that they were heretical, an impure sect whose works were hated by the Lord and by the Ephesian saints. It is futile to follow a specious interpretation of who the Nicolaitans were from the meaning of their name, which is derived from Nike, victory, and Laos, people, and think of them as a victorious people, for they were otherwise than that. To follow still further in this specious interpretation into the difference between "clergy" and "laity," however unscriptural the ideas in these terms may be, can lead to no definite conclusion as to who these people were or what they believed.

To the repentant Overcomer the promise of his reward is this, that he will be given the privilege of eating of the Tree of Life that is in the Paradise of God. The word Paradise has three uses in the New Testament (1) It is used by the Lord to describe that part of Hades (called by the Jews, Abraham's bosom—Luke 16. 23) to which the Lord and the repentant robber went after death, and where were all the blessed dead of past dispensations. (2) In 2 Corinthians 12. 2-4, it is the third heaven to which Paul was caught up. (3) In Revelation 2. 7, the Paradise is the city of the New Jerusalem, where the Tree of Life grows on each side of the river of Water of Life, which flows in the midst of the street of the city. "Paradise" literally means "a pleasure garden with various kinds of trees, a place of delight."

And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: Here the Lord speaks of Himself as the First and the Last, which became dead and lived. What can give greater comfort than the knowledge that the One who became dead by His own act of laying down His life for us is alive for evermore? It is a living Lord who saves and keeps. The Lord speaks little of the works of the church in Smyrna, but much of tribulation and poverty. He says, "Thou art rich"; although poor as to this world's goods, yet rich in faith (a rich faith means a rich saint), and heirs of the kingdom which the Lord promised to them that love Him (James 2. 5). Tribulation is a refiner: gold becomes more precious as it is refined. In Daniel 11. 33-35, it speaks of the wise instructors of the
people falling " by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, many
days. " Then we are told, " Some of them that be wise shall fall, to refine
them, and to purify, and to make them white, even to the time of the
end. " Such will be the experience of many during the time of the Great
Tribulation. This suffering church has no accusation laid against it by
the Lord. In this respect it is like that of Philadelphia, though the
emphasis is laid on the lack of strength in Philadelphia. The Jews who
frequently and viciously attacked Paul in his day, and were enemies of
the gospel, were still at their work in Smyrna, for here we read of the blas-
phemy of them which say that they are Jews, but are a synagogue of
Satan. Far from being Jews, as Paul denned a Jew in Romans 2. 28, 29,
they manifested the same spirit as when they cried, " Crucify, crucify, " in regard to the Lord; so here they blaspheme His followers. The devil was
about to cast some of the suffering saints into prison, and their tribulation
was to extend ten days, but whether this was for ten literal days, or for ten,
" the unknown quantity, " it is perhaps impossible to say. We believe
that this tribulation has nothing whatever to do with the persecutions
from A. D. 249 to A. D. 284, as some have taught, under Roman emperors
Decius, Valerius, Aurelius, and Diocletian. The tribulation of the church
in Smyrna was before the end of the first century A. D. The special
promise to the sufferers is, " Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee
the crown of life. " This crown is promised to such as endure temptation,
whether from fleshly lusts, as in James 1. 12-15, or from external trial
and persecution, as here in Smyrna. Here is another of the " fear nots"
of Scripture. The promise to the Overcomer is, " He that overcometh
shall not be hurt of the second death. " What does it mean to be hurt
of the second death, which we are told in Revelation 20. 14; 21, 8, is the
lake of fire? Some help may be derived from the use of the word
** perdition " or destruction. It is used of the " man of sin " (the beast),
who is called the " son of perdition " (2 Thessalonians 2. 3), who will
with the false prophet be cast into the lake of fire (19. 20). This same word
is used in connexion with the destruction of the life of the believer, for it
is possible for a saved person to have a lost life, a life which has gone to
perdition. Paul says, in Hebrews 10. 39, " But we are not of them that
shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving
of the soul (or life). " It is only in such a sense that a believer, saved
with an eternal salvation (Hebrews 5. 9), can be hurt of the second death.
See also 1 Corinthians 3. 13-15; Matthew 16. 24-26.

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: Here the
Lord speaks of Himself as having a sharp two-edged sword. He adopts
a warlike attitude because there were those in Pergamum who held the
teaching of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans. Satan's throne, we are told,
was in Pergamum. Here was the seat of Roman government, and here
had been erected a temple in which divine honours were given to Augustus.
Many, many thousands of Christians throughout the Roman empire
suffered death rather than give divine honours (due to God alone) to
Roman emperors. Satan and his hosts are called " the principalities
... the powers ... the world rulers of this darkness ... the spiritual
hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places " (Ephesians 6. 12). From
Pergamum, the place of Satan's throne and dwelling, he carried on his baleful
work against the saints of God, but those in Pergamum had stood firm.
The Lord said, " Thou holdest fast My Name, and didst not deny My faith. "
They had been true to Him and to His word. Antipas had been valiant
in the fight against the powers of darkness, and touching the Lord refers
to him as "My witness, My faithful one," who had been killed for his faithful testimony. If Satan does not manage to destroy God's saints by evils without, he will seek to destroy them by evils within. In Pergamum were those who were playing the traitor's part. They held the teaching of Balaam, who, though the Lord would not allow him to curse Israel, taught Balak how to destroy Israel, by the daughters of Moab being let loose among the sons of Israel, with the result that those women through their lust enticed the sons of Israel to sacrifice to their gods. The result was that Israel was joined to Baal-peor. Fornication and idolatry have ever been wedded evils. We are not told that certain in Pergamum practised these evils; they held the teaching, and it is only a step from holding teaching to practising it. Others held the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. Now that such sin had been discovered by the Lord, action by the church was called for, and the church was called upon to repent or the Lord would make war with them with the sword of His mouth. The case was somewhat like to the sin of Achan. The Lord said that Israel had sinned, not that all the people had committed the sin of Achan, but there was sin in the camp, and defeat was theirs until the devoted thing had been removed and judgement had fallen on Achan and his house. The sword of His mouth is the word of God (Revelation 19. 13-15, 21; Hebrews 4. 12, 13).

Here again the reward to the Overcomer is different—the hidden manna, and the white stone upon which is a new name which only the Overcomer knows. The hidden manna of wilderness times is what is referred to in Exodus 16. 33, 34: "Take a pot, and put an omerful of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations... so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept." This, we learn from Hebrews 9. 4, was a golden pot wherein was this manna, which was placed in the ark of the covenant. As the manna speaks of Christ, the Overcomer is destined to have a very special portion of that blessed One to delight his heart above other believers. What is the white stone or pebble? It is said that in the past in criminal cases a white pebble was given in the case of acquittal, and a black in condemnation. A white stone was also given to the victors in the games. The Greek word for "stone" is only twice used in the New Testament, here and in Acts 26. 10, where it is the voting stone of persons in authority. Paul says that when the saints were put to death he ever gave his vote, or "stone," against them; that was in his unconverted days. Here the white stone indicates the Lord's approval, and possibly the appointment of the Overcomer to a place of authority.

J. M.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
AT SINAI, IDOLATRY AND MOSES' INTERCESSION
(Exodus 32. 1-35)

From Liverpool. —While Moses was in the mount receiving the law and the commandments, the people grew tired of waiting, and gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said, "Make us gods, which shall go before us" (32. 1). Three things emerge from these sad incidents. They had forgotten who it was that had brought them out of Egypt. Also, they were violating the clear command of Jehovah. Further, Aaron, upon whom much responsibility rested at that time, failed to restrain the people, and to remind them of their promise. Romans 1 tells of those, who, with sad results, refused to have God in their knowledge.
The scene that confronted Moses as he came down the mount caused his anger to wax hot, and he cast down the tables out of his hand. The very law they were pledged to obey was quickly violated in their worshipping the golden calf and sacrificing unto it. Aaron should not have built an altar and should not have proclaimed a feast.

Moses knew his God, believed in His faithfulness, and pleaded God's promises to his forefathers. God graciously heard and repented of the evil He had said He would do unto His people. But justice had to be done. The people had to taste the fruits of their folly and were made to drink of the water upon which the burnt and powdered idol had been strewn. Many-perished in the judgement effected by the faithful Levites: such judgement had to be carried out against brethren, companions and neighbours, for judgement cannot recognise relationship or natural ties. Judgement must be impartial, and God's judgement ever is. "The sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses" (32. 28): and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

It would seem that Aaron was intimidated by the people; but he cannot be absolved from responsibility. His answer, when questioned by Moses, put the blame on the people. Aaron's error is seen in the words "for Aaron had let them loose" (32. 25).

To Israel Moses said, "Ye have sinned a great sin." and added, "and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin." We note the word "peradventure." Moses realized the grievousness of their sin, and his desire was to seek the LORD on the matter. He pleaded that Jehovah would forgive His sinning people, and even suggested that, if they could not be forgiven, he should be blotted out of God's book. God's answer reveals the divine mind as regards individual responsibility.

G. Jacques, A. H.

From Middlesbrough. —For forty days and nights the people were without the leadership and guidance of Moses. They quickly forgot their promise, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do." and asked Aaron to make them gods to go before them. Aaron, in a moment of weakness, agreed. Having obtained their idol they then began to worship it, and to eat, drink, and play. To fail in such a way, so soon after hearing God's voice, was indeed a great sin.

God told Moses of the sin of the children of Israel, and how He was going to consume them and make a great nation of Moses. Moses interceded on their behalf, and the LORD stayed His hand. When Moses saw the calf, and the children of Israel worshipping it, he dashed the tables of stone to the ground. In the midst of all this sin, Moses stood firmly for God, and brought Israel's sin home to them.

Moses asked Aaron to explain why he had dealt with the children of Israel in this way, for they were broken loose for a whispering among their enemies, but Aaron made excuses, putting the blame on the children of Israel. With a view to carrying out God's judgement on Israel, Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the LORD'S side, let him come unto me." The children of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. As the result of their action on this occasion the tribe of Levi gained a place of responsibility in divine service which God had purposed to give to first-born sons of all Israel. No doubt this event proved an occasion for ridicule on the part of the enemies of Israel and of God. It is a very serious matter to bring discredit upon the testimony of God.
Moses again acted as intercessor, saying, "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." Moses' name was not, of course, blotted out of God's book, and the children of Israel were spared because of the intercession of Moses. Despite the fact that they had broken the terms of the covenant, God was gracious to them. 

*Derek Goodwin.*

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From Ayr Y. P. M. —With the people of Israel it would appear to be a matter of "Out of sight, out of mind." They spoke despisingly about the servant of God, and soon forgot the word of God, which circumstance led them to commit idolatry, a great sin against God.

It is sad to see the failure of Aaron: in an hour of opportunity he was found wanting. He was one of those who questioned whether God only worked through Moses.

We note how God in His wrath said, "thy people," and how Moses in his wisdom in interceding said, "Thy people," and reminded God of His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Israel. The measure of Moses' love for his people and his God is seen in that he did not grasp at the offer of God: "*I will make of thee a great nation.*"

Moses interceded and pleaded for Aaron and for Israel (Deuteronomy 9. 20), and in this showed what a wonderful character was his. Moses was like the apostle Paul in his great love for the people of God. It was not in presumption that he said, "Peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin" (32. 30). Moses was an advocate, but the Lord Jesus is not only our Advocate, for he is also the propitiation; this Moses could never be (1 John 2. 1, 2).

It was asked why Aaron made a calf. It was felt that the calf was one of the gods of Egypt and so answered their purpose in their departure from God.

It was understood that the LORD'S smiting of the people (32. 35) was in addition to that recorded in verse 28, and that verse 35 refers to the plague. 

*William Gilmour.*

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**EXTRACTS**

From Belfast. —Israel sinned grievously against the LORD at Sinai; they added the heinous sin of idolatry to their former evils. Exodus 19—32 gives the account of Moses going up unto God in Mount Sinai, there to receive the Ten Commandments and the instructions regarding the making of the tabernacle. It was during this absence of forty days, when deprived of the influence of this godly man Moses, they sought after the gods of Egypt which they had so recently left; and so they made a golden calf. In the purpose of God the gold was intended to be used for the making of the tabernacle. There is the possibility of misusing the gifts that God has given us and applying them to an evil end. May we use our gifts to the glory of God.

Moses took the golden calf, ground it to powder, which he cast on the water and made the people drink it. In this there is seen the principle that we shall reap whatsoever we sow. Israel drank the bitterness of their folly; and so we, if we live unto sin, will reap in tears. May we, then, live in the Spirit unto God and reap an eternal reward. 

*N. C. Shields.*
From Glasgow.—The long absence of Moses made the people impatient, so that they cast off all restraint (32. 1). They clamoured for a god to go before them, for they were of the mind that Moses would not return. Which way did they purpose to travel? Acts 7. 39, 41 says, "To whom our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them, and turned back in their hearts unto Egypt... And they made a calf in those days, and brought a sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands," Aaron was drawn into this great sin by the multitude. He could have stablished the people by reminding them of the solemn words they had uttered before God not many days before. They had entered into a covenant with God (19. 8). Alas, Aaron gave way to their cry and took their gold and made a molten calf. They had broken the covenant by making and worshipping the golden calf.

Is there not a great lesson here for the people of God today, who are the house of God? Have not we made a covenant with God (1 Peter 1. 2)? If we break covenant and go back on our word, are not the words of Hebrews 10. 26-31 a solemn warning as to what will happen? Let us be sober and watchful; let us take these lessons to heart and be not like the people who saw the mighty works of God in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, and yet were disobedient and perished in the wilderness.

J. H.

From Atherton.—Aaron's failure was perhaps due to the fact that he was placed in circumstances far more difficult than those in which Moses was; but against this it was thought that never would Moses, great and noble leader that he was, have failed after this manner.

Moses' anger waxed hot when he realized the extent of the people's wrongdoing. In Moses we see tokens of true leadership—a tender loving heart for the nation, and no self-interests. Together with Aaron's disappointing failure, this would present itself as a sound lesson for leaders today. To be able to stand alone in the day of testing, and to be able to advocate on behalf of others are ever qualities required of leaders.

The use of the word "all" in verse 3 raised the question as to whether the Levites participated in the people's failure [1]. In answer, Numbers 16. 32-33, 26. 11 were read, and it was suggested that in the first of these portions the use of the word "all" is similar to its use in Exodus 32.


From Edinburgh.—Departure in heart and mind will lead to departure in ways and that, in turn, will lead to judgement upon us. Moses was wholly engrossed in receiving the commands of God, but God knew what was happening among His people, and His anger waxed hot. Moses had said, "I am not eloquent... I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (4. 10). But as soon as he heard of the judgement he pleaded for this people with a short eloquent prayer, and his prayer prevailed. It is well that today we have One who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and who is in the presence of God for us: it is of His mercies that we are not consumed.

When the anger of Moses was kindled, he cast down the tables of stone, and they were broken. It was suggested that this act was another hasty act that was not in the mind of God.

Some thought that the grinding of the gold to dust was figurative only, as gold is a malleable metal, but the majority accepted the statement as it stands. We may be compelled to eat the dust of our own actions, and this is never palatable [2].
Moses knew that God had a book and he was prepared to have his name blotted out for the sake of the people—a picture of the Lord who bore our iniquities and stands before God for us.  

James Paterson.

From Melbourne. —Some of the gifts of silver and gold given by the Egyptians (12. 35, 36) were used by Israel, not to cover the boards or make the golden lampstand, but for a purpose which incurred the righteous anger of the LORD; so much so, that He would have destroyed them all except Moses. Israel was accustomed to the gods in Egypt, but after the LORD saved them from the hand of them that hated them, " they sang His praise. They soon forgot His works " (Psalm 106. 12, 13). We, like Israel, are prone to forget the work of Christ on Calvary. Jeroboam, many years after, made two calves of gold. He set one in Beth-el and the other in Dan (1 Kings 12. 28, 29)—a repetition of Aaron's sin, but ever so much more subtle. Instead of the one place of offering in Jerusalem, the people were offering in two widely separated places. Beth-el and Dan are multiplied a thousand-fold today, and the one place of the Name, the house of God, is counted by countless numbers of believers as of no consequence. Disobedience among God's children today is seen on every hand. Grand singing and respectable church buildings are preferred to the written word and the indwelling Teacher of the word.

Israel's leader was absent for over a month. Their patience was tried and they failed. In the absence of our Leader, the Lord Jesus Christ, let patience have its perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

S. S.

From Birkenhead. —So seriously did God view this declension that He was prepared to destroy His people and make of Moses a great nation. That He did not pursue His purpose was due to the faithful intercession of Moses. Moses realized that he could only plead with God on the basis of His character. The people had no merits of which he could speak. Moses stood in the breach for Israel. That God was prepared to make of him a great nation was of little consequence to him. His sole concern was to plead with God for "Thy people. " Earnestly he reminded God of His promises to the fathers. Happily, Moses was successful. God was prepared again to show mercy to Israel. As the people of God today we are happy to know that we have One in the presence of God who intercedes for us. How much we need His faithful intercession!

As well as being an intercessor for Israel Moses is seen as the one who gave commandment for divine judgement to be meted out amongst the people (32. 27). Whilst Moses was in the mount he was taken up with the severity of God's proposed judgement: later, when he saw for himself the evidence of their awful departure from God, he returned to intercede with God again (32. 31).


From Kingston-on-Thames. —Israel had seen the wonder of the Red Sea, at Marah, in the giving of the manna, and in the giving of water at Rephidim; yet in spite of all these mercies they fell into idolatry in worshipping a molten calf, thus breaking the commandment of the LORD. The people asked Aaron to make them a god. It would appear that Aaron feared the people, and to content them fell in with their wishes, so that their ear-rings were converted into a molten calf.
The impatience of the people surely has a lesson for us today. For a long time now the coming again of the Lord has been promised, but the day of grace is still present. It behoves us to be watchful and patient, for it is possible we may become weary during the Lord's absence. The psalmist said, "I waited patiently for the LORD" (Psalm 40.1). May we run with patience the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12.1). The self-sacrificing love of Moses is very touching (32.11-14); he went so far as to ask the LORD to blot him out of God's book, but the LORD replied that those who had sinned would be blotted out of His book. A divine principle is thus asserted in Exodus 32.33 and Romans 9.1-3. W. H. Humphris.

From Southport. —Israel had seen much of idol-worship in Egypt, and it would be easy for them to turn to it at the delay of Moses. Albeit the divine comment in 1 Corinthians 10 leaves without excuse those who died, especially those who refused to come out on the LORD'S side at the call of Moses. Aaron must have regretted his own weakness when he saw its results. He may have thought it policy when he asked Israel for their gold. Moses stands out as the great intercessor, type of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7.25). We also see his deep love for his own nation when he declined to have the honour of being the head of a new nation, at the great expense of the loss of his people. We cannot but compare his plea (verse 32) with the plea of Paul for Israel in his day (Romans 9.3). Both pleas, beyond all praise as they were, are eclipsed by the mighty and perfect work and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby God can forgive the sins of His people.

T. R.

From Wigan. —The idol-worship witnessed in Egypt was evidently called to mind by Israel. In worshipping the molten image Israel were changing their glory for the likeness of an ox which eateth grass, thereby incurring divine wrath (Psalm 106.19-23). God loves a pleader on behalf of His people, for the LORD'S portion is His people (Psalm 135.4). He longingly looked for an intercessor in the dark days prior to the captivity, but found none (Ezekiel 22.30). Moses on this occasion stood in the breach to turn away God's wrath (Psalm 106.23). He pleaded upon the basis of the covenant which God had sworn by Himself (Exodus 32.13). The hallmark of true greatness is imprinted in Moses' words of self-denial; like Paul he was prepared to suffer eternal loss for those whom he loved (32.32, Romans 9.3). The interceding power of Moses receives divine recognition in that the day came when Israel's sins were said to be such that even the combined pleading of Moses and Samuel would not have availed (Jeremiah 15.1).

The Lord ever liveth to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7.25), not on the grounds of the Abrahamic covenant, but on the basis of His own sacrifice, for He is the repairer of a breach that none other could put right, a restorer of paths to dwell in (Isaiah 58.12). J. Sharratt, H. Caldwell.

From Cowdenbeath. —Israel at Sinai were encamped beneath a mount that still burned with fire (Deuteronomy 9.15). It might be thought that they would have been conscious of God's presence amongst them. The action of Aaron shows how weak leaders can cause people to stumble; leaders are not immune from error and it is sad to see Aaron, the one who was at this very time being marked out for such high honour, lending himself to the making of a molten calf. Good men can come under evil influences.
What a contrast there is between Moses and Aaron! Aaron, the servant of men by making the calf, a weak man at this time and afraid of the people, instead of protesting against their idolatrous wishes, actually made the calf (32. 35), thus making himself and the people equally to blame. In contrast, Moses, the servant of God, came down from the mount in an energy that was able to take a stand single-handed against the thousands of Israel and to execute judgement upon their wrong-doing, for he ground to powder the golden calf and sprinkled it upon the water.

So fierce was the wrath of God, that He would have destroyed Aaron also had not Moses pleaded for him (Deuteronomy 9. 20), for at that time he was totally unworthy of filling the office marked out for him.

Iain T. H. Hunter.

From Crowborough. —When Moses was called up into the mount, Israel soon forgot the mercies of God and in heart returned to the idolatry of Egypt. They looked to Aaron for a lead, and he failed in this great trust. This brings to the fore the need for right leaders, who will wisely guide. Wherein did Aaron fail? Was he himself unstable, or did he love to be a popular man? The hearts of men are prone to forget, and the apostle Paul found in his day that they were still the same (Romans 1. 21-23).

Moses' first plea on behalf of the people was for the honour of God, lest His glorious Name be blasphemed among the nations. This should be a guide to us in our supplications. All we ask from God should first be for His glory. The pleading of Moses raises a difficult point as to how far the purposes of God are influenced by the prayers of God's people.

In Isaiah 44. 14-20 we see the folly of making idols of wood. In Isaiah God says, "I am the LORD and there is none else." Israel had been commanded, "Thou shalt not make... a graven image." They saw no similitude of God when He spoke at Horeb. Satan is the master-mover behind idolatry. Today the word is "Guard yourselves from idols." Let not anything take the place of Christ in our hearts. Through Him God is revealed: He is the image of the invisible God.

S. S.

From Vancouver. —Apparently the children of Israel looked up to Moses more than they should have done. People sometimes fail to give glory to God when He works wonders through men; instead they magnify men (Acts 3. 11, 12; 14. 11).

According to Aaron's answer to Moses (32. 22), he was afraid of the people and so he did what they asked. Then the people said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." When Aaron saw how serious the situation was becoming he built an altar before the calf, and made a proclamation, saying, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." Today many voices call "Come out: worship with us." Except men are true worshippers, worshipping in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him (John 4. 23), they worship Him in vain.

Stanley Karp.

From Hamilton, Ont. —The apostle Paul said, "We know that no idol is anything in the world, and there is no God but one" (1 Corinthians 8. 4). Must one worship a golden calf to commit the sin of idolatry? Did not Samuel say, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim" (1 Samuel 15. 23)? Remember the words of Paul, "Wherefore, my beloved flee from idolatry" (1 Corinthians 10. 14).
We find it hard to understand why Aaron seemed so willing to make the golden calf. Could it be that he was afraid to refuse? "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Proverbs 29. 25). Again, before Moses went up into the mount, he said to the elders, "Whosoever hath a cause, let him come near unto them", i.e. Aaron and Hur (Exodus 24. 14). Could not Aaron have gone to the elders? When we look back and see how great men have fallen, well might we give heed to the words, "Be ye steadfast, unmovable" (1 Corinthians 15. 58).

Moses besought Jehovah on behalf of the people, and Jehovah repented of the evil He had said He would do unto His people (32. 14). The LORD listened to the pleading of His faithful servant Moses. How much time do we spend praying for one another and beseeching God on one another's behalf? How much value do we put on the words, "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (James 5. 16)?

D. MacEwan, W. Dryburgh, R. D.

From Nottingham. —The absence of Moses presented a particularly good opportunity for Satan to be busy. The Master knew the weaknesses of the flesh from which we suffer, and before He left us He bade us take a loaf and cup in remembrance of Him.

Aaron was deceitful in explaining the origin of the calf. The excuse that they knew not what had become of Moses was without foundation, for Moses left Aaron and the elders with a definite charge and a statement as to where he was going (24. 14). We know that Moses was in the mount forty days, which would speak to us of a time of testing, which Israel failed to endure. Not only had they left God and returned to the idols of Egypt, but also they were quite prepared to move on in their own strength.

The history of Levi was black (Genesis 49. 5-7); yet God brought them nigh, and in them and in Aaron we have ones who were to serve God in the closest possible service, that of the priesthood. Likewise God, in His wonderful grace, has brought us nigh to Him to serve Him as priests.

In the place where Israel was now encamped there was, evidently, plenty of water, having its source, we suggest, in the Mount of God. But the people were denied its full benefit through their own folly, for the calf, ground to powder, was strewn on the waters, thus making them bitter. Believers can lose the sweetness and joy of salvation by their own folly, for if we sin then the joy which could be ours might become bitter indeed.

R. Hickling.

From Toronto, Ont. —The Septuagint reads, "The people combined themselves against Aaron..." It is not revealed in Scripture that Aaron sought to restrain the people, nor can we assume that any period of time elapsed between verses 1 and 2, but rather that Aaron entered into leadership in this sin, instead of opposing it. It is noteworthy that both in Deuteronomy 9 and in Acts 7 the making of the molten calf is attributed to the people: they "rejoiced in the works of their hands." Nevertheless, it was a sin perpetrated by both Aaron and the people (32. 35). They were forgetful of God in their very midst.

The feast they partook of was a feast in honour of their new-found god, and the meat consumed came, possibly, from the offerings made on the altar Aaron had built.
We noted that the Hebrew word used for "play" in verse 6 is the same word translated "mocking" in Genesis 21.9, where we read that Ishmael mocked Isaac, the son of the free woman. The word carries the thought of mocking and insult, and surely in the eyes of God this was true of Israel's action in worshipping the golden calf.

In the action of the sons of Levi we have an example of separation and consecration—separation from that which was altogether evil, and consecration in service. We were reminded of the words of Paul to Timothy, "Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" (2 Timothy 2.19). This is the second seal which God has placed on His firm foundation; the first being, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." Levi answered the call, "Whoso is on the LORD'S side..." (32.26), which answers to the first seal, and their gathering together unto Moses and enacted God's judgement in the camp of Israel. We may, by separating ourselves from the unequal yoke and touching not the unclean thing, have this promise granted to us—"I...will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to Me sons and daughters" (2 Corinthians 6.14-18).

N. Kernaghan.

COMMENTS

[1] (Atherton). —There is no evidence that the tribe of Levi were not among the people who clamoured for "gods." There is ever room for repentance, and it is evident that Levi repented before they took the LORD'S side and went unto Moses and enacted God's judgement in the camp of Israel. —J. M.

[2] (Edinburgh). —The burning of gold is a highly skilled work, and Moses had no doubt learned to do this amongst many other things he learned in Egypt. He ground the burnt gold to powder, not gold dust. Gold being one of the heaviest of metals would have sunk to the bottom of the stream, but this gold powder evidently mixed with the water, and of this Israel had to drink. —J. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Glasgow. —Exodus 32.32. What book is referred to here?

Answer. —Besides there being a record of the wicked and their works (Revelation 20.12), there is, I think, a double writing of the redeemed, (1) the writing of the names of all redeemed persons (Luke 10.20), and (2) a writing of those of the redeemed in regard to their service (Revelation 3.5). The name of some may be blotted out of (2), but never out of (1). As to what Moses had in mind it would be very difficult, perhaps impossible, to say. —J. M.

Question from Edinburgh. —What is the fulfilment of Exodus 32.34?

Answer. —It may be in verse 35 in that the LORD smote or plagued the people for making the golden calf. —J. M.

Question from Hamilton, Ont. —"There fell of the people that day about three thousand men" (Exodus 32.28). Would these men be eternally lost?
Answer. —It is a difficult thing to say who in the Old Testament are eternally saved, and who are not. We should remember that Israel's salvation from Egypt was from a temporal power—Pharaoh and his people, and their salvation from God's wrath which fell upon the firstborn of man and beast was from literal, physical death, in which even little children who had never sinned would have died. These little children would not have gone to the fire of hell. The little firstborn male children of the Egyptians who died did not go to hell-fire; they had done no wrong. The teaching of Exodus 32 is God's punishment of His people whom He had saved, and in its typical teaching has its voice for God's people in this dispensation. —J. M.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

CHAPTER 1

Verses 12, 13, 14: One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.

The natural state of the Cretans was low; so much so, that their avarice, ferocity, fraud and begging, were proverbial, of which several ancient writers have written. Epimenides, a Cretan, and a prophet of their own, described them in the words quoted by Paul. Their ferocity is expressed in the words, "evil wild beasts," one of the lowest descriptions given of men. It is God's description of the coming antichrist, "the wild beast." Of their fraud, they were said to be always liars, and of their avarice and begging, they were lazy gluttons. One could hardly imagine a more demoralized people; and the miracle was that the gospel was received by many of them, and that there were churches of God in every city in Crete. There was ever the fear that they would slip back to their former manner of life and Titus was told to reprove them sharply or severely, that they may be sound, or healthy, in the faith. Also, that they were not to give heed to Jewish fables and the commandments of men who were turning from the truth, such as those of the circumcision of verse 10.

Verses 15, 16: To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Purity of mind is the result of the acting out by believers of healthful teaching. The word of God like pure water has a cleansing effect in the heart where it flows. Pure minds see pure things, but corrupt minds see things that are corrupt. Two people may approach the city, the one with eyes and heart full of lust, to seek the dens of sin and the haunts of vice, the other with holy aspirations, to seek the companionship and homes of the godly. The bee flies over the field seeking the flower with its scent and honey. The blow-fly seeks the stench of the corrupting carcase. We ever seek out what we are ourselves, the pure, the things that are pure, but to the polluted saint and unbelieving sinner nothing is pure, because their minds and consciences are polluted.
Profession and practice should agree. We should eschew what is implied in the words, "The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Genesis 27. 22). What profit is there in professing before men that we know God and deny Him by our works? The one cancels out the other. Works such as, being abominable, disobedient* and to every good work worthless, reveal a desperate plight in the conduct of any believer.

CHAPTER 2

Verses 1, 2: But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine: that aged men be temperate, grave, soberminded, sound in faith, in love, in patience:

How frequently Paul writes of healthy words and teaching! There cannot be a healthy spiritual life apart from health-giving instruction. Old men are to be temperate or sober; grave, that is, venerable or serious, not hilarious; discreet or of sound mind. They are to be sound or healthy in faith (not in the Faith here, though it is sound in the Faith in Titus 1. 13), and in their love and patience.

Verses 3, 4, 5: That aged women likewise be reverent in demeanour, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be soberminded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed:

Old women, like old men, were to be "in deportment as becomes sacred ones." They were not to be slanderers. Slanderer here is the feminine of Diabolos, devil. They were not to be given to much wine, but to be teachers of what is good, right or beautiful in conduct. The object was to school, admonish, counsel, rebuke, the young women in the holy arts of domestic life; to love their husbands and their children; to be soberminded or discreet; to be chaste, pure, modest; to be keepers at home, that is, "diligent in homework"; to be kind or good; to be subject to their own husbands, such is a woman’s place in relation to her husband as assigned to her by God. The object of all this is, that the word of God be not blasphemed or evil spoken of.

Verses 6, 7, 8: The younger men likewise exhort to be soberminded: in all things shewing thyself an ensample of good works; in thy doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us.

The younger men were to be exhorted to be soberminded or discreet. One is reminded of what is said of David while a youth, and shortly after he slew Goliath: "he behaved himself wisely"; "he behaved himself wisely in all his ways"; "he behaved himself very wisely"; and he "behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul" (1 Samuel 18. 5, 14, 15, 30). Titus was also to show himself a pattern in all good works. He was to be a model of the doctrine he taught. What Titus was in his behaviour he was to enjoin upon others. He was to manifest uncorruptness in teaching, in gravity, in sound or healthy speech, which could not be condemned. The object of this good behaviour, both in Titus and his hearers, was that those of the contrary part could say no evil thing of those in the churches in Crete.
Verses 9, 10: Exhort servants to be in subjection to their own masters, and to be well-pleasing to them in all things; not gainsaying; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,

Paul frequently gives instruction to slaves or bondservants, as in Ephesians 6. 5-8; Colossians 3. 22-25; 1 Timothy 6. 2. Here again he returns to the subject. Christian slaves were to be in subjection to their masters and to be well-pleasing to them in all things. They were not to be contradictory when their masters spoke to them. They were not to embezzle or steal their masters' goods, but to show good fidelity, being trustworthy. In this way, before their masters and others, the doctrine they held, the doctrine of God our Saviour, would be adorned and beautified in their eyes. The excellence of the doctrine would be seen in the changed behaviour of those who were once liars, evil wild beasts, lazy gluttons (1. 12).

Verse 11: For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

Appeared (Gk. Epiphaino—to shine upon, give light to): the epiphany of grace is before the epiphany of glory (verse 13). The first is through the incarnation, atonement and resurrection of the Lord; the second is at His coming again. There is no original word for " bringing. " Salvation (Soterios) is an adjective and is part of the subject " the grace of God. " Dr. Young in his version renders the verse, " For the saving grace of God was manifested to all men. " Alford also says that Soterios is part of the subject. The gospel is like sunshine, the former shines to bring eternal health to the soul, the latter to give health to the body. Foolish people may hide themselves from both and die, both in soul and body.

Verses 12, 13: Instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ;

The saving grace of God becomes the teacher of such as are saved by grace. It teaches us to deny, renounce, disown, ungodliness (we were once ungodly, Romans 5. 6, persons in a fearful state, yet it was for such Christ died), and worldly lusts (see 1 Peter 4. 2), and to live soberly, discreetly (behaviour in regard to ourselves), righteously (in regard to our neighbours) and godly (in regard to God's requirements) in this present age; looking for what God's grace teaches us to expect, even God's glory. This will be ours when the blessed hope will be realized in the coming again of the Lord, who has promised to return, at which time He will appear in glory to His own. This is not to be read as though the passage means two things, (1) the coming of the Lord, as Son of God, for His own, and (2) His coming, as Son of Man, with His saints. If it read the blessed Hope and the appearing of the glory, then there would be two things indicated, but there is no definite article before " appearing, " hence only the Lord's coming to the air is in view. Note how the Deity of the Lord is clearly indicated in verse 13. Jesus Christ is our great God and Saviour. The A. V. is not correct here; it indicates two Persons, the Father and the Son. J. M.
"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).

EDITORIAL

The children of Israel left Egypt in haste (Exodus 12. 33), but not in disorder, for the LORD delivered them with a high hand, and after the crossing of the Red Sea there was no element of flight in their progress. From the Red Sea to Sinai they were a disciplined people, learning much concerning the LORD their God by direct experience and by the judgements given through Moses, but as this was not a true and full expression of God's pattern in the ordering of His people, He instructed them step by step to bring them into conformity with His will. At Sinai they received the ten commandments (Exodus 20) and the judgements (Exodus 21-23), and there they were sprinkled with the blood of the covenant (Exodus 24). As a covenanted people they were then privileged to give to God, so that they might make for Him a sanctuary wherein He might deign to dwell in their midst (Exodus 25 et seq.). With the tabernacle set up and the ceremonials associated with it established, the tabernacle became the central place in the life of Israel, and the arrangement of the encampment was in definite relationship to it (Numbers 2). The encampment was no random or haphazard affair: each tribe had a place defined by the LORD, and there it must be. If we make a rough diagram showing the placing of the tribes relative to the tabernacle, and if we bear in mind that their journeyings were in the main towards the east and towards the north, we shall readily observe that the order of journeying defined in Numbers 10 is strictly in accordance with the order of encamping and, that the order of encampment was notably convenient for unconfused and orderly movement of the tribes when they were commencing a journey. Further, the marching column corresponded to the pitched encampment: "as they encamp, so shall they set forward " (Numbers 2. 17, 34). The order of the hosts of Israel on the march reflected the beautiful order of the encampment of the tribes.

God's present-day people, like the children of Israel, may be regarded as a pilgrim people going to a better country and as a people out-gathered unto God. They should be seen to have their entire life, discipline and worship in conformity with their standing relative to the house of God.

J. B.

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

CHAPTER 2

And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: To this church the Lord speaks as the One whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and His feet like burnished brass. Whilst to Ephesus He is the One who is present in the midst, and to Pergamum He is ready to make war with them with the sword of His mouth, here He is seen in the role of the Judge. By the inherent light which streams from His eyes He sees all. He needs no evidence to be led to arrive at a judgement. Brass speaks of judgement,
and here it is burnished brass. He knows perfectly and His judgement is just. He says, "I know (Oida) thy works: —love, faith, ministry, patience, —and He knew that their works now were more than at the beginning. All this was highly commendable. The whole church was not corrupted, but there was one evil allowed, and that was, that they suffered an evil woman whom the Lord called Jezebel, because she had the characteristics of that daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, who had married Ahab and led her husband and Israel into the sin and immoralities of the worship of Baal (1 Kings 16.30-32; 2 Kings 10.19-28). Jezebel in Thyatira taught the same as her ancient namesake, even idolatry and fornication. The church in Thyatira was responsible to deal with this evil woman and her followers. A number of expositors think that they see in Jezebel the church of Rome. What has this woman to do with the rise of the papacy? Nothing whatever! She lived at the time of John, towards the end of the first century of the Christian era, when political Rome was in power and papal Rome did not exist. So many bring their ideas to the Scriptures and cram them in, in order to take them out, instead of allowing the Scriptures to mould their thoughts. Jezebel was a woman who taught literal idolatry and fornication; those who listened to her, those in Pergamum also held this teaching. She was a woman; she is called, "the woman Jezebel," and not a church (so called). If this woman did not repent, and the Lord had given her time to do so, the Lord would take direct action toward her, and deal with her and her paramours who committed adultery with her. He would also kill her children with death. One can understand the simple, straightforward words of the Lord, but how all this can be wrought out in regard to the rise of papacy in Rome is quite inexplicable. It is like so many sermons and books that are written on the Bible; the Bible itself is often simple enough, but the preaching and writing of men are like dark clouds that shut out the light. The world would be well blessed if many of the sermons and books about the Scriptures were taken and publicly burned as was done with the books of magic arts in Ephesus long ago. Note here that the Lord speaks to all the churches; " and all the churches shall know. " He is the one who searches the hearts and gives to each according to his works. If the woman Jezebel is the church of Rome in the early or middle centuries of this dispensation, what churches were these that were outside of her, who were to know that the Lord was the Searcher of hearts and the Judge of actions? We are left in an inexplicable maze by this unscriptural periodic interpretation of these chapters and churches. Think of the words of the Lord, " But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira. " There were Jezebel and her dupes in Thyatira (not in Rome or anywhere else), and "the rest in Thyatira". The Greek preposition en, in, here shows clearly the location of those who are written to. Upon the rest in Thyatira the Lord cast none other burden than to clear themselves of the teaching and practices of the woman Jezebel, and to take such action toward her as was necessary. To defame the whole church in Thyatira, as some have done with their teaching concerning the Roman Jezebel, is to do injustice to the church in Thyatira and the faithful therein. The church in Thyatira was still a church of God where the Lord walked; it was not apostate Christendom.

He that overcame, and kept the Lord's words to the end, was promised a place of authority over the nations in the coming kingdom. When the Lord would rule or shepherd the nations with a rod of iron and break them as a potter's vessel, He would give the Overcomer the same honour
as His Father had given to Him. The Overcomer would also be given the morning star. Peter speaks of the Day (or Morning) Star arising in our hearts, not in the heavens, a reference to the Lord's coming for the Church (2 Peter 1. 19). This is no doubt in contrast to the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon those who fear God's name at the Lord's coming as Son of Man to earth (Malachi 4. 2). The Lord calls Himself the Bright and the Morning Star (Revelation 22. 16). The giving of the Morning Star to the Overcomer is some special distinction that will be given at the Lord's coming again; even as those will be rewarded who have waited for Him to reappear (Hebrews 9. 28; 2 Timothy 4. 8).

CHAPTER 3

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: Here the Lord speaks of Himself as having the seven Spirits and the seven stars. His having the seven Spirits is no doubt an allusion to what is said in Revelation 5. 6, "I saw... a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth." The Holy Spirit is seen as seven Lamps of fire burning before the throne (Revelation 4. 5). The Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son (John 15. 26). The Spirit, according to Psalm 139. 7-10 is everywhere, in heaven, in hell, and in the uttermost parts of the sea. He is omnipresent as all the Persons of the Godhead are (Jeremiah 23. 24). See also 2 Chronicles 16. 9; Proverbs 15. 3; Zechariah 4. 10, as to the eyes of the LORD being in every place, keeping watch. Such as spiritualize away the whole sense of the Lord's messages to the seven churches think that they see Protestantism in the church in Sardis. Protestantism was a protest at the first against the iniquities of the Romish church, in which a demand was made for the cleansing of that church and its priesthood. Where is there any protest made by Sardis against the evil woman Jezebel (said to be Rome) in the church in Thyatira? No such allusion is made to such a thing. To speak of Thyatira as Rome and Sardis as Protestantism is an interpretation forced into these passages of Scripture. It is pure imagination. The church in Sardis had a name that they were alive, but they were dead. Still they were a golden lampstand, and the Lord walked among them as He did in Smyrna and Philadelphia. Their position was right, but their condition was wrong. Their works were dead, a lifeless formality had set in. They were called to be watchful, that the things that yet remained, in which there was life but no movement, might be strengthened and established. Of old we read that the hair of the shorn Samson began to grow. Life in the once strong man began to manifest itself. Recovery was slow and gradual. Samson could never have his eyes again, but his hair grew. In time the evidence of his separation to the Lord was seen. A church may get far down spiritually, but if the matter of separation to the Lord and His service is attended to, there will be an evidence of life, of revival. Let not saints allow
everything committed to them to die, for if so, then they themselves will die, and a church that once existed will exist no more. Let us soberly ask ourselves, "What works of ours does God see before Him?" May we listen to what the Lord said to those in Sardis, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent." Received, hear, keep, repent! Is there not ever room for repentance, a change of mind which will result in a change of conduct? We may all change for the better or the worse. It lies with ourselves, and there is ever grace available for a change for the better. If the saints in Sardis did not watch, then the Lord would come upon them unexpectedly as a thief, and they would learn to their sorrow what such a visitation would mean for them.

But in contrast to the many, there were a few names in Sardis known to the Lord, who did not defile their garments. Garments speak of habits. Their behaviour was clean. Such the Lord said were worthy and would walk with Him in white. Walking with the Lord in unsoiled garments will lead to a closer walk with the Lord in the ages to come. We must walk with Him in His ways; He will not walk with us in our ways. Enoch walked with God. Noah too walked with God. Walking with Him demands that there shall be nothing in our lives that causes our hearts to be at a distance from Him.

The promise to the Overcomer in Sardis was, that his name will not be blotted out of the book of life, and that the Lord would confess his name before His Father, and before the angels. The second part of the promise is similar to what He promised to those who confessed Him before men (Matthew 10. 32; Luke 12. 8). As to the first part, it seems to me that there is a double writing in heaven, (1) the writing of all born-again persons (Psalm 87. 6; Luke 10. 20), and (2) a writing of such as serve the Lord (Philippians 4. 3). Only in the latter sense is it possible for names of redeemed persons to be blotted out of the book of life. We must ever distinguish between the new birth and service. In human affairs there are records kept of persons who are born, and also records of servants. These are not confused in men's affairs. Here is an honour for the Overcomer, to have his name confessed by the Lord in heaven, and shame for those who do not overcome, to have their names expunged from the record of the Lord's servants. May we have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the church in Sardis and to each of the other churches also.

J. M.

REST

At the end of a busy day we all enjoy rest at our own place with the satisfaction of a task well done. How we enjoy the relaxation! Concerning God we read in Genesis 2. 2, "He rested... from all His work." He had the satisfaction of a work well done; all was finished; everything was good; the time had come to rest. How sad that this rest was soon to be disturbed! From the day our first parents fell, God has been seeking His rest.

The journey to the land of promise, the land of rest (Canaan), was lengthened because of unbelief. That generation failed to enter the land; their children entered the land, but they never possessed it in the fullest sense. Elocutly sad are the words of Micah 2. 10, "This is not your rest," and of Hebrews 3. 10, 11, "They did not know My ways;... they shall not enter into My rest." Here is the crux of the matter—knowledge of the ways of God. What a picture the words of Hebrews 3. 7-11 conjure up in our minds! The children of Israel hardened their hearts, provoked and tempted the LORD; they did not know His ways.
Today we have a Living God, a Living Hope, and a rest which is God's rest. Unbelief brought failure in the past, now it is not the unbelief that resists the gospel, but the unbelief that does not know His ways. Another day of rest was promised, a sabbath rest for the people of God. We are to give diligence to enter into that rest today. It is our heritage, and we lose (and God loses), if in any measure we fail to enter in through unbelief. The day is fast approaching when this dispensation will cease, when we will rest for all eternity, and when God will rest undisturbed. The foundation is laid; the work is finished; we enjoy a foretaste of that glorious time, and can look forward in anticipation to the fulness of His rest.

How we are upset if our quiet evening is disturbed, especially if the disturbance seems unnecessary! But the rest that God desired was wilfully broken by our first parents; another day of rest was promised, but Joshua could not give that rest; yet another day of rest was promised—our day. God has manifested to us infinite love and patience. A glorious privilege and opportunity is ours today, if we know His ways. T. Hope.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
FROM SINAI TO MOAB (1), DIVINE INSTRUCTIONS, THE SILVER TRUMPETS, DIVINE ORDER, TO PARAN.
(Numbers 10. 1-36).

From Cowdenbeath. —According to divine instructions, a hammer wielded by a craftsman transformed rude quantities of silver (silver speaks of redemption) into two trumpets, which were to be sounded by the sons of Aaron (who were redeemed men) to convey certain instructions from God to His people.

The trumpeters and their silver trumpets present an excellent picture of persons who, though born in sin and shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51. 5), have so responded to the word of God (described as a hammer in Jeremiah 23. 29) that it has wrought a complete change in their lives, redeeming them from the thraldom of sin and from their vain manner of life (1 Peter 1. 18), and rendering them suitable channels through which the mind and the will of God, as set out in the Scriptures, can flow freely to others.

When the craftsman had completed his work, the hammer was laid aside and the trumpets were ready for use; but in the case of a person, this hammering action of God's word is a long-continued process during which the person may be used in God's service, the degree of the effectiveness of the process being dependent upon the person's response to the teaching of the Scriptures. We, as children of God, gathered together in churches of God, should endeavour to respond quickly to the action of the Scriptures (written aforetime for our learning) that we might be used of God, as the priests and their trumpets were—instrumental in passing on to others God's will for His people of the present day.

Numbers 10. 4, linked with Acts 15. 6, expresses the propriety of a regular meeting of the elders among God's people; verse 9 would speak of our need to voice our supplications when fighting to spread the gospel and when warring against our many adversaries; and verse 10 would surely speak to us of the voice of thanksgiving we raise each Lord's day morning when we remember the Lord Jesus, and as worshippers approach God through the virtues of our Great High Priest.

It is evident from the entire chapter that God is a God of order. Israel did not move in any haphazard manner. There were strict rules laid down by God to which it was required of them to adhere. At all times God demands discipline among His people; and His people of today are no exception.

Ian C. Ross.
From Atherton. The detailed instructions given in Numbers 10 reveal God pre-eminently as a God of order. The people in these matters were not permitted to please themselves, for this would have meant disorder.

The two silver trumpets were made from silver, probably from the freewill offering of the people (Exodus 25. 1-3). The compulsory silver offering was used entirely in the building of the Tabernacle (Exodus 30. 11-16, 38. 25-28).

The trumpet sounds would vary: for instance, at the calling together of the heads only one trumpet was to sound, whilst at the assembling of the congregation they were both sounded, thus giving a louder and distinctive sound. The call for assembling was given in short, sharp notes, whilst the alarm was a long continuous blast.

The counterpart for today in these instructions plainly indicates God's design in the collective gatherings of His people, to worship, to seek His face, and to hear His voice. We should recognise the divine order and the need for collective gatherings, for to relegate these matters to a secondary place will incur divine displeasure. God's plan is seen clearly in the psalmist's words, " Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice " (Psalm 50. 5). The need for the elders of God's people to be together in conference may be observed as present-day instruction (10. 4).

The journeyings of the people were to be orderly. From the set order there must be no deviation. Orderliness should be a characteristic of the people of God in all their activities: they should be seen in holy array. Order has its voice in testimony too: it will speak to men. As we assemble to serve, we do well to remember the word, " Let all things be done decently and in order " (1 Corinthians 14. 40).

We thought that as Israel journeyed the ark would find its place in the midst of the people. In view of this we could not understand verse 33, according to which it went before them. One suggestion given was that it did go before them, for with it was associated the divine presence. We would value help on this point [1]. J. Bullock, G. A. J.

**EXTRACTS**

From Kingston-on-Thames. —The two trumpets would seem to typify God's word, with its instructions for His people today contained in the Old and New Testaments (the two trumpets), always associated with the truth of redemption (silver) and the cross-work of Christ (the sacrifices over which the trumpets were sounded).

We are not told in this chapter whether Moses was able to persuade Hobab to accompany Israel, but Judges 1. 16 seems to indicate that his pleading prevailed. Since men had no authority as to the route taken or the choice of resting places, it is difficult to understand why Moses should suggest that Hobab would know how they were to encamp and would be instead of eyes to them. It may be that his services were required in relation to the feeding of the flocks and herds. It appears from the early chapters of Exodus that there was sufficient pasture to support animal life without divine intervention, so that after the camp was pitched Hobab's experience in this matter would be required in finding suitable pastures nearby. God does not perform miracles when human knowledge and wisdom, sanctified and subjected to His will, can achieve the desired ends. L. Burrows.

From Birkenhead. —Every time the silver trumpets were blown the people would be alert to their meaning, and continually reminded that they were a redeemed and covenant people, the trumpet sound itself being to them as the voice of God. In the land the trumpets were for their set feasts,
the **beginnings of** months, and the alarm for war, that Israel might be remembered before God and saved from their enemies. It is clear that each type of call would **be** known to the people by its distinctive note. There is an allusion to this in 1 Corinthians 14. 8, which emphasizes that in the ministering of the word of God, the message should be such as to **be** easily understood, the ministers themselves having **a** clear understanding of the needs of their hearers.

It is significant that the ordinance of the blowing of the silver trumpets in this chapter is followed by the account of the orderly assembling and moving forward of the tribes under their standards, with the princes and officers responsible for their direction. For the people of God today, the primary lesson in this is that of divine government and control through human instruments. For this the people of God need to understand their divine constitution. Whether in the assembling of overseers for conference, or in the gathering of the saints for worship and service, all should be according to the directing of the Holy Spirit Himself (Romans 15. 4-6, 1 Corinthians 12).

From Glasgow. —The blowing of the silver trumpets was an occasion for attention by every man in Israel. It was necessary that he listen intently in order to discern the nature of the message. It follows, of course, that the priests had to be careful to make the signal loud and clear, so that those for whom it was intended should be in no doubt.

We ask how the sound was carried throughout the expanse of the camp, particularly in the case of military urgency. Whilst no information is given on the point, we think that the blowing may have been repeated from different points in the camp.

The lesson for our day might be that we must be alert to the voice of God whatever His message, and that we must be quick to obey. The person charged with the dissemination of divine truth must be clear and certain in his ministry to saint and sinner.

In verses 11 to 28 we have instruction on how the orderly progress of the congregation was to be achieved. It is noteworthy that the vanguard armies were from the standard of Judah and were the strongest numerically. This may suggest that the strong among the LORD'S people have a duty to be in the forefront, as a shield to those who come after. The armies of Dan were the next most numerous and formed the rearguard. The sanctuary and its vessels were carried between the various armed hosts. Thus arranged they formed a lengthy procession which must have been many miles long. It is interesting to note from verse 34 that the cloud was over them by day, suggesting that the cloud was not located as when resting on the tabernacle, but extended over the line of march. This would be an encouraging sign of divine protection and an obvious warning to their enemies.

From Toronto, Ont. —In the wilderness the children of Israel were now a mighty army for God, several hundred thousand strong, all having been redeemed by the outstretched arm of Jehovah. This mighty host needed co-ordination and direction in unity. What more fitting than that the rallying-call for this army should be sounded from silver trumpets? **Let** the trumpets blow for gladness, for alarm, or for war, for journeying on the lifting of the cloud, for calling the princes or over the offerings, every note was a memory of the redeeming mercy of their God, when in love and pity He had brought them back to Himself from the bondage of Egypt. So by the silver trumpets Jehovah ensured that day and daily they should never forget His redemptive work.
No less today is redemption the basis of God's calling. Paul's counsel to elders was, "Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Redemption ground is still the rallying place of saints whether in joy or in spiritual conflict [2]. The crosswork of Christ must be our constant memorial. The continuous memorial of our redemption is a memorial unto the Lord, too; and though He needs no memorial of the work of Christ (for He looks upon His face), He ever loves His children to ponder and tell the story of redeeming love. A. J. Dorricott.

From Belfast. —In order to emit a clear melodious sound the trumpets must be perfect. The Son of God was perfect, and accordingly His life was absolutely true and unwavering. The trumpets were beaten before they could sound. The Lord was afflicted both by God and by man before the note of redemption could ring forth. Would it be correct to compare the trumpet with the saint [8]? Before we can lift up our voices to God or sound forth the word of God to men, we must be redeemed. There might also be a sense in which we require beating or chastening before we can emit a true note of service.

A number of non-Israelites came out with the people from Egypt, and God made provision in His law for such people and for all outsiders who sought to be identified with Israel. In saying that God would bless Hobab, Moses undoubtedly meant that the blessing of God to Israel would overflow to this stranger, rather than that he would be directly blessed. This is a principle seen throughout the history of Israel. God did and will bless the nations through His earthly people. It was considered that Moses could hardly have been in the mind of God in giving the invitation to Hobab to journey with the people and be to them instead of eyes [4]. The LORD was the "eyes" of the people and led them in the fire and the cloud.

J. A. Lennox Brown,

From Edinburgh. —The trumpet sound would be a familiar sound to the children of Israel, and it was the responsibility of Eleazar and Ithamar to give the proper sound. Trumpets of rams' horns were used by the priests in the days of Joshua: and in the days of David and Solomon other trumpets were used in the service of song in the house of God. The two silver trumpets, we suggest, speak of the word of God. The trumpet and the voice are often linked together. The sound was familiar in Israel; it was part of their life. It reminded them that they were not their own. The various sounds mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14. 7, 8 might suggest the warnings in ministry, when the rightly dividing of the word of truth should be known in the house of God today.

In the order of marching of the tribes Judah led: praise comes first. The ark was in the midst of the marching tribes, where Moses and Aaron would be as well. They were progressing towards a better country. The leader of each tribe is named, he would be responsible while the people were on the march. There was never failure during the movement of the people from place to place, but they certainly failed, when they remained encamped. Whenever the cloud was taken up the people journeyed in strict order. Once more we are reminded that God is not a God of confusion: whether in the past or in the present, things that belong to the house of God must be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14. 40)

Ian Hope.

From Hamilton, Ont. —The fact that there were two trumpets and that they were made of silver (probably of the redemption-money of Numbers 3. 44-51), speaks to us of the two-fold redemption of the people of God,
firstly from Egypt, then to God. Today all are called in the gospel on the basis of redemption (Ephesians 1. 7). The call into "the Fellowship" is also on the basis of redemption, the redemption of a people (Titus 2. 18, 14).

Divine instruction was given concerning the order in which the tribes should set forward. Judah ("praise") set forward first. Praise to God first is the secret of success for the people of God. (1 Peter 2. 5). Issachar ("bearing hire") is seen in Genesis 49 as "a servant under taskwork"; this speaks of service with a reward (1 Corinthians 4. 5) after God's praise has been forthcoming (1 Peter 2. 9). Zebulun ("dwelling" or "haven") speaks of "a sabbath rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4. 9, 10). Issachar laboured because he saw a resting-place that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant. Reuben is seen in Genesis 49 as the pre-eminence of dignity and power. Praise to God, followed by service and entering into God's rest produces dignity and power in our lives. Simeon means "Hearing." Having entered into God's rest, we are in a condition to hear Him speaking through His word. Gad ("the seer") reminds us that God desires a people of vision today (Joel 2. 28, Acts. 2. 16-18), who will do exploits for Him. Ephraim means "doubly fruitful." A people of vision, seeing their responsibility before God and toward the world, will be a "doubly fruitful" people. Manasseh ("causing forgetfulness") would indicate that fruitfulness can only come by forgetting the things that are behind and pressing on toward the goal (Genesis 41. 51, Philippians 3. 13, 14). Benjamin is "son of the right hand." The right hand is a place of importance with God (Acts 2. 88-35). We, as the people of God, have been highly favoured. Dan means "judge." Though favoured, we are reminded that judgement begins at the house of God (1 Peter 4. 17). Asher ("happy") reminds us that "Happy is the people, whose God is the LORD." (Psalm 144. 15). Naphtali ("wrestling") would point to the fact that our warfare is not against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6. 10-12). Lastly, Paran ("to beautify") reminds us of the beauty of the order of the camp of Israel of which Balaam spoke (Numbers 24. 5, 6). Such beauty of order should characterize us as the people of God today (1 Corinthians 14. 40).


From Middlesbrough. —God gave instructions for two trumpets of silver to be beaten out. Silver, in the Scriptures, typifies redemption. From this we learn that any man wishing to speak on behalf of Christ must first be a saved person. The trumpets were to be of beaten work: we ought to be willing to respond to the hammer of God's word. They were to be used on several occasions: for the calling together of the people, for an alarm before Israel moved, for a signal to mark the beginning of a set feast, and to be blown before the people went into battle.

Moses asked Hobab his brother-in-law, a Midianite, to go with them and be their guide. This was a failure on Moses' part [5]. If God could deliver Israel from Egypt, and guide them thus far, He could surely guide them on the rest of their journey. At first Hobab declined the offer, but with a little persuasion by Moses he agreed to stay and throw in his lot with Israel. This was against God's will, as was later shown when God used Moses to punish the Midianites.

Derek Goodwin.

From Crowborough. —We noted that the command to make the trumpets came from God, so also did the instructions as to how and when to use them (10. 1—11). Another important feature is that they were of silver and beaten work and of one piece. The silver reminds us of redemption, and the one piece of oneness. It would have been the cause of great confusion if the trumpets had given an uncertain sound. Responsible
indeed was the work of Aaron's sons, the priests, to give to the people the correct communication of God's mind and will. Great is the responsibility today of those called of God to instruct His people from His word regarding the collective activities of God's people. Even so it is greatly desired that His people give heed to His word to gather themselves together, whether to worship and praise Him, to move forward together with Him, to engage in collective spiritual exercise or in resisting our great enemy. Let the communicated and revealed will of God regulate His people in every way. Let it be sounded forth with clarity and heard with joy. In our giving heed to the revealed mind and will of God lies our greatest safeguard from all evil, and also great joy.

J. H. B.

From Liverpool. —Two views as to the typology of the silver trumpets were expressed: (1) they typify men through whom God speaks, and (2) they typify the word of God. We concluded that the second view was more acceptable, and the fact that the trumpets were to be of beaten work seemed to substantiate this view, in that those who would take up the word of God would need to "beat it out" in study and meditation. The R. V. M. "turned" is not to be confused with spinning or turning (on a lathe). It indicates the beating or turning of sheet silver round a shaped block of wood to give the form of a horn or trumpet.

There are a number of examples of the use of trumpets in both Old and New Testaments. In Jeremiah 6. 16, 17 we are told that Israel refused to hearken. Ezekiel 33. 1-9 gives a clear picture of individual responsibility of watchmen and people. Joel 2. 1-5 takes us onward to a future day, even the day of the LORD. "Blow ye the trumpet... sound an alarm..."

In the New Testament we are told that, "There are... many kinds of voices in the world" (1 Corinthians 14. 10), many to hinder and confuse the child of God. Christendom is full of confusion and error, because of wrongful interpretation and teaching put forth as truth. Uncertain sound (unscriptural teaching) cannot direct aright. Wrong teaching cannot but result in wrong practice; hence the confusion in Christendom today. Compare Nehemiah 8. 8.

A. P. Sands, AM.

From Wigan. —Whatever the purpose for which the trumpets might be sounded, there must be no confusion in the message: a clear note must be sounded. The apostle had this in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians concerning speaking with tongues: we should speak so as to be understood, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war" (1 Corinthians 14. 8).

In after days, in Israel it must have been a memorable sight, when the trumpets blended harmoniously with the voice of the singers in praising God, while the sweet savour of the burnt offering ascended from the altar (2 Chronicles 5. 12). And again, when the battle was before and behind Judah, and the priest sounded the trumpets, because Israel remembered God's word, He remembered them and saved them from their enemies (2 Chronicles 13. 14-15).

There was a beautiful order in Israel whether in camp or as they journeyed. God said they were "as gardens by the river side, as lign-aloes which the LORD hath planted, as cedar trees beside the waters" (Numbers 24. 6). Perhaps Paul saw this when he wrote to the Colossians, "beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ" (Colossians 2. 5). Among the tribes of Israel as they journeyed Ephraim and Manasseh had a beautiful place, always before them was the sanctuary (10. 21, 22; 2. 17, 18). Psalm 80 is significant. "Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that sittest upon the cherubim, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Manasseh, stir up Thy might."
The sweetest of all trumpet sounds has yet to be heard, that for which we wait, when "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thessalonians 4. 16). "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15. 52). J. Caldwell, J. H.

From Nottingham. —Dr. Young shows that the two main Hebrew words for "trumpet" in the Old Testament Scriptures are *chatsotserah* and *shophar*. There are some passages where other words are used. It is said by some Hebrew scholars that *shophar* refers to a trumpet used mainly for military purposes, and *chatsotserah* to a sacred trumpet used in association with the service of God's house.

The splendour and size of the great encampment of Israel must surely have been an object of wonderment to neighbouring nations. There were tents at each of the four points of the compass, all associated with God's house. Is it not God's desire that in this dispensation there should be believers from all points of the compass associated with God's house? The Lord Jesus spoke of "all the nations," and something of this is seen at Pentecost (Matthew 28. 19, Acts 2. 8).

Moses' great responsibility and the feeling of loneliness, which this burden encouraged, seem to have overcome him, at least for a time, in connexion with the incident related in verses 29-32. In Hobab Moses had a man who, through his every-day circumstances, was familiar with the desert. The human nature in Moses would look to this man for help. Indeed as the Scripture records, he could have become their "eyes" in the desert. But there was a better Guide than Hobab. God was to be their Guide; and, as the ark of Testimony was borne out three days in advance of Israel, God was directing their way. Good for us it is if we can trust our Divine Guide and "trust not in man; the arm of flesh will fail." R. Hickling.

**COMMENTS**

[1] (Atherton). —It seems clear that in the order of the march of Israel through the wilderness the Kohathites bearing the vessels of the sanctuary (called "bearing the sanctuary") were in the midst of the people, Judah and Reuben in front and Ephraim and Dan behind. But in the matter of finding a resting place for Israel, that is, a camping place, the ark was carried on in front of the people. One would think in the reading of Numbers 10. 33, that it was the ark of the covenant that sought the resting place. No doubt there would be some miraculous intimation from the ark or mercyseat in regard to the chosen place, of which, however, we are not told. The ark was the token of the divine presence, and the place in which God willed that He should rest was ever of His own choosing (see Psalm 132. 13, 14), whether He dwelt long time or short in a place. —J. M.

[2] (Toronto). Regarding Acts 20. 28, "to feed the church of God, which He purchased (acquired, R. V. marg.) with His own blood," we cannot speak of the "blood of God," an idea unsupported by any scripture whatever. The correct reading here should be, "*which He acquired with the blood of His own," that is, of His own Servant or Son, His Christ, whose blood is that of Man and not of God. Again, we must not confuse redemption in its first use, as applied to Israel, which was effected by the blood of the paschal lamb and the strength of a living Jehovah, with that effected through the redemption or atonement silver (Exodus 30. 11-16). These are two entirely different lines of truth which should be carefully
studied by our friends. Moreover, Christ died for many purposes other than to save us from the penal consequences of sin, and such a phase of redemption did not form the foundation of God's house in the past, nor does it today. (See Exodus 38. 25-28). —J. M.

[3] (Belfast). —There were two kinds of trumpets in Israel, the two silver trumpets (silver trumpets were to the number of 120 in Solomon's time—2 Chronicles 5. 12), and the ram's horn trumpets. The latter were used at the Jubilee, at the fall of Jericho, etc. The silver trumpets had four uses, (1) the calling of the assembly, (2) the journeyings of the camps, (3) war, and (4), at the set feasts and in the beginning of months they were blown over burnt and peace offerings for a memorial before God. The word for the ram's horn trumpets is derived from "what is clear", hence they gave a clear sound. The silver trumpets were so called, because they gave a quivering sound. There is no word for trumpets at what is called " a memorial of blowing of trumpets, " and " a day of blowing trumpets " (Leviticus 23. 23-25; Numbers 29. 1). Some have said that both kinds of trumpets, the ram's horn and the silver trumpets, were blown on that day, but there is nothing in Scripture to confirm this. The first day of the seventh month was the civil new year of the Jewish people, the time when it was thought the world of men and women began; it was also the seventh month of the Jewish religious year. It has been thought that this memorial of blowing of trumpets was to prepare Israel for the day of atonement ten days afterwards. I am not at all certain that the trumpets, either ram's horn or silver, typify either the Lord or His saints. I would be more disposed to the thought that they may suggest to us the sounding of trumpets, as in 1 Corinthians 15. 52: 1 Thessalonians 4. 16; Matthew 24. 31.

[4] (Belfast). —See what is said by Kingston-on-Thames. —J. M.

[5] (Middlesbrough). —See [4]. I would be very slow to condemn Moses for what he said to Hobab. We are glad to think of the eyes of the Lord being ever upon His people watching them with the tenderest care, yet, on the other hand, we have to use our own eyes and the eyes of any others who see more than we see. There is a balance in such things, and it is well not to run quickly to condemn God's great servants who served Him so well. I feel quite certain that Moses, in what he said to Hobab, was not thinking that Hobab's eyes would take the place of God's. —J. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Cowdenbeath. —Are we to understand that the term "sanctuary" (10. 21) excludes the ark of the covenant, or that God removed the ark to the van as a rebuke to Moses because of his words to Hobab: "Thou shall be to us as eyes" ?

Answer. —"Sanctuary" I understand to mean the vessels of the sanctuary with which the service of the sanctuary was performed. These vessels included the ark of the covenant. In seeking a new resting place for the ark and the God of the ark, the ark went out in front of the people of Israel. There is much food for thought in this. Hobab did not take the place of the eyes of the LORD, neither in Moses' thought nor in fact. —J. M.

Question from Kingston-on-Thames. —Did three days' journey separate the ark from the main body of the Israelites, or did it simply lead the way for the first three days, as the A. V. rendering of Numbers 10. 33 seems to indicate?
Answer. —As far as I can understand how this was done from the words of this verse (33), it would seem that the ark went three days' journey in front of Israel and would probably return to the people to guide them to the resting place. If any of our friends have a better explanation, we shall be glad to hear what they think.

Question from Hamilton, Ont. —Do we have any scripture to show that the silver trumpets were used in the land?

Answer. —I cannot say, but I would conclude that when Israel reached the land the silver trumpets would not be needed for the journeyings of the camps, but their other uses would remain, (1) calling the assembly, (2) war, and (3) sounding over the sacrifices. —J. M.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

CHAPTER 2

Verse 14: Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works.

This verse again emphasizes the Deity of the Lord. Jehovah in a past dispensation redeemed Israel, so that they should be to Him a peculiar treasure. He said, "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation " (Exodus 19. 5, 6). Similarly today, but on a higher plane, the Lord gave Himself for us, not merely to redeem us from past sins, but from present lawlessness, that is, from doing our own will and being a law unto ourselves, and to purify unto Himself a peculiar (that is, excellent) people. The character and conduct of this people is to be, " zealous of good works." To many saved folk the thought of God having a people is not in their thoughts. To many, evangelism fills entirely their thoughts and time, but God's will is that He should have a peculiar people, a subject people under the authority of the Lord, who is our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Verse 15: These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

In these instructions already given we have Paul authorizing Titus by the words of an inspired epistle to speak, exhort and reprove the disciples who were in the churches of God in Crete. In the carrying out of the apostle's commands no man was to despise him.

CHAPTER 3

Verses 1, 2: Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work, to speak evil of no man, not to be contentious, to be gentle, shewing all meekness towards all men.

Subjection is one of the basic truths of the Scriptures, subjection to rulers and authorities (Romans 13. 1), subjection of younger elders to older elders in the flock of God (1 Peter 5. 5), of wives to husbands (Colossians 3. 18; Titus 2. 5; 1 Peter 3. 1), servants to masters (Titus 2. 9; 1 Peter 2. 18), to those that help in the work and labour (1 Corinthians 16. 16), to one another (Ephesians 5. 21). Also the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; God has not taken the control of man out of his own
hand (1 Corinthians 14. 32). In contrast, "The mind of the flesh... is not subject to the law of God," and it is evident in these days that it is not subject to any other law, save the law of sin and death (Romans 8. 2); the lawless are increasing like locusts in the earth, devouring peace with an insatiable appetite. Believers are also to be obedient, save in such a matter as where the will of God and of men clash (Acts 4. 16-21). They are also to be ready towards every good work, to speak evil of no one, not to be quarrelsome, to be gentle or mild, and to show meekness to all. These are all excellent Christian virtues.

Verse 3: For we also were aforetime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

Who are the "we also"? It seems to me that there is here a contrast between "we" and "them" of verse 1. "Put them in mind," that is the Cretans. The Cretans were always liars (1. 12), their state before conversion. Then Paul gives us an insight into the state of the Jews, that is, those who are described as "we also." The Cretans, a pagan people, were degraded in their habits, but the Jews were really no better, for beneath a cloak of religion was a totally corrupted society. The Jews were without intelligence, disobedient (ever rebelling against God's law and that of the Romans), led astray, and serving various lusts and pleasures. As to their social life, that also was in rags; the Jews were living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. The conduct of each was hateful to others and consequently they hated each other. An external religion is but a mask, a guise to cover the natural wickedness of the human heart.

Verses 4, 5, 6, 7: But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

God is our Saviour; He is the Source whence salvation comes. Jesus Christ is our Saviour; He is the One by whom salvation was wrought. Kindness means first of all utility, usefulness. To give a millionaire a shilling would be no kindness, but it would be to a hungry beggar. To give a man a suit of clothes who has twenty suits would be no kindness, but it would be to a man clothed in rags. How well suited to the need of those whose righteousness is as filthy rags is the kindness of God! God's kindness is born of His love toward men (Philanthropia, philanthropy, only twice used in the New Testament, in Acts 28. 2, of the kindness of the pagans in Melita to Paul, and here of God's love toward mankind). God's philanthropy was manifested in the incarnation, atonement and resurrection of the Lord. This reaches us not through any good quality in ourselves or our works, for there is none that doeth good (Romans 3. 10-12). It is according to His mercy He saved us. We have been saved through or by means of the washing or laver of regeneration. [Laver, Loutron, is a noun here, not a verb; it is a laver or bath, though the use of the bath is implied, and may legitimately be rendered bathing or washing in a bath, whereby the whole person and not a part is washed or bathed. Note the distinction the Lord makes, in John 13. 10, between the washing of the feet in a basin and being bathed all over. "He that is bathed (in a Loutron, laver) neeth not save to wash (in a Nipter, basin) his feet, but is clean every whit "]]. Regeneration (Palingenesia) literally means, being born again, and is equivalent to "born again" (Gennao another) in John 3. 3, 7. The laver of regeneration is the word of God, through which, when received
by faith, through the message of the gospel in the power of the Spirit, the sinner is born again or regenerated (see John 3. 3, 7; 1. 12, 13; 1 Peter 1. 23; 1 John 5. 1), and is made clean every whit (John 13. 10; 15. 3; Hebrews 10. 22; Ephesians 5. 26), and in that state of purity he remains for ever, though his feet need to be washed, which means that the word of God needs to be applied to his ways and walk. Palingenesia is found again only once in the New Testament, in Matthew 19. 28, where it is used in a different sense, not in connexion with the regeneration of the individual soul, but the regeneration of human society at the coming of the Son of Man to earth, when a fountain shall be opened for sin and uncleanness (Zechariah 13. 1). "Renewing of the Holy Spirit": renewing (Anakainosis, found only here and in Romans 12. 2, but see cognate verbs in 2 Corinthians 4. 16; Colossians 3. 10; Hebrews 6. 6) describes the complete renewal of the individual by the Holy Spirit. These two statements regarding regeneration and renewing are complementary, and describe the operation of the word and Spirit of God on the soul, as spoken of by the Lord to Nicodemus, when He said, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3. 5). This act of God in grace is, Paul says, "poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Having been justified by grace (Romans 3. 24), we have become heirs (of God and joint-heirs with Christ—Romans 8. 17), according to the hope of eternal life. This is not the hope of having eternal life sometime in the future, but the hope that springs from and belongs to eternal life, in which state we were saved (Romans 8. 16, 17, 24, 25), in which hope we rejoice that one day we shall enter upon the inheritance of the saints in light, for which God has made us meet (Colossians 1. 12, 13).

Verses 8, 9: Faithful is the saying, and concerning these things I will that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they which have believed God may be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men: but shun foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

The "faithful saying" here is what Paul has been writing about, salvation, regeneration, and so forth. Such things were to be affirmed confidently. The present object of this is, that those so graced of God as to be saved, regenerated, renewed, justified, and to enjoy for ever a glorious inheritance, should maintain good works consistent with the grace they have received. Good works wrought by Christian people are both good and profitable to men. But what could be more inconsistent than that the heirs of heaven should be moving heavenward wrangling about what they have in the flesh, such as the Judaizers were doing, continually rhyming off their genealogies, as though to be children of sinners was to be compared with being children of God? The Lord said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and flesh it remains with all its sin and troubles. But many Jewish believers never seemed to enter into the meaning of the Lord's words and the teaching of the apostles, and were a continual menace to peace and a hindrance to the progress of the Lord's work. Such questionings and genealogies and legal contentions begat strifes and fightings and were unprofitable and vain.

Verses 10, 11: A man that is heretical after a first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned.

A heretical man is a self-chooser, a party man who by his practice and doctrine would make a sect, "a self-chosen and divergent form of religious belief and practice." He is sectarian in out-look and intent,
"one who creates a faction." It can be seen how dangerous such a person would be to the Fellowship. He is to be given a first and second admonition publicly before the church, and if he is obdurate, he is to be refused or rejected by the church; they are to decline fellowship to him, not simply to close his mouth, as in chapter 1.11. See 1 Timothy 5.11, where we have the same word. The younger widows were to be refused enrolment as widows to be supported by the church. See also 1 Timothy 4.7; 2 Timothy 2.23; Hebrews 12.25 for the same word. The heretical man is perverted (Ekstrepho, from Ek, out of, and Strepho, to twist or turn round). It means "to turn inside out," "to change for the worse," "to become corrupt." Such a one sinneth, is living in sin; it is his habit. He condemns himself.

Verses 12, 13: When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, give diligence to come unto me to Nicopolis: for there I have determined to winter. Set forward Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

Artemas is not elsewhere mentioned, but Tychicus is mentioned several times. Paul hoped to send either of these brethren to Crete to relieve Titus, whom Paul wished to come to him to Nicopolis (supposed to be Nicopolis in Thrace) where Paul had decided to winter. Zenas and Apollos had been in Crete, and Titus was exhorted to send them on their journey diligently and to see that nothing be lacking to them for the journey. The epistle was evidently written when Paul was at liberty, between his first and second imprisonment. It may have been written from Macedonia about the time of the writing of 1 Timothy.

Verse 14: And let our people also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

It is profitable here to note the importance of the word "also." Titus was to set forward Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, and that nothing be wanting to them, and the saints also were to maintain good works for necessary uses. Why does Paul say this after he has spoken about the journey of these two servants of the Lord? It seems to me that if the saints did not give of their substance, then there would be meagre supplies for the Lord's servants on their journey. Saints were to give, and Titus was to see that the Lord's servants' needs were met.

Verse 15: All that are with me salute thee. Salute them that love us in faith. Grace be with you all.

Those who were with Paul at the time of his writing, who are not mentioned by name, saluted Titus, and Titus was to salute those who loved (Phileo) Paul and his co-workers in faith. Some translators think, though there is no definite article before faith, that it is implied in the grammatical construction, and that it should read, "Salute them that love us in (the) Faith."

Paul closes with his usual salutation in all his epistles—"Grace be with you all."
"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).

EDITORIAL

From time to time we have remarked on the notable oneness of mind expressed in the papers submitted, but this month there is a distinct divergence of opinion as to whether Moses lost somewhat as to his leadership of the people and as to his standing in the LORD'S things, because the LORD took of the Spirit that was upon him and put it upon the seventy chosen elders (Numbers 11. 17, 25). Some suggest that Moses lost nothing through this, while others seem to imply that what the elders gained Moses lost. It is not our purpose to argue this point, but we should like to point out that the latter view is not a logical necessity arising from Numbers 11. 17, 25. If we are right in understanding that the Spirit referred to is the Holy Spirit, then the Acts of the Apostles supplies abundant evidence that the giving of the Spirit by the Lord does not involve loss to those already indwelt by the Spirit. The same would be true as to those upon whom was the Spirit of God in Old Testament times.

We recall a pictorial illustration (formerly much used in reference to the gospel) of the lighting of one candle from another, the comment being, "My light is none the less." If we are used of God to bring the light of the gospel to others, we are not thereby rendered less enlightened. The same is true of the ministry of the word to the saints. If the Lord bless a man with light on a vexing subject, and he pass on to the saints what the Spirit has taught him, he is not therefore the less rich in spirit. Temporal things are not so. Sharing them involves loss, but the things of the Spirit are shared without loss, possibly with gain. If, then, we seek wealth, let it be spiritual wealth, and let us pray that the Lord will raise up Spirit-taught teachers so that there may be increasing light among His people.

"O send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me" (Psalm 43. 3).

J. B.
NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION
CHAPTER 3

To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: Of Philadelphia one writer says, "Philadelphia signifies brotherly love, ' and evidently points to the characteristic feature of the work of God in our days. " The revival of long-forgotten truths, and their application to the souls and lives of God's saints, was the Philadelphia work of eighty years ago. " Here we are supposed to get the meaning and intent of this periodic teaching of the seven churches. Philadelphia is derived from Philo, I love, and Adelphos, brother, and means "brotherly love". So the teachers of the "Brethren" movement apply this to themselves, as to what took place in Dublin and Plymouth. We have already pointed out that this city was called after its founder Attalus Philadelphus who lived before the Christian era began. What the name of the city of Philadelphia had to do with brotherly love among the Christians who formed the church in Philadelphia is a mystery. It becomes a bewildering mystery when it is applied to the "Brethren" movement, as is done by the writer whom I have just quoted, and by others also. It is easy enough to write piously about brotherly love amongst so-called "Plymouth brethren," but what are the facts? Are such writers serenely oblivious of the cruel division between Darby and Muller, which separated these two men's followers into two camps even to this day? We need not refer to lesser divisions which have taken place from time to time in both camps. The exposition regarding Thyatira, that the woman Jezebel is the Papacy, is bad; that concerning Sardis, that this is Protestantism, is equally bad; but, if possible, the claim by "Brethren" writers that Philadelphia is the "Brethren" movement is worse. Philadelphia has nothing to do with the "Brethren" movement. It was a city in which there was a church of God in the days of John the apostle in the first century of this dispensation.

The Lord writes to the angel of the church in Philadelphia as "He that is holy, He that is true." He is the Holy One of God, of absolute holiness, equal to that of the Father and the Holy Spirit. He is also true, for He is the Truth. It is impossible for Him to lie. He could not say what was untrue from ignorance or by intent. He said, "He that sent Me is true," and "My witness is true" (John 8.14, 26). He also speaks as the One who has the key of David, who opens and none shuts, and shuts and none opens. He knew the works of those in Philadelphia, and that they had kept His word, and had not denied His name. They had also a little power left, as though to indicate to them that they had had greater power at an earlier time. He set before them an open door. He would assist them; He would open a door for them to enter. How needful it is in the work of God that the Lord should open doors for the entrance of His word! See what Paul said about a great door and effectual being opened to him at Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16.9; see also Acts 14.27; 2 Corinthians 2.12; Colossians 4.3).

In Isaiah 22.20-25 reference is made to the key of David, and to the work of Eliakim, on whose shoulders it was laid in the past. Shebna the scribe and treasurer was to be thrust from his office, and Eliakim exalted to the place of authority. Such indeed is the Lord; no one else but He is worthy to occupy the seat of having all authority in heaven and on earth. He will shut and He will open as seems right to Him.

There was a synagogue of Satan in Philadelphia as there was in Smyrna, those who, like their master, were opposers of the truth and work of God. See how Satan opposed the work of God in the returned remnant from
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Babylon (Zechariah 3. 1, 2). Where God is working Satan will also be found working in opposition. Those who composed the synagogue of Satan, Jews according to the flesh, but not Jews according to Paul's judgement in Romans 2. 28, 29, were in due time to be brought and made to worship at the feet of those in the church in Philadelphia, and to know that the Lord loved these saints. This does not mean that these saints would be worshipped as God is worshipped, but that the Lord would honour them in this way, because they had kept the word of His patience. Patience here means endurance—"the word of My endurance." "James says, " We call them blessed which endured" (5. 11). There was a present reward for the Philadelphian church, that, because of their endurance, the Lord was going to keep them from the hour of trial that was coming on the whole inhabited earth to try the inhabitants thereof. This has nothing to do with the time of the Great Tribulation, for those saints with all the saints of the Church which is Christ's Body, will not pass through the Tribulation, whether they have kept the Lord's word or not. The Lord will have come to the air for the Church before the seventieth week of Daniel 9 begins; this applies to Israel, and the second half of it is the time of the Great Tribulation. The New Testament writers wrote in the strain that the Lord's coming was imminent, and so here the Lord speaks of coming quickly, as also in chapter 22. 7, 12, 20. The Greek word Taxu here may mean speedily, hastily, or soon, shortly. It seems gravely possible that, through our failing to hold fast what has been entrusted to us, the crown we might have received may be given to another who has been more faithful.

The promise to the Overcomer in Philadelphia is very outstanding. The Lord says, " I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God, and Mine own new name. " We might say that it is a galaxy of promises. First the Lord says, " I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God. " But we read of the new Jerusalem, that John says, " I saw no temple therein, " that is, no material temple; yet there is a temple, " for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. " Evidently faithful men will have a close and permanent association with Deity in that coming city and in the worship therein. Let none despise or mar God's present-day temple (which is not the Body of Christ) in the light of what is coming (1 Corinthians 3. 16, 17; 2 Corinthians 6. 16; Ephesians 2. 21, 22). God's temple is God's house. On this pillar will be written three names: the name of His God, that is, the God of the Son of Man, who in His Manhood became a worshipper, the name of the new Jerusalem, and the Lord's own new name. If the name of the new Jerusalem will be written on certain of the saints of this dispensation, we can from this see who will compose the Bride of the Lamb, which is the new Jerusalem. Though the names of the twelve tribes of Israel will be on the gates of the city, this does not prove that the Bride is the redeemed of Israel, or that Israel is incorporated with the Church to form the Bride. We expect to deal with this point later on. The Lord's new name is not revealed as yet.

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The state of the church in Laodicea is supposed to set forth the last phase of what some are pleased to call "the professing church." But what is the professing church, and what does it profess? Is it Christendom, that Babylonian conglomeration which pays but lip-service to Christ? The writer before referred to says, "Whatever the general condition of the church may be at any period, Christ never deserts it." Again he says, "The true and the false may enter the * House . . . * caught up,' and * spued out' intimate the respective
destiny of the true and the false, of true believers and mere professors."
The church in this writer's view is a mixture of saved and unsaved people, a view of the church never once found in the New Testament Scriptures. Indeed the call of God condemns such an idea. God's call to the church of God in Corinth was, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers... Wherefore Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6. 14-18).

The confusion of Darbyism as to "the church of God" and "the house of God" is utter and complete. No unsaved people are contemplated as being in the church in Laodicea, nor in any other church of God. "Lukewarm" shows that the saints had some measure of warmth, though such a state is detestable to the Lord. An unsaved person has no warmth at all, he is dead in his trespasses and sins, and as cold as death. If "lukewarm" means mere profession, the whole church was lukewarm, and therefore there was not a saved person in it. Let us think for a moment of the church of God in Corinth as giving guidance on the composition of a church of God. We are told in 1 Corinthians 15. 2 that they were saved by the gospel that Paul preached. Also, the body of each of the saints therein was "a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 1. 19), and they had each been baptized in one Spirit (the Holy Spirit) into one Body (of Christ) (1 Corinthians 12. 12, 13). Where are the false believers here? Then, God's spiritual house is built of persons who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and, as living stones, have come to Christ, the living but rejected Stone, to be built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2. 2-5). All these had been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, and were born again (1 Corinthians 1. 18, 19, 23). Where are these false believers and mere professors in the church and house of God? Laodicea does not represent a professing church at the close of the dispensation of grace, but was the church of God in the city of Laodicea, of which we read in Colossians 4. 13-16, "the church of the Laodiceans."

The character in which the Lord presents Himself to this church is that of **the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God. **God is **the God of truth** (Isaiah 65. 16, Amen, R. V. marg.). The first words that God put into the mouth of Balaam were concerning His truthfulness.

"God is not a man, that He should lie; Neither the son of man, that He should repent: Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? "(Numbers 23. 19).

God is not yea and nay. As to "the promises of God, in Him (Jesus Christ, the Son of God) is the yea: wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us" (2 Corinthians 1. 19, 20). God speaks down to us in His Son and says, "Yea," and we say back to God "Amen" through His Son. The Lord Jesus is the Amen in all the work of God, whether in creation (John 1. 1-3), or in grace (John 1. 14, 16, 17), or again in judgement (Revelation 19. 11-16). He is the true expression and response, the Amen, to the mind and will of God. Never at any time has He been or could He be out of alignment with the mind of God. Hence He is the faithful and true Witness. He, the incarnate Word full of grace and truth, came to tell God out or declare Him. He is the Beginning of the creation of God, though He Himself has no beginning nor end. He is, as the Almighty Himself, the Beginning and the End (Revelation 1. 8; 22. 13), the Alpha
and the Omega. In Him and through Him and unto Him were all things created (Colossians 1. 16), and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist or exist (verse 17). It is the rankest heresy to hold that there was a time when the Lord was not, and a time when He was created. This was the doctrine of Arius, a doctrine which was condemned in the early centuries. His followers, the Jehovah's Witnesses (so-called), and others, are with us at this day. The Lord is the eternal Son of the eternal Father. God, the Father, and God, the Son, are co-existent. Many, many scriptures proclaim the true and full Godhead of the Son.

Why had the Laodiceans become lukewarm? The answer is that they had turned from the Lord to things. They had become rich in material things and they had need of nothing. They were well-found as to worldly things, but, alas, in the heavenly things they were poor. They had temporal and material wealth, but they seriously lacked that which was spiritual and eternal. They did not even seem to need the Lord. Once they were hot, that is boiling, boiling with vigour and enthusiasm, but now the fire was burning low and they were tepid and insipid. The Lord was about to vomit them out of His mouth; His portion in them had lost its pleasantness. They only thought that they were rich, while they were poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked. They had not learned the teaching of the Lord, that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth. The wealth of a man is in what he is, not what he has. His wealth is in his soul, not in his pocket. The Lord spreads His riches before them like a merchant in the market place, and calls on them to buy from Him. He has for sale fine gold, white garments, and eyesalve for their blindness. They are deaf to the cry of the Divine Merchantman, so He packs together His goods and makes His way to their homes, and as a pedlar stands at the door and knocks. He will come in to them with His riches, if they will but open the door to Him. Moreover, He is prepared to sup with them and they with Him. What an enriching Christ is this! Some there are who think that the Lord's words set forth a day of individual testimony at the close of the dispensation. Nothing can be further from the truth. The saints here addressed were such as were in the church of God in Laodicea, not saints sitting at home and in fellowship in no church at all. We know that in the last days perilous times will come, as Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 3, but we must not allow ourselves, because of this, to dose off into sleep, thinking that the church in Laodicea prophetically sets forth a time of apathetic indifference to collective testimony at the close of the dispensation. The truth regarding the church in Laodicea was for that church towards the close of the first century. We, of course, may learn lessons therefrom, as we can from what is said to the church in Ephesus, and to the other churches as well. All these churches have words of instruction for us, if we have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He said to the Laodiceans, "As many as I love, I reprove and chasten. " He loved them. They were His born-again people, not false professors, mere tares to be cast out and burned. He called upon them to hear His voice through the Spirit. He spoke, but it is equally true that the Spirit spoke His message.

He holds out to the Overcomer a glorious promise. He says, "I will give to him to sit down with Me in My throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne. " We can never sit on the throne of the Father; only Deity may sit there. Of old David and Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah in Israel. It says, " Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD (Jehovah) as king instead of David his father, and prospered " (1 Chronicles 29. 23). This is Messiah's throne in which the Overcomer will sit with the Lord, as He promised.  

J. M.
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
FROM SINAI TO MOAB (2), TABERAH, MURMURINGS AND DISAFFECTION, THE SEVENTY ELDERS APPOINTED.
(Numbers 11. 1—12. 16).

From Belfast. —Israel murmured against the LORD. It is always serious to speak against the LORD, and it was proved so here by the children of Israel. So great was the anger of the LORD that fire came out from His presence and consumed some of their number. We believe this to be literal fire. The people cried to Moses. Time and time again they had done so, and each time the man of God had interceded on their behalf. Moses' work speaks graphically of the work of the Lord Jesus on behalf of His people.

We might think that this would have been a lesson to Israel, and to those who journeyed with them, but trouble soon broke out again in the camp. It was started by those who journeyed with them, i.e., the mixed multitude, who murmured, and the children of Israel soon joined in the murmuring. This time they thought of the good things which they had had in Egypt. Gone were the thoughts of how they had been ill-treated in Egypt, and of their groanings whilst they dwelt there (Exodus 2. 23-25). They overlooked the fact that God had delivered them, and called them out to be a people for His own possession.

The trouble eventually came to the ears of Moses, and caused him to feel discouraged. Five times Moses indicated to the LORD his weakness, and pleaded to be relieved of the burden of the people. The LORD acceded to the request of Moses, and appointed seventy elders to help with the burden. Some thought that Moses should have continued alone in faith to bring the people through. It was the people who had failed, and this caused their leader to become greatly discouraged. If the people had obeyed the statutes of the LORD, they could have been led by Moses. It shows us something of the magnitude of the burden Moses bore, in that seventy elders had to be appointed to share his burden.

Attention was drawn to the words, "I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them" (11. 17), and a contrast was made with 1 Corinthians 3. 16, where the Spirit of God is said to indwell all the people of the new covenant. [Should be 1 Corinthians 6. 19. —J. M. ]

The LORD judged Aaron and Miriam for their sin. This should be a lesson to us against covetousness and murmuring against one whom God has called to leadership in His house. We should wait upon the LORD, for He will judge rightly. Moses interceded for Miriam, but her sin had been committed and God's judgement had fallen, and she paid a price for her folly which in its outworking affected the whole camp and brought the progress of the people to a temporary standstill. We learn this lesson, that sin by one in the assembly affects the whole and retards the blessing of God until the sin has been properly judged and purged.

E. C. Coyne,
The mixed multitude that came out with Israel showed its character by its lusts and desires, and the children of Israel fell into the snare with them and lusted for the food of Egypt. It is easy to be influenced by the mixed multitude, hence a warning is left for us to be truly separated, with our faith and trust stayed upon Jehovah.

Israel craved the six things of Egypt (the world), but ignored the seven good things associated with the land. We should heed the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 10. 10, "Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer. " Taberah was the place of burning, of judgement, where God brought forth fire upon the people. We recall that in Elijah's day God brought forth fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice (1 Kings 18. 17). How dreadful is the burning fire of judgement!

Through their coldness of heart the thing provided by God, the manna, lost its appeal and they complained that their soul was dried away. When such a condition exists, men turn to the unsatisfying things of the world.

Israel forgot God, " they believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation " (Psalm 78). He who had brought them out with a mighty arm and gave to them His law was soon forgotten. Would we also forget the wonders of our salvation? the marvellous truths handed to us? It happened to the early churches, and Satan would seek to see it come to pass again. God will supply that which is best for us. Psalm 107. 9 tells us of satisfaction for the longing soul, and this is for us today. Let us learn to seek after the One who " filleteth the hungry soul with good", and like Daniel abstain from the dainties of the world (Daniel 1.12-19).

F. Lorenz, J. J. Thomas.

From Melbourne. —We have grave warnings as to the evils of complaining and murmuring. At Taberah God's judgement was swift, fire burnt amongst the people, consuming many. This judgement seemed to fall particularly upon those in the uttermost parts of the camp, which seems to suggest that the cause of the complaining was with those who were out of touch and who fell an easy prey to this complaining. The apostle Paul says in Philippians 2.14, " Do all things without murmurings, " a timely word of advice, for much evil can commence with complaining.

Following hard upon this solemn lesson, Israel again failed, for they murmured when their minds went back to Egypt again. For us, it is so easy, if we get out of touch with the Lord, to let our hearts go back to the world and the things of the world, things which we entered into before we owned the Lordship of Christ, but which we renounced. Alas, many a bright Christian has turned back in heart to the world and then forsaken the Lord. Such an one was Demas: " Demas forsook me, having loved this present world " (1 Timothy 4. 10). He did run well, but turned back. Let us learn then, to keep close to our Lord.

It would appear that the mixed multitude among Israel caused the murmuring, which soon spread throughout the people. Let us search our heart continually lest there be in any one of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. We must watch for any sign of murmuring, whether in ourselves or amongst the saints, for its insidious working is corrupting, and, unjudged, will bring judgement from God.

God met the request of the people for meat, but sent the plague upon them. Psalm 78. 22 gives the source of the trouble. " They believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation. "

P. W. A.
The words "wept again" (11. 4) seem very expressive, they show the true state of many in Israel. Their eyes, unlike those of Moses, had not the forward gaze of faith, but they were constantly looking back to the things from which they had been saved. Their spirits would have been cheered had they looked ahead to the promise and trusted in the LORD their God. The spirit of looking forward to what lies beyond this scene was characteristic of Paul and must be seen in us too, if we are to please our Lord.

One difficulty is the reconciliation of the R. V. and A. V. texts in Numbers 11. 25. The R. V. says, "they prophesied, but they did so no more." The A. V. has "they prophesied, and did not cease." Which of the two texts is the correct rendering? [1].

The effect of the putting of the Spirit upon the seventy reminds us of the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit filled the disciples and they demonstrated this by their actions. Believers, indwelt by the Spirit of God, should be in that condition which will allow outward evidence of that which is within.

Two who were still in the camp, Eldad and Medad, began to prophesy. Is there any significance in the fact that these two men were still in the camp? [2].

Joshua, full of respect for Moses, said, "My Lord Moses, forbid them". Let us note the answer this elicited from Moses, that very meek man: "Would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them." Moses had not fallen into the error of thinking God could use none other, a mistake into which we can easily fall today.

It is worth noting that Moses is not recorded as having made any reply to Miriam, when she spoke against him. God heard, God judged and God spoke. Scripture says His anger was kindled against them, but only Miriam appears to have been punished. Was this, perhaps, because God, who knows the heart, knew from which of the two the initial move had come? [3].

R. Hickling.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —Moses experienced a difficult time. We speak of the patience of Job, but Moses certainly had need of much patience; he was continually pleading with God on behalf of Israel. We also have the Lord Jesus, who acts as our Advocate.

The mixed multitude that went with Israel on their departure out of Egypt, fell a lusting, and they caused the trouble. There is no place for a mixed multitude in the churches of God. Paul wrote to the church in Rome concerning those who caused divisions and stumbling (Romans 16. 17-20).

We are all put to the test as we journey in this scene, and whilst we are only sinners saved by grace, we may well ask ourselves, "Are we weary of the manna? Does Christ fail to satisfy our hearts? Are our longings sometimes taken back into the world?" It would be a sad day if this should occur. May our gracious God keep us from such desires. Isaiah said, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee" (Isaiah 26. 3).

W. H. Humphris.

From Edinburgh. —We suggest that the fire which showed God's acceptance of the burnt offering (Leviticus 9. 24) would be different from the fire of God's judgement [4]. Moses prayed and the fire stopped, but the memory remained, since the place was named Taberah, a place where Israel provoked their God to wrath (Deuteronomy 9. 22). Following this, their next sin was lusting: they lusted exceedingly. They cried for meat to eat. They loathed the manna. They remembered that in Egypt they ate
cucumbers, leeks, melons, onions and garlic. They forgot that they were journeying to a land of plenty of wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives and honey (Deuteronomy 8. 8). But God granted them their desires, and for two days and a night they gathered, and gorged themselves with quails for a whole month. God's wrath was kindled again and a plague destroyed a number of the people. The memory of this sin also remains, since the place was called Kibroth-hattaavah. According to 1 Corinthians 10 the example shown by Israel is a warning to us: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured." Hence we in our day are to learn the lessons of Taberah and Kibroth-hattaavah.

Robert Taylor.

From Crowborough. —God rained down manna from heaven, and Israel ate angels' food; yet they were not satisfied, but desired the food to be had in Egypt. God's people today must feed on the spiritual food provided for them by God and not desire to be filled with this world's fare.

The appointment of the seventy elders must have been a great help to Moses. Jethro had suggested this earlier. Was this the flesh going before God's time? [5].

That Moses was held in high esteem by God is evident from Numbers 12. 7: "My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all Mine house." The writer to the Hebrews reminds us of these words and tells of the High Priest of our confession, even Jesus, who was faithful to Him that appointed Him (Hebrews 3. 1, 2).

J. Robertson.

From Hamilton, Ont. —We wondered if the mixed multitude were instrumental in causing the lusting [6]. When the people murmured and Moses heard their weeping, he was displeased and as a result his burden seemed to him unbearable and he complained to God. God took of the Spirit which was upon Moses, and put it upon seventy elders (Numbers 11. 17). We felt that Moses lost something besides the burden [7].

Miriam and Aaron took advantage of the situation that existed and spoke against Moses, God's chosen one. They envied Moses in the camp. Family trouble arose over the Cushite woman Moses had married. God justified Moses against Miriam and Aaron's attitude, and judgement fell: Miriam became leprous, and the camp journeyed not for seven days.

Robert Taylor.

From Ayr Y. P. M. —Israel murmured, speaking evil against the LORD (Numbers 11), which angered the LORD, and brought down upon them the fire of divine judgement. Similar swift judgement fell upon Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10), and upon the 250 men who offered incense at the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16). Therefore we can judge the seriousness of Israel's sin by the manner of punishment that it incurred.

Murmuring, lusting and weeping continuously proved too much for Moses, and he broke down under the strain. Truly the burden of this people was telling on him, for two years previously he battled valiantly (Exodus 16), reproving the people for their murmurings against the LORD. His words betrayed his feelings, and in utter wretchedness he asked the LORD to kill him out of hand. In the infinite wisdom of God a plan for devolution of authority was devised and Moses was instructed to choose seventy of the elders of Israel. They are not necessarily the same men as worshipped with Moses at Sinai (Exodus 24). They had to be elders (Zaquen), old, aged or bearded, men having a lengthy practical experience of life. They had also to be officers (Shater, writer) or those used to administering the affairs of the people. The difference between these men and the men appointed by Moses on the advice of Jethro (Exodus 19. 25) lies in the fact that the latter
judged only in the small matters, while the former with Moses carried the burden of the weightier decisions. 

D. G. Miller.

From Middlesbrough. —The influence of those who were not numbered with Israel, the mixed multitude, but who journeyed with them, was corruptive. The mixed multitude were always a liability to God's people, never a help to them. They fell a lusting and Israel also lusted with them. They looked back to Egypt and the luxuries they had enjoyed there. It is a serious thing to look back; it often leads to shrinking back and going back.

It is a serious matter when leaders find rebellion or disaffection amongst those whom they are leading. It is a far more serious thing when others who have some responsibility in leadership rebel against God's chosen leader. Miriam and Aaron were not in the mind of the LORD in this matter. We do not read of the punishment of Aaron; perhaps it was sufficient for him to see Miriam in the outside place for seven days. The camp could not advance, but had to wait: individuals may hinder the progress of God's people. The humility of Moses is remarkable; he had every confidence God would vindicate him. Aaron's confession is evidence of repentance: he respectfully addresses Moses as "my lord".

Derek Goodwin.

From Wigan. —The mixed multitude that associated themselves with Israel proved to be a great danger to the people of God, for they were not of one heart and one soul with them. They fell a lusting, It is evident from Numbers 11. 4 that their attitude had its effect upon the rest of the people, a solemn lesson for us today, for we can speak and act in such a way as to discourage others (Numbers 32. 6-9). The same difficulties, but of a different nature, were experienced in Nehemiah's day: perhaps these also had affiliated themselves with Israel on their return from Babylon (Nehemiah 9. 2, 13. 3).

Moses, quite understandably, felt the burden of this groaning people. It would seem that even during Israel's bondage in Egypt there were men recognised as elders. We read in Exodus 24. 9 of seventy recognised elders of Israel.

It has been supposed that the quails were piled up two cubits deep from the face of the earth, but the correct rendering is "about two cubits above the face of the earth," that is, within reach of the people that they might slay them for food. God's provision in the manna was to be measured by the homer and none lacked, but on this occasion Israel's gluttonous tendencies could be seen in that he that gathered least gathered ten homers.

H. Caldwell.

From Glasgow. —The name of the place in which the fire of God came down in judgement upon Israel was called Taberah, because the fire of the LORD burnt among them. That place would ever be a witness against them. Calvary's cross, on which the Lord Jesus Christ died, will always be a witness against the world for its rejection of the Lord Jesus.

Moses had to learn that the LORD'S hand had not waxed short. The chosen men were caused to prophesy round about the Tent, because God had put the Spirit of prophecy upon them. But two men remained in the camp and prophesied. When Joshua came to Moses, Moses rebuked him by saying, "Art thou jealous for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them! " This reminds us of Peter who said to the Lord, " Lord, and what shall this man do? " The Lord rebuked Peter by saying, " What is that to thee? "

The one against whom Miriam spoke was the one who had to intercede for her. In our case, the Lord Jesus, whom we once rejected, is the One who became our Mediator.

Fred Harvey.
From Southport. —It was pointed out that the manna was given to the children of Israel when they were hungry, but at the time of Numbers 11 they had sufficient and they complained. We are reminded (Ephesians 2.1-3) that we once lived among the sons of disobedience fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. Yet we came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and when we did so we were empty of any means of saving ourselves. Nevertheless it is true that, from time to time, we look back to the things of the world, from which we have separated ourselves. These things ought not to be so. We are exhorted to walk by the Spirit and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5.16-24). It was pointed out that in connexion with murmuring the LORD'S anger was kindled, but in connexion with lusting His anger was kindled greatly.

God gave Moses instructions to appoint seventy elders to stand with him. These men were already known to be elders of the people (12.16); they were to receive recognition when they stood before the Tent. As they prophesied, all would know that the Spirit which had been on Moses was now upon the seventy elders also. It is necessary that God's people be ruled by more than one man, lest the burden become too great for that one man. Perhaps this also illustrates fellowship; we stand together.

God has placed on record that Moses was faithful in all His house, and that God would speak to Moses directly and not through dreams. In the portion under consideration we see Moses interceding with God. What a power he had with God because of his faithfulness! Does not James write, "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (James 5.16)?

W. S. Holden.

From Birkenhead. —The effect of the murmurings on Moses the leader of Israel was almost disastrous. Many men of God, like Moses, have felt the same way when confronted with such general disaffection, even to doubting God's ability to save in the situation. But, for Moses, good was to come out of this evil. He was to learn he was not to be alone in bearing the burden of the people. Obeying the LORD, he gathered the seventy men whom he knew to be elders of the people around the Tent to witness God's plan of deliverance.

The sharing of responsibility for the people of God is a divine principle both in the Old Testament and in the New, where it is always the work of the Spirit of God, both in the choice and in the enabling gifts (see Acts 20.28, Titus 1.5, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4.11). Moses in his humility was happy to see the Spirit of God in evidence upon the elders in their prophesying, and realized that by the Spirit they would be fitted to share with him the government of the people. G. Roberts, N. Adkins.

From Liverpool. —Israel "murmured," speaking evil in the ears of the LORD. Of all that they remembered of Egypt (they had forgotten the task masters) only fish was of any real food value: in producing this, the harvest of the waters, man has no hand.

We too may despise the manna, the word, for by it we feed on Christ through faith. The word which produced life in us is that which must sustain that life: nothing else will suffice. Nothing of the world can replace the word of God.

There are many things in the world which answer to those things for which Israel craved, things that are a delight to the flesh, but which are of no value to the spiritual man. These things, if longed for and sought after, would take us back into that of which Egypt is a type, the world.
We wondered, concerning the Egyptians that came up with them, if it was wrong to have these with them? No divine instructions were given in this matter [8]. Nevertheless, provision was made for the stranger (Deuteronomy 10. 19. 23. 7, 8; Leviticus 19. 33, 34; Isaiah 14. 1. 56. 3-8).

T. Sands, A. H.

From Atherton. —The word "murmurers" here used is not the usual equivalent of discontent, but implies habitual sighing, and is found only twice in the Old Testament (again in Lamentations 3. 39). The frequent discontentment had now developed into something habitual, totally contrary to faith, and most displeasing to the LORD.

The references to the manna, its appearance, and its taste (11. 6-9), seem to be inserted to show how unreasonable was the attitude of the people in disliking it; and the consequent remonstrances of Moses seem to be in passionate utterances, so contrary to the meekness characteristic of him.

The appointment of the seventy elders differs from that of Exodus 18, and appears to be the basis of the Jewish Sanhedrin, although subsequent references to the elders (as in Joshua 7. 6, 24. 1, etc.) make no mention of the number, and in the days of the Judges and the Kings they are not to be traced.

The prophesying of the two men Eldad and Medad was apparently with a view to bringing the people of Israel to consider their ways. Their names Eldad (God is a Friend) and Medad (Love) should have reproved the murmuring, and transformed such into love (11. 29).

From Cowdenbeath. —"Yea, they spake against God" (Psalm 78. 19). Thus the Holy Spirit through Asaph describes the sin of Israel at Taberah for which they experienced the severity of God's judgement. It seems almost incredible that, following upon such a display of divine wrath, the mixed multitude should fall a lusting and the whole nation should follow their example in desiring the things of Egypt. The things they lusted after grew out of the ground; the manna came from heaven. They could not have an appetite for earthly and for heavenly things at the same time.

The Holy Spirit was upon Moses. This same Spirit rested upon the seventy elders. The evidence that the Spirit had come upon them was seen in their being able to prophesy. They did not continue to do so, because their receiving of the Spirit was to fit them for bearing the burden of the people with Moses and not that they might prophesy.

The providing of flesh for the nation, which to Moses was an impossibility, manifests the wonderful ways of God, who caused the east wind to blow and guided the south wind to bring winged fowl as the sand of the sea to the camp of Israel (Psalm 78. 26-28). The uncontrollable lust of the people was seen in the way in which they reacted to God's gracious dealings. As the quails flew around the camp some three feet from the ground they were easy prey for the lustful Israelites, who gave themselves over entirely to this exciting pursuit for two days and a night. The amount they gathered was far in excess of their needs. Their lust knew no restraint, and for this they were smitten with a very great plague.

The Holy Spirit described Moses as being "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12. 3). When speaking to Aaron and Miriam God described him as being faithful. In reacting to the harsh dealings of others, Moses showed meekness. In discharging his responsibilities towards God, Moses was faithful. Let us seek to emulate this wonderful man.

James Bowman.
FROM SINAI TO MOAB (1), DIVINE INSTRUCTIONS, THE SILVER TRUMPETS, DIVINE ORDER, TO PARAN.
(Numbers 10. 1-36).

From Vancouver, B. C. —Paul speaks of the trumpet in 1 Corinthians 14, saying, "There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and no kind is without signification." Today many trumpets are being blown, some by those who know not redemption, and literally thousands are being drawn into organizations that deny the wondrous story of redemption. Let those in God's house who blow the trumpets not give an uncertain sound. Let redemption be always so sweet to us that we must sound it out so that others will hear and be saved.

Could we suggest that the two trumpets might speak of the testimony of the word of God and the Holy Spirit? Or is there a twin voice of testimony in Paul's words to Timothy, that God "willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth"? We wondered if this scripture might speak in some way of the two silver trumpets, but we did not forget that the sounding was in the camp of Israel.

R. Darke.

From Brantford, Ont. —The trumpets would be to Israel as the voice of God; it was incumbent upon all Israel to obey their call. They were not to be blown by anyone, but by the priests, the sons of Aaron. In every dispensation God conveys His mind through those whom He recognizes as the leaders of His people. When the Israelites heard the trumpet sound, there would be no uncertainty as to what they should do. The apostle says in 1 Corinthians 14. 8, "If the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war?" God's presentation of His truth for today carries with it a clarity which places upon all His redeemed the responsibility to obey.

We would assume that Hobab came from Midian with his father when he came to meet Moses (Exodus 18), and continued with Israel until the time recorded here. It appears Moses felt that Hobab's knowledge of wilderness conditions would be an asset to Israel and exhorted him to continue with him. Though not recorded here, it would appear from Judges 4. 11 that he consented and his progeny, the Kenites, were very friendly disposed towards Israel. Moses stated that God had spoken good concerning Israel, and any who cast in their lot with them would know somewhat of the LORD'S blessing. It is the same today, the people of God may not be great in the eyes of the world, but all who associate themselves with them now will know the Lord's blessing.

A. Sproul, R. Drake.

COMMENTS
[1] (Nottingham). —The R. V. seems to be the correct rendering. Mr. Darby gives "They prophesied, but did not repeat (it)." He says, "The A. V. 'and ceased not, ' follows a different punctuation in the Hebrew."—J. M.

[2] (Nottingham). —No reason is given why Eldad and Medad had not gone out from the camp to the Tent. It seems that, because they were of the seventy whose names were written, they prophesied in the camp as the others did round about the Tent. —J. M.

[3] (Nottingham). —It is a possibility that Miriam was the prime mover of speaking against Moses, because he had married a Cushite woman. I note that it says, "Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses". Miriam is placed first, and possibly was the trouble-maker. —J. M.
Would it not be nearer the truth to say that divine fire may be used or applied in different ways? —J. M.

The purposes for which men were chosen in Exodus 18 and in Numbers 11 are different. In Exodus 18 men were chosen to deal with lesser causes in the camp; in Numbers 11 the seventy elders, which were later called the Sanhedrin, shared with Moses the government of the entire people of Israel, two different forms of rule and judgship. —J. M.

Murmuring begins somewhere, and often with one person, and it spreads. This was the case when Judas Iscariot murmured over what he deemed to be the waste of the ointment and evidently his murmuring spread to the rest. Compare John 12. 4-8 with Matthew 26. 8-13, and note too, Matthew 26. 14-16, that when Judas could not lay his hands on the ointment, he would get money by betraying the Lord's Person. I am of the opinion that the murmuring in Numbers 11 began with the lusting of the mixed multitude. —J. M.

Did Moses lose or gain? See Editorial. "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more" (Proverbs 11. 24). The apostles who quite evidently ruled God's people in the beginning of the Acts, later joined others with them in this work, and we read of the apostles and elders (Acts 15. 2, 6). —J. M.

The mixed multitude (Exodus 12. 4; Nehemiah 13. 3) were a mongrel crowd, many of whom were perhaps half-breeds—Israelite and Egyptian, some Egyptians possibly, and perhaps some of other nationalities. We read of such a half-breed in Leviticus 24. 10-23, and of his blasphemy and judgement. Such men need not have been a cause of disturbance if they used the means of grace aright, but, alas, they were sometimes a cause of trouble and weakness. We have to remember that bright example, Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess and his father a Greek. —J. M.

Questions from Glasgow. —(1) Who was the Cushite woman whom Moses married? Was she Zipporah? (2) Were the two who prophesied in the camp two of the seventy elders?

Answer (1). —I cannot do better, I think, than quote an answer given by scholars over a hundred years ago about the Cushite woman Moses married:

Zipporah, a native of Midian, is called a Cushite, not because she was descended from Cush, but because the Midianites occupied a portion of the country called Cush, in Arabia Petraea, bordering on Egypt, which extended itself principally on the eastern shore of the Red Sea: and its northern extremity. This Cush was called Ethiopia. Hence Zipporah is called an Ethiopian. There appears to be a great perplexity respecting the countries called Cush and Ethiopia; for an account of them see Calmot and Home. " (From the Christian Annotator, 1885).

Answer (2). —Yes, Numbers 11. 26 says so. —J. M.

Question from Brantford. —From Numbers 2 and 10 we gather that in the order of the march the ark and the tabernacle were in the midst, with six tribes before and six tribes after. Did the ark go before Israel as mentioned in Numbers 10. 33, 34?

Answer. —Yes, see the reason given why it went three days before Israel. See May issue of Bible Studies. —J. M.
NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON.

Verses 1, 2, 3: Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow-worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

This epistle was written, it is supposed, with those to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Hebrews, from Rome during Paul's first imprisonment. Here Paul states again that he is a prisoner of Christ Jesus, as he does in Ephesians 3. 1, and in the Lord, in 4. 1, and in Philippians 1. 13 he alludes to his bonds. In Philemon he associates Timothy with himself in verse 1. It may be that Timothy was also a prisoner with him, for, probably some little time later, he wrote to the Hebrews and said, "Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty" (Hebrews 13. 23). The epistle was written by Paul concerning Onesimus, who, as we learn from Colossians 4. 9, belonged to Colossae. Then the references to Archippus in Colossians 4. 17 and Philemon 2 strengthen the view that Philemon also belonged to Colossae. Paul writes endearingly when he calls Philemon "the brother" and "our beloved," and commends also his labours as a fellow-worker, labours wrought with the apostle perhaps in Colossae or elsewhere. Some think that Apphia was the wife of Philemon, but this is conjecture, also that Archippus was one of the family or household, but whilst such are possibilities there is no proof. A church met at the house of Philemon, possibly part of the church of God in Colossae. Paul's salutation is common to his epistles.

Verses 4, 5, 6: I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers, hearing of thy love, and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints; that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ.

There is a difference amongst translators, whether "always" belongs to "thank" or to "making mention." Hence, in contrast to R. V. above, some punctuate thus: "I thank my God, always making mention of thee in my prayers." It is a technical point in Greek grammar about which the learned may differ. Whichever way the verse is read, it shows the regularity of the intercession of Paul in his prayers for Philemon, a worthy example for us all! We can understand the love of Philemon toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, and we can also understand his faith toward the Lord Jesus, but what does it mean when Paul refers to his faith toward the saints? The text of the R. V. in Ephesians 1. 15 is somewhat similar, though there is some doubt whether the text or the margin of the R. V. is correct. If we consider James 2. 15-20, it seems clear enough that we can show faith as well as love toward the saints. To see a brother in want and not minister to his need manifests a complete lack of faith as well as love, for faith without works is both barren and dead. So Paul wrote to Philemon of his faith and love toward all the saints as well as toward the Lord Jesus. Then Paul continues and writes "that the fellowship (fellowship, Koinonia, has various meanings: community, fellowship, society, participation, communion, communication, alms, charity, and so forth) of thy faith may become effectual," which I take to mean, as one has put it, "the communication of thy faith may become effectual," that is, that it may be operative. Fellowship is not static; it is living and operative. It means sharing in common. Paul was
touching a chord in this good man's being which had been working for long, when he wrote of the full knowledge he had of what he called "of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ." This is the regulator of Christian conduct; if saints are right toward or unto Christ, they will not fail to be right toward each other. Philemon had not only provided a meeting place for the church that met at his house, but quite evidently he was a large and good-hearted man who loved the Lord and His people and sought to care for them.

Verse 7: For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.

Here we have the work of Philemon laid open by Paul, in that the hearts (bowels, which describe the tenderest feelings) of the saints had been refreshed (given rest, quiet, refreshment) by him. This was undoubtedly a joy and comfort to the saints, as the knowledge of it was to Paul the prisoner. Paul ever rejoiced when it was well with the saints. He was like a good shepherd whose flock feeds quietly in the lush grass beside the still waters.

Verses 8, 9, 10: Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus,

The aged father, Paul, pleads with Philemon concerning his child, Onesimus. One day, perhaps, the whole story will be told, and it will be a touching tale. Who and what was Onesimus? He was a brother in the flesh of Philemon (verse 16), and it appears that he was also a bondman or slave to his brother. Hereon may hang a tale of waywardness on the part of Onesimus in his unconverted days. Paul says, "Who aforetime was unprofitable to thee." He left Philemon and Colossae, possibly ran away and turned up in Rome. How did he come into contact with Paul in prison? Had he joined the Praetorian guard? (Philippians 1.13). Or was he one of the soldiers that guarded Paul? (Acts 28.16). Or was it worse than that; had he committed some crime which resulted in imprisonment, and thus he met Paul the prisoner? We cannot say. But we can picture to ourselves their meeting and think that we can follow the course of the conversation which led to Onesimus being led to Christ, "begotten," as Paul says, "in my bonds." Both knew Colossae and both knew Philemon. They met on common ground here, and soon they both stood on common ground of being in Christ. Later Onesimus was added to the church in Rome, for Paul writes of him being in the Lord (verse 16). Paul could have enjoined upon Philemon the right Christian course to be followed by him towards Onesimus, but he took the better course of beseeching him for love's sake.

J. M.
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).

Some are of the opinion that God was displeased because the people asked to have spies sent before them (Deuteronomy 1. 22). Over against this we must set the evidence of the same portion, "The thing pleased me well." Moses would appear to have been at this time in the mind of the LORD, and the fact that the thing pleased him, might be taken to indicate that he knew that it was according to the LORD'S will. The succeeding words, "I took..., " do not necessarily negative this view, for his action was strictly in accordance with the LORD'S instruction (Numbers 13. 2).

The will of God must be done. Men may do evil and intend evil, but God may bring good out of the evil that men do. Consider the case of Joseph. After revealing himself to his brethren, he said, "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you" (Genesis 45. 5), and again, "As for you...; but God..." (Genesis 50. 20). Psalm 105. 17 corroborates this, but puts the two sides in the reverse order, "He (God) sent...; Joseph was sold..." To many things in the Scriptures there are two sides, the will and work of God and the acts of men.

The divine aspect and the human aspect of things done among God's people can be seen also, when men act in accordance with the will of God. Brethren in Antioch were commanded by the Holy Spirit to separate Barnabas and Saul for the work to which God had already called them (Acts 13. 2, 9, 15, 16). Again, Paul and others appointed elders in the churches of God (Acts 14. 23, Titus 1. 5), but these men were made bishops or overseers by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20. 28). Further, brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jerusalem (Acts 15. 2), yet Paul wrote to the Galatians, "I went up by revelation." The Acts of the Apostles makes it clear that the apostles and elders of that day sought the mind of the Lord in whatever they wrought for Him. So also did Moses while leading Israel in the wilderness; so too should we all, leaders and others, in this present day. It is a very safe rule, for men to give effect to what God has determined.

Before leaving this issue, we should like to make the further point that this principle applies to doctrine as well as to practice. At the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15) certain matters were examined and certain decisions made by the apostles and elders as guided by the Holy Spirit. These decrees were then delivered to the churches, and are described as being "ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem" (Acts 16. 4). This man-ward reference does not overlook the true source of the decrees, for the letter containing the decrees says, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us" (Acts 15. 28).

We revert now to Numbers 13 and 14. It may well be that the appointing of the twelve spies, as an act of prudence (and men must be prudent in the things of God), was according to the mind of God. The judgement came, not because spies were asked for, or because they were sent, but because the people believed and obeyed men rather than God. (Compare Acts 5. 29). We may be misjudging Israel, if we conclude that the asking for spies was an evidence of unbelief, for did not Joshua, at the end of the forty years, send two spies into Jericho? J. B.
NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION
CHAPTER 3

For the sake of those who are exercised of God about church truth, we give our understanding of the subject, as revealed in the New Testament.

(1) There is a secular use of the word church, as applied to the free citizens who ruled the city of Ephesus, called "the regular assembly" or church (Acts 19. 39). It is also applied to the irregular assembly or church of Demetrius, who had gathered the church of silversmiths together (Acts 19. 32).

(2) It is applied to Israel, the church in the wilderness, comprised of that called-out and gathered-together people (Acts 7. 38).

(3) It is used of the Church which is His (Christ's) Body, which He is building on Himself, the Rock, and which He will present to Himself without spot or blemish or any such thing, when He comes to the air for all who are in Christ (Matthew 16. 17, 18; 1 Corinthians 12. 12, 13; Ephesians 1. 22, 23; 5. 22-32; 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18). The building of this Church began at Pentecost (Acts 1. 4, 5; 2. 1-4), and it comprises all believers in Christ who are baptized in and indwelt by the Holy Spirit from Pentecost until the Lord's coming for the Church.

(4) It applies to the church and churches of God, which describe local gatherings of God's called-out and gathered-together people, for the purpose of divine service Godward in praise and prayer, and divine service manward in testimony to men. Such a people must be separate from the sects of Christendom, whether ritualistic or evangelical. There was a church of God in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1. 2; 2 Corinthians 1. 1), in Jerusalem (Acts 8. 1; Galatians 1. 13), in Antioch (Acts 11. 26; 13. 1), and in many other cities and towns. The churches were linked together in Roman provinces for the administration of God's will among His people. Thus we read of the churches of God in Judaea (1 Thessalonians 2. 14; Galatians 1. 22); of the churches of Galatia (Galatians 1. 2; 1 Corinthians 16. 1); of Macedonia (2 Corinthians 8. 1); of Asia (1 Corinthians 16. 19; Revelation 1. 4, 11). Then churches of God are mentioned without being viewed as grouped together in provinces (1 Corinthians 11. 16; 2 Thessalonians 1. 4).

(5) We have the churches of Christ (Romans 16. 16), and the churches of the saints (1 Corinthians 14. 33), and also the church at the house (Romans 16. 5; 1 Corinthians 16. 19; Philemon 2). These uses of the word church, apply, in our opinion, to groups of saints forming the one church of God in the place, as in Rome, Ephesus, and Colossae, and, of course, Jerusalem, where there were thousands of saints who could not be accommodated in one building. Nowhere do we read of the church of Christ or of the church of the saints. The definitions are found twice and in the plural in both cases.

(6) In 1 Timothy 3. 15 we read of "the house of God, which is the church of the living God." Though we frequently read of the churches of God, we never read of the houses of God. There is but one house of God at any one time, whether in Israel, in the days of the apostles, or now. God's house is where men require to learn to behave themselves. Being in it is conditional, the condition being, "if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3. 6). This should not be read, "seeing we hold fast"; that would violate the plain meaning of the Greek, also the A. V. and R. V. versions and any other version of value. The house of God must not be confused with the Body
of Christ; the former is conditional, the latter unconditional. The house of God is both a holy and a royal priesthood, to render divine service Godward and manward (1 Peter 2. 3-10). Each church of God bears the character of the house of God, and altogether they form the one house, the dwelling place of God on earth. This unity is seen very early in the work of God in the Acts, for we read of "the church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, "He... ekklesia kath holes," the church throughout all "or whole, from which words "the church catholic" is derived. It shows the unity which existed among the divinely gathered disciples wherever found. (See Acts 9. 31, R. V.).

(7) "The church of the firstborn (ones)," of Hebrews 12. 23, is a company of heavenly beings who are called-out and are distinct from the general assembly of innumerable hosts of angels. A picture of this is seen in the tabernacle in the wilderness. The outer circle of those around the tabernacle was composed of the twelve tribes; the inner circle of the sons of Levi. Moses and Aaron and his sons were on the east, and on the other three sides were the three branches of the Levitical family, Kohath, Gershon and Merari. The Levites were taken instead of the firstborn of the sons of Israel, who, but for the serious incident of the Golden Calf would have occupied the inner place. This inner circle of the Levites instead of the firstborn is a copy of things in the heavens to which those in the house of God have come.

CHAPTERS 4 and 5

As chapters 4 and 5 present heavenly scenes and are integrated together, we shall seek to deal with them accordingly. Chapter 4 begins with the words, "After these things." The truth contained in the letters to the seven churches is truth proper to the churches of God during the dispensation of grace, as is the truth in other epistles of the New Testament. Whilst the New Testament Scriptures contain many things that have a bearing on men in general, and many things apply to all born-again people, yet we must recognize that the epistles were written to the divinely gathered saints in the churches of God and house of God.

From chapter 4 onwards the Lord is beginning to unfold events which will transpire after He has come for the Church, that is for all who are in Christ, the dead and the living. We shall find, as we proceed from chapters 4 to 19, that the events are not given always in serial form in the order in which they will transpire. There will be found to be an overlapping. We may briefly point out what we mean, when we indicate that at the end of chapter 6 with the opening of the sixth seal we come to the time of the coming of the Lord in the great day of His wrath. At the end of chapter 11 we come again to the Lord's coming to earth, when the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. Then in chapter 19 we come again to the Lord's coming in judgement, and to the battle of Armageddon.

In chapter 4. 1 we are told that a door was opened in heaven, and John was commanded by one with a voice like a trumpet to come up hither and he would be shown the things that would come to pass hereafter. "Straightway," he says, "I was (or became) in the Spirit." He describes what he saw. He saw a throne set in heaven and One sitting upon it, who was like a jasper stone and a sardius. There was no form or similitude, only the flashing splendour like in character to these precious stones. Jasper is said to be as clear as crystal, in Revelation 21. 11, and sardius is a stone of blood-red colour. This was the glory of God, the glory of Him who is the Father of lights in whom there is no darkness at all. This is the light unapproachable in which the Man of Sorrows now dwells,
in the glory which He had with Him before the world was. There was a 
rainbow round about the throne like an emerald to look upon. Who has 
not been entranced by a glorious sunrise or sunset as he viewed the streaming 
light paint the heavens with the exquisite colours of created light? or again 
been captivated by the colours of the rainbow? But what will it be to see 
the glory of God in any manner or measure? Those who will see the rainbow 
around the throne will be such as will be in covenant relation with God, 
even as those are who have watched the rainbow from Noah's time. The 
blessings are far, far greater in the former than the latter.

Round about the throne are four and twenty thrones, on which sit four 
and twenty elders, with crowns on their heads. Some may agree with 
the following statement of an expositor of the book of the Revelation: "The 
thrones and crowns point to a royal company of the redeemed and glorified 
saints in heaven." He also says, "By the elders we understand, therefore, 
the innumerable company of the redeemed saints, raised, changed, and 
c caught up to meet Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4. 17). " Thus, the four 
and twenty elders are identified as the Church which is Christ's body. 
It is easy to make such statements, but we are anxious to know how this 
is worked out. The throne of God is one. Is not the number twenty-four 
as definite?

Do the millions of saints in the Church, the Body of Christ, crowd on the 
twenty-four thrones, or are the twenty-four thrones symbolic of millions 
of thrones? Again, will all saints of this dispensation be crowned with 
crowns of gold?

Several reasons have been adduced as to why the twenty-four elders 
are all the redeemed of this dispensation:
(1) that angels "say," but saints "sing";
(2) that these twenty-four elders are old, mature persons, which points 
to a previous life;
(3) that they are crowned with gold crowns, the word crown (Stephanos) 
being used of a victor's crown, showing that they have been 
victorious in their previous life on earth;
(4) that in the A. V. they sing a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to 
take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, 
and hast redeemed us to God with Thy blood," us showing that they 
are redeemed persons; the angels not having sinned do not need to 
be redeemed.

There may be other reasons for supposing that the twenty-four elders 
form the Church which is Christ's Body, but those given may be sufficient 
for examination at the moment.
(1) Note that in chapter 4 the elders say, and in 5 they both sing and 
say. Moses both sang and spoke in Exodus 15. 1; and David spoke in the 
words of his song, in Psalm 18. See the inspired heading of the psalm. 
But the whole case for angels not singing breaks down completely before 
the words of the LORD, in Job 38. 4-7, where we read of the time of creation,
"When the morning stars sang together, 
And all the sons of God shouted for joy."

We may dismiss entirely the thought that angels do not sing.
(2) As to the elders being old, mature persons, one would think from this 
that the saints of the Church were older than the angels, but this is not the 
case. Elders amongst God's people are not necessarily the oldest men. 
Younger men are often among the elders that rule because of their greater 
gifts and spiritual wisdom and experience. If for the moment we think of 
the elders as heavenly beings, who can say that all the angelic beings were
created at the same time? May there not be some who are older than others? Whatever be the answer to such thoughts, the fact is, that angels were not all created equal in rank. Among celestial beings there are thrones, dominions, principalities and powers (Colossians 1. 16). There are fatherhoods in heaven as well as on earth (Ephesians 3. 14, 15), though there is neither marriage nor birth in heaven (Luke 20. 84-36) like what is on earth. In Colossians 1. 16 we have thrones, and in Revelation 4 we have the twenty-four thrones of the elders.

(3) Then as to crowns, it is contended that the Greek word for crown (Stephanos) always means a garland, chaplet, wreath, conferred on a victor in the public games and it is always used in the Scriptures in the sense of the honour conferred on a victor. We might ask, "Will all saints be victors and wear a victor's crown?" Even with a very limited knowledge of the Scriptures we would have to confess that that will not be so. If all saints are victors and overcomers, why those letters to the seven churches which we have just considered? Why Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2. 1-13? Will all saints wear the crowns of life, righteousness and glory? Have these not to be won? In Revelation 6. 1, 2, the rider on the white horse was given a crown (Stephanos) before he went forth to conquer. It is not a reward for victory achieved, but a mark of honour in view of the work he was given to do. The same is true of the woman, in Revelation 12. 1-6; she is crowned with a crown (Stephanos) of twelve stars. The woman is Israel. The twelve stars are the twelve tribes. What victory had Israel won? None at all! They had even crucified the Lord, who is seen as the Man-child that the woman, Israel, brought forth. Nevertheless such was the honour, according to God's electing grace, that He conferred upon her, that she should be the chosen vessel by whom the Lord would enter this world, as Paul says in Romans 9. 5. "Of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Israel is still honoured in the purposes of God and has before her a great future, and that because of the Man-child, the Lord, who is now upon the throne of God. I judge that it is right to say that both Adam and the Lord were crowned with glory and honour by God before the work they were given to do; Adam, as set over all the work of God on earth, and the Lord in that He was to taste death for every man, and of course to reign as the Son of Man afterwards (Hebrews 2. 6-9). How often we hear Hebrews 2. 9 quoted as though it had a NOW in it, "Jesus, because of the suffering of death (now) crowned with glory and honour"! There is no now in the verse. It is helpful, I think, to quote what Liddell & Scott say as to the Greek word Stephanos: "Mostly, a crown, wreath, garland, chaplet, whether given as a prize, mark of honour, or festal ornament." In the case of the elders, I judge that the crowns of gold are marks of honour befitting their being seated on thrones round the throne of God, and are not indicative of their having been victors on earth.

(4) As to the insertion of the plural pronoun "Us," in Revelation 5. 9, it all depends on whether the Greek plural pronoun Hemas in this verse is part of the Scriptures. As to this, authorities differ. Some textual critics of weight exclude it, and in consequence it is read as in the R. V.; other textual critics include it, and consequently it is to be read as in the A. V. Chapter 5. 8-10 reads: "And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God (A. V. has, "hast redeemed us to God") with Thy blood men (A. V. "out")
of every tribe (A. V. "kindred"), and tongue, and people, and nation, and
madest them to be (A. V. "hast made us") unto our God a kingdom (A. V.
"kings") and priests; and they (A. V. "we shall") reign upon (A. V. "on")
the earth."

There is no doubt that verse 10 should read as in the R. V. " and madest
them (Autous, them, not Hemas, us) unto our God." Thus the four living
creatures and the four and twenty elders are not speaking of themselves
in verse 10. If this is so in verse 10, they cannot be speaking of themselves
in verse 9 either; consequently the weight of grammatical evidence in the
passage is for the omission of Hemas in verse 9, for you cannot have Hemas
in verse 9 and Autous in verse 10. It is a great weight to put on a disputed
text, to conclude that the four living creatures and the four and twenty
elders are human beings who have been purchased with the blood of Christ,
a very great weight indeed. This is nevertheless what some have done. If
the four and twenty elders are the saints of the Church which is Christ's
Body, it is strange that in Revelation 19. 4 they are mentioned as a different
company from the Lamb's wife, mentioned in verses 7 and 8. Again, how
are we to understand the matter when we read of "one of the elders"
(5. 5), in the light of the interpretation that the twenty-four elders signify
millions of saints? We read also in 7. 13 of "one of the elders." If the four
and twenty elders are myriads of the ransomed, then so must also be the
four living creatures, for they with the four and twenty speak the words of
5. 9, 10. We do not accept that the four living creatures are redeemed
human beings. We shall write of this matter later.

We are told by John in 4. 5 that "there were seven Lamps of fire burning
before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." In regard to the
interpretation of such a statement it is well to give heed to the LORD'S
words to Job: —

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel
By words without knowledge?" (Job 38. 1, 2).

In Ephesians 4. 4 we are told that there is one Spirit. The Father and
the Son and the Holy Spirit are the Divine Trinity—one God (Matthew
28. 19). The tabernacle with its service was a copy of the things in the
heavens. In the tabernacle was the lampstand with its seven lamps of fire.
In the vision shown to Zechariah there was a lampstand with a bowl on the
top of it and seven pipes to the seven lamps, and the explanation of the
vision, of the continuous flow of oil from the bowl to the lamps, was—"Not
by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts"
(Zechariah 4. 2-6). The two olive trees, which were Joshua and Zerubbabel,
on whom rested the responsibility of leadership in the LORD'S work in the
remnant which had returned from Babylon, poured out the golden oil to
maintain the lamp of testimony. They were empowered for this work by
the Spirit of the LORD of Hosts. As in the tabernacle and the temple, the
lampstands upheld seven lamps of fire, giving light for divine service. The
seven gave one light, not variegated lights. We learn from Ephesians 4. 3-6
that the seven ones mentioned form the unity of the Spirit. Unity is a state
of being one, a oneness. Thus, I judge, that the seven Spirits are one Spirit,
the Holy Spirit. We may learn later why the Spirit is seven. Those who
are instructed in Scriptural numerics speak of seven being the Spirit's
number, and of seven being a perfect number, but even when this has been
said, how much are we instructed in the fact that there are seven Spirits?

Before the throne was also a glassy sea like unto crystal. What are we
to learn from this? It does not say that the sea was either glass or crystal,
but it was like in appearance to crystal. I see no need to enter into a
discussion of the difference between glass and crystal, that glass is the product of the hand of man, but crystal is a natural product got from the earth. In 15. 2, this sea is mentioned again, and in this passage John says, "I saw as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire." The sea appears to be a solid substance, at least it had that measure of solidity, that those who came triumphant from the beast stood upon it. But what is the message of the sea? In the court of the tabernacle was the laver, and in the temple there was a molten sea of brass which held three thousand baths of water. The water in both of these vessels was for the priests to wash themselves (2 Chronicles 4. 2-6; Exodus 30. 17-21). The laver was made of fine brass (or copper), of the mirrors of the serving women who served at the door of the tabernacle (Exodus 38. 8). The laver speaks of the laver or washing of regeneration, which is the word of God, by which every believer is bathed, and in consequence is clean for ever. The water of the word is afterwards to be used for the cleansing of the hands and feet in service for God (John 13. 1-17; 15. 3; Hebrews 10. 22; Titus 3. 5; Ephesians 5. 25-27; John 3. 5). If we think of the laver being made of fine burnished copper, we may think of it revealing defilement and also providing the water for cleansing of the defilement. Similarly, the word of God reveals defilement and cleanses it, when the word is applied. When we think of the glassy sea we have reached a place where there is no defilement. The sea before the throne provides no water for cleansing. It is something of intense purity in which the least spot of defilement would be revealed. It seems to me that this is like what Ezekiel calls the terrible crystal (1. 22), terrible indeed for man apart from the cleansing power of the blood of Christ and the word of God. Ezekiel says, "And over the head of the living creature there was the likeness of a firmament, like the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above." I leave the reader with the result of my meditations. (The Hebrew word rendered crystal in Ezekiel is rendered ice in Job).

J. M.

HE MADE THE TEACHING GREAT AND GLORIOUS

(Isaiah 42. 21, R. V. M.).

"The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1. 17).

The giving of the law to Israel was indeed a momentous occasion. The awe-inspiring scene is described in Deuteronomy 33, where Jehovah is seen as the great Law-giver, having descended from those heavenly beings who rendered absolute obedience to His will to the midst of a rebellious and stiffnecked people (Exodus 20. 22). We may well ask, "Who is a teacher like unto Him?"

It is a noteworthy fact that this royal law was an inheritance for the assembly of Jacob. A nation without law is on the way to anarchy, but righteousness exalteth a nation. Israel was a unique people (Deuteronomy 7. 6-8). Moses, ere Israel crossed the Jordan, could be asked, "What great nation is there, that hath God so nigh unto them... And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and judgements so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" The irrefutable answer was, "None." The depositing of this fiery law with them brought its solemn responsibilities and blessings. When man comes face to face with the word of God, he is held accountable as to his response to the divine will. If the people sought with all their heart to walk in the way of the LORD, then they would be
brought into line with God's requirements of them as a holy nation. The words of the LORD were to be taught diligently to their children and to successive generations (Psalm 78. 5, 6). These words were to form the whole conversation of the household, to be bound upon their hand, to be ever before their eyes, and to be openly set forth upon their doorposts and gates (Deuteronomy 6).

It is a sad reflection, that, because of the weakness of the flesh in its proneness to sin (Romans 8. 8, 4), no one was ever able to fulfil the law's righteous demands. The commandment which was holy, righteous and good (Romans 7. 12) was not fully obeyed by Israel as individuals or as a people (collectively). It is written in Deuteronomy 27. 26, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them." The old-covenant Scriptures are replete with evidence concerning the advent of One, who, for the LORD'S righteousness' sake, would magnify (Gadal, to make great) the law and make it honourable (Isaiah 42. 21). In order that this might be fulfilled it was imperative that the coming One should be born under law, this being fulfilled in the incarnation of the Son of God (Galatians 4. 4), who said, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5. 17). God's law reposed unbroken within His heart, as He moved through this squalid scene. Righteousness was found to be the girdle of His reins, and the breastplate of righteousness never adorned a nobler breast or shone to greater purpose. God's faithfulness and salvation, His lovingkindness and His truth were heralded in all their fulness (Psalm 40. 6-10). In His birth, life and sacrificial death the types and shadows of the law found their substance. His adherence to the great commandments of Mark 12. 30, 31 was proved at Calvary. He bore the curse of the law that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3. 13, 14). — H. Caldwell.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

From Nottingham. —The key to this study seems to be in the word "unbelief." Despite God's promise to bring the people into the land (Exodus 3. 8), they wished to investigate for themselves. By coupling the study of Deuteronomy 1. 22, 23 and Numbers 13. 2 we understood that God permitted this to take place.

The twelve spies were able to confirm God's declaration about the land's fruitfulness (13. 27), but ten of them considered the inhabitants too great an opposition (13. 31). Only Caleb and Joshua viewed things in their correct perspective. We can realize that God being with us makes possible the accomplishment of things impossible in human eyes. We wondered why only Caleb appears to plead with the people (13. 30). Two views were expressed. (1) Caleb's word may have carried more weight as the people may have considered Joshua's position to be influencing him. (2) At forty years of age (Joshua 14. 7) Caleb may have been the older of the two and thus felt more responsible to act.

The people confidently expected death at the hand of their enemies, and so resolved to appoint another leader. This had previously happened (Exodus 32. 1), but not with Moses actually in the camp. Surely the people were at a low ebb to contemplate stoning God's faithful servants when they pleaded with them to repent!
God, as a result of the people's behaviour in tempting Him ten times, announced His solemn plan to Moses. The LORD'S suggestion of making of Moses a great nation was thought to be aimed at proving the character of this wonderful man. Moses' response showed his care for the people and also for God's glory.

Some discussion developed on the punishment the people finally received, a query arising as to why God agreed to pardon the people (14. 20), and then, so it was thought, changed His decision and meted out punishment for the crime. The end of the ten spies was death by the plague (14. 37); and for all over twenty years of age death in the wilderness (14. 29). The necessity for the punishment of every crime was pointed out; nothing should be overlooked.

The people mourned at the news. What a lesson to them, that those for whom they had concern (14. 3) were those whom the LORD shielded and kept (14. 31)! Their outlook seemed to change quickly, for soon they resolved to progress in their own strength, despite Moses' warning (14. 42). They suffered an inevitable defeat.

Our study makes sad and disappointing reading, but may it have the effect that we may realize that we need to walk with God. R. D. Williams.

From Birkenhead. The spies were princes among the people, men who were leaders. In the giving of their report there was disunity, which led to failure. Herein we see a lesson for our day. Those who take the lead should be of one mind and act in unison. The action of the leaders has its effect upon the people, either for good or for evil.

Of the two that gave the good report only one (Caleb) is here mentioned. It was suggested that this was because he was the elder of the two. Although Joshua was God's chosen leader to take Moses' place, Caleb manifested a spirit of subjection. These two men were honoured for their faithfulness by being allowed to enter the promised land. God is a rewarder of them that seek after Him (Hebrews 11. 6).

The people were led astray by the spies who gave an evil report, and once again there was the cry of unbelief. Israel turned their backs on God and His purposes, and sought a captain to take them back to Egypt. This displeased God, who would have destroyed the people but for the intervention of Moses, who in his prayer sought not his own honour but God's, saying, "The Egyptians shall hear it... and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land." He also said, "Let the power of the Lord be great."

He knew the character of God—powerful, plenteous in mercy, forgiving, but who will in no wise clear the guilty.

The people had much to thank Moses for, because God heard his prayer, and said, "I have pardoned according to thy word." So today in effective prayer we should know something of the character of the God with whom we are dealing.

Although the people had sinned against God, Moses' prayer was not against them as was Elijah's in his day (Romans 11. 2). It is never right to pray against the people of God, and Moses did not make this mistake.

After all the wonderful dealings of God, both in grace and in judgement, they were still disobedient, for early in the morning they got themselves to the top of the mountain. The word from Moses, who was in the mind of God, was "Go not up," but they presumed to go up. This again brought judgement upon them. It is a very solemn matter for anyone to set aside divine instruction, hence we have the word of warning. "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (1 Corinthians 10. 6). Alan Hyland, Philip Kelly.
**EXTRACTS**

**From Belfast.** —From Deuteronomy 1. 22 we learn that the people themselves decided to send men to spy out the land. With God's approval twelve leaders (or princes) were chosen to represent the tribes of Israel. The spies can be divided into two groups, those who had the vision of the flesh and those with the vision of faith. Not only was the people's attitude determined by the report of the ten spies, but they themselves were not in a right condition to enter the land (Hebrews 3). We noticed the contrast of the taking of Jericho. Because the people were in a right condition, God gained for them a great victory.

The attitude of the ten spies should teach us not to discourage others. The result was serious. God had given His encouragement. Had He not promised on a previous occasion, "The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace"? Yet ten of the spies came back with the news, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." Stronger than Israel they might be, but not stronger than Israel's God. Only the two men who had the vision of faith were able to say, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."

D. Mawkinney.

**From Melbourne.** —Israel had had through Moses many assurances from the LORD that He was able to meet all their needs; moreover, they had seen what He did for them at the Red Sea (Psalm 106. 9, 10, 11).

The spies returned after forty days, bringing with them sufficient evidence that Canaan was indeed a fruitful land; "a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it." This was the very best time of the year to take possession of the land that was given to Israel by the LORD, for it was the time of firstripe grapes. But ten of the spies brought back an evil report of the land, so shattering the people's faith. This resulted in forty years of wandering in the wilderness.

Only two of the prince-spies escaped the plague and death, Caleb (Whole-hearted) and Joshua (Salvation of Jehovah). Caleb was forty years old (Joshua 14. 7), and, because of the evil report of his erstwhile companions, must wait another forty years before he could again set foot in Canaan. This land flowing with milk and honey is a figure of the Fellowship of God's Son, wherein every believer may find a resting place. Many believers, however, by their ceaseless wandering from one gathering to another show that they have not found spiritual Canaan.

At this time the LORD was preparing a successor to Moses, even Joshua, Moses' minister. We saw in Moses, the law, and in Joshua, a type of Christ through whom came grace and truth. It was left to Joshua to go into and possess the land, thus effecting for Israel the salvation of Jehovah.

S. 5.

**From Brantford (Ont.).** —God's righteous judgement fell on the ten men who brought back the evil report. The greater the responsibility, the greater the judgement for failure to do what God desired. Much responsibility rests on the leaders of God's people today, to encourage, not to discourage the saints. Paul said of Philemon that he refreshed the hearts of the saints—a great commendation! John later wrote of Diotrephes who discouraged and ill-treated the brethren. What loss will be his in a coming judgement day!

Although Joshua and Caleb saw the giants, they had faith in God's promise to give Israel the land. We were reminded of some who feared
to come into the house of God because of "giants" (obstacles only in their own minds), forgetting that God is able to help us overcome.

J. Kernaghan.

From Liverpool. —The LORD had said, "Go in and possess the land" (Deuteronomy 1. 8). It was not the intention of Jehovah that spies should be sent. He had promised them the land through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whose seed the children of Israel were. Moses said, "The LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of thy fathers, hath spoken unto thee; fear not, neither be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 1. 21).

The people had suggested sending men to search out the land, and this had pleased Moses. We judge that he would bring this matter before the LORD, who graciously allowed this request. They should have acted in faith, and gone up there and then (Numbers 13. 17-20).

What occupied the hearts and minds of the people during the forty days? They had then an opportunity to remember and recount God's goodness and faithfulness in bringing them thus far, yet it would appear, from their attitude to the report brought back, that they waited in a state of doubting anticipation. They had forgotten the time when they had stood on the shores of the Red Sea watching fearfully as the armies of Egypt advanced, when, through Moses, God said, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will work for you today.... The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14. 13, 14).

James Seddon, A. H.

From Vancouver, B. C. —The children of Israel believed in the LORD their God but limited His power to save them. This is true of many today who do not believe in the free gift of eternal life, but teach that salvation is by works. The LORD counted the provocations: this was the tenth, started this time by the ten spies. Israel had to wander in the wilderness forty years, according to the days that the twelve spies spent in spying. Later ten tribes wandered for many years without the ordinances and commandments of the LORD. But the LORD looked to the day of restored unity (Ezekiel 37. 22). The greater part of the children of God today are still wandering without the whole counsel of God for this dispensation.

H. McLeman, S. Karp.

From Glasgow. —It was observed that it was at the command of Jehovah that Moses sent out the spies. Every tribe was represented in those princes whom Moses carefully selected for this mission. Their names are recorded in Numbers 13. 4-15. They received instructions from Moses to report on Canaan in relation to its fertility, its cities and its inhabitants. Hebron, to which they came, seems to have been a very ancient city (13. 22). The branch which they cut down, with its cluster of luscious grapes of Eshcol, must have been very weighty, when it took two men to carry it. Forty days spent surveying Canaan should have been sufficient to enable them to gain a good knowledge of the land and its peoples. Only Caleb and Joshua delivered a true report. The other ten were of defeatist mind and manifested lack of faith in Jehovah. Their eyes were upon men instead of upon God. Caleb and Joshua, however, were valiant men of faith, and knew that what God had promised He was also able to perform. They were somewhat like the great apostle who wrote, "If God is for us, who is against us?" The congregation, in believing a false report which caused them sorrow, disbelieved a true report which could have brought joy.

W. Edgar.
From Wigan. —With Israel God was longsuffering and patient. When the land was before them to possess it, and the word of God came to them to go in, they asked that spies be sent before them (Deuteronomy 1. 21, 22). God allowed them the desire of their fearful hearts, and twelve men were chosen to spy out the land. Ten of these, through unbelief, brought back an evil report. They saw the inhabitants as giants and themselves as grasshoppers. Caleb and Joshua saw through the eyes of faith. God with them, they followed God fully (Numbers 14. 24). To them the land was an exceeding good land (14. 7), and the inhabitants as bread for them (14. 9). Their faith saw no obstacles. Faith said, "We are well able to overcome it"; unbelief said, "We be not able" (Numbers 13. 30, 31).

When God would have smitten them they were saved by the mediatorial work of Moses. Faithful to God, that His fame among the nations should not be lost, and merciful to the people, he pleaded for forgiveness for them. He remembered that, when he was in the cleft of the rock and the LORD passed before him, he heard the Name of the LORD proclaimed: "The LORD, the LORD, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth;... forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exodus 34. 6, 7). So he pleaded, "Pardon, I pray Thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of Thy mercy" (Numbers 14. 19). There is a Greater than Moses who now intercedes for the people of God: He is also Son over God's house, and a merciful and faithful High Priest. He pleads for forgiveness on the ground of God's mercy and His own shed blood.

In the proclamation of Exodus 34 God also said, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." Now He said, "Your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years and shall bear your whoredoms" (Numbers 14. 33). This has been true in every age, and in our own generation: fathers have refused the good tidings of God's rest, and spiritually their children have become wanderers.

From Edinburgh. —The land was viewed by the twelve spies: it flowed with milk and honey: but there were giants therein, the cities were fenced and the strongholds were great. Ten of the spies gave an evil report and pleaded weakness. Caleb and Joshua spoke differently. They knew that God was able and that God was stronger than their foes. But the word of the ten carried and the people rebelled. The consequences to Israel turned out to be grave. God would have blotted them out, but again Moses interceded and God's mercy was extended to His people. God was angry, and His judgement came upon His people so that the wilderness and not the land would be their home for forty years.

The responsibility of leaders among God's people is great. Care must be exercised in all that is spoken and done, else the people are liable to go astray. Here the leaders failed, and hence the people failed to enter into their inheritance. A people cannot rise higher than its leaders. Now, as then, leaders must be on the watch. Paul in his words to the elders of Ephesus said, "From among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20. 30). In effect, the crisis at Kadesh-barnea would occur again. Who can estimate all that will be lost through such failure?

From Middlesbrough. —There were two main objectives set before the twelve spies, to see whether the inhabitants of the land were strong or weak, and to find out if the land itself was fruitful. On their return
they were unanimous that the land was most desirable, and also concerning the strength of the inhabitants. The division of opinion amongst the spies was on the question as to whether they were strong enough to overcome the inhabitants in battle. It is a great pity that the minority report was not accepted by the congregation. Were they overlooking the fact that in their midst the pillar of cloud was clearly to be seen, a symbol of the Divine Presence with them? Caleb tried in vain to still the people. Large companies of people are very often governed by emotion, and it then is very hard to reason with them.

God's judgement was that the generation that had rebelled against Him should perish in the wilderness. Their children would be brought into the land. It was rather ironical that their young ones, who, Israel said, would be a prey, were to be the only ones (save Joshua and Caleb) to enter the promised land.

Israel saw and repented, and some then tried to enter the land in spite of Moses' warning that God was not with them. The opportunity had passed. It was futile for them to attempt in their own strength what they had previously refused to do with God's help. Derek Goodwin.

From Cowdenbeath. —Conscious of the enormity of the people's sin, Moses and Aaron prostrated themselves before the congregation. Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes, and addressed the angry nation. The bright faith of these two men in the promise of God and their superb confidence contrasted sharply with the dark unbelief of the people. How different it would have been if the people had been joined by faith to the word of good tidings even as those two men were (Hebrews 4. 2)! God had to intervene to protect these faithful men. Israel's unbelief and its disastrous consequences should have a warning voice for us. Are the truths and promises of God real and precious to us? There is a rest, in association with God's house, into which we may enter. Diligence is required on our part. We must hear and continue to hear the word of God, and receive it with believing hearts.

This sad juncture in Israel's history displayed again the humility of the man Moses and his ability as an intercessor. Having been so often in the presence of God and having such an intimate knowledge of God, he was able to draw copiously from the words of God in his intercession. God gave heed to the pleading of Moses, and Israel were saved from immediate extermination, but God swore that those who had despised Him would not enter into the land.

The death of the ten spies had a salutary effect upon the nation. They confessed their sin and expressed their willingness to go up into the land, but their opportunity had gone. The commandment of God came to them through Moses: " Go not up, for the LORD is not among you. " Again they disobeyed, and were smitten before their enemies as Moses had declared. Activity which is the result of fleshly energy can have disastrous results.

James K. D. Johnston.

From Atherton. —We note the words " we were in our own sight as grasshoppers" (13. 33) precede " and so we were in their sight. " These men were so much taken up with their own weakness that they forgot that God was on their side; their lack of faith produced in their hearts a fear of men. This reminds us of many in our day who have seen the beautiful and glorious truths of the Fellowship, of which the land of Canaan would perhaps speak, and yet at the same time seem to find so many obstacles. Personal difficulties and weaknesses become magnified and the wonderful truth, that with God all things are possible, slips into the background.
The LORD in His great mercy pardoned the people at Moses' earnest pleading, which is yet another example of the mighty power of Moses as a mediator and intercessor. In this connexion how are we to understand and interpret such strong words as God used (14. 12)?

In all our dealings with God we must ever bear in mind that He is a righteous and holy God. For this reason the ten spies who brought back the evil report died by the plague before the LORD. In addition almost the whole of the adult population of Israel was condemned to die in the wilderness: they were not allowed to enter into the land of good things.

_D. S. Jones._

### REQUEST FOR PRAYER

We seek your earnest prayers on behalf of our beloved co-worker, Mr. James Martin, who is seriously ill after an operation.

_EDS._

### NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

**Verses 11, 12, 13:** Who was aforetime unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart: whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

There is perchance a long story of waywardness on the part of Onesimus in the statement, "Who was aforetime unprofitable to thee. " Philemon may have lifted his brother and slave out of many troubles. Is this not true of many sinners, that their life is entirely unprofitable? "Destruction and misery are in their ways" (Romans 3. 16), but they are not beyond the power of God in the gospel to save them from a vain manner of life and entirely to transform them. There have been many such trophies of grace. Paul says that since Onesimus was converted he "now is profitable to thee and to me. " (Possibly we have here a play on the name of Onesimus, which means Helpful.) This is what is to be expected from the transforming power of divine grace, and where it is not in evidence, it makes one wonder whether the grace of God has indeed reached the heart, and the regenerating power of the Spirit has been known.

Paul would have kept Onesimus at Rome to minister unto him in the bonds of the gospel, but true conversion leads to rectification, as far as possible, of past wrongs. This is seen in the case of Zacchaeus, who said, after he had known the Lord, " Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore it fourfold" (Luke 19. 8). So grace taught Paul to send Onesimus to Colossae to Philemon his brother, so that past wrongs might be put right. In parting with Onesimus Paul parted with what he called "my very heart, " so dear had Onesimus become to him.

**Verses 14, 15, 16:** But without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will. For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever; no longer as a servant (bondservant or slave), but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

Paul would do nothing regarding Onesimus without having the mind of Philemon, that is, his decision or judgement. Paul wished to do nothing apart from this. Brethren should ever be careful that, where the interests and responsibilities of others are involved, there should be no action
taken without having their mind or judgement. Often much trouble has been caused where the mind of others has not been sought. Paul also says that the goodness of Philemon should not be shown towards Onesimus out of necessity, but of free will. Paul lays the case before him in a masterly fashion, but brings no pressure to bear upon him. Philemon must be a free agent in what he does. Who knows the manifold working of God? Paul says that perhaps Onesimus was parted from Philemon for a season, that he might have him for ever, eternally, for during the interval Christ had reached and saved him. Now he returns to Philemon, not as a slave but much more, a brother beloved, to Paul especially, but much rather to Philemon, " both in the flesh and in the Lord." Thus we see that Onesimus was a brother in a double sense, a natural brother of Philemon, and now also a brother in the Lord.

Verses 17, 18, 19: If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account; I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides.

Those who are in the Fellowship or Partnership (Acts 2. 42; 1 Corinthians 1. 9) are fellows or partners. See Luke 5. 10: "James and John, sons of Zebedee,... were partners with Simon." Paul and Philemon were in the same Fellowship, for the churches of God are one, in one Fellowship and the saints received one another when they moved about carrying letters of commendation from church to church. See Romans 16. 1; 2 Corinthians 3. 1. Paul asks Philemon, and also the church at his house (note verses 1, 2), to receive Onesimus as he would have received Paul himself. If there was anything which would hinder fellowship, such as past wrongs committed by Onesimus, whereby Philemon had suffered loss, he was to put that to Paul's account, who would repay him. It is dangerous doctrine to think and to say that because God forgives the sinner for all past wrongs, because of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who has in His death paid the sinner's debts to God, that therefore all debts to men have to be regarded as repaid and forgiven. This is not so, as the story concerning Onesimus clearly teaches. Though Christ restored to God what He took not away (Psalm 69. 4), there may still be restoration to men to be considered. Paul then touches lightly upon the point of the debt that Philemon owed to him, " I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides." Here was a debt that Philemon had not paid and never could.

Verses 20, 21: Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ. Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say.

Paul hoped for joy and refreshment in the matter of Onesimus. As he committed this letter to Onesimus, so it is thought, he sent him forth on the long journey (in those days) back to Colossae; his arrival there would be like the return of the prodigal in Luke 15. We can well believe, though the sequel of the story is hid from us, that the joy in Colossae would be similar to the joy in the father's heart and home, where the best robe, the ring and the sandals were brought for the long-lost son, and the fatted calf was killed. The joy that divine grace brings, the like of which there is not on the earth besides, would, we think, be in the home of Philemon when Onesimus arrived. Paul said that he had confidence in the obedience of Philemon, not to Paul, but to the teaching of divine
grace, that he would do even beyond what Paul said. This letter shows a taste and touch in handling a domestic difficulty, where estrangement had, no doubt, existed, of the most exquisite kind. Such matters are often the most difficult to handle, where family love has been flouted. Divine grace must be poured in in large measure to heal wounds that have been made.

Verse 22: But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you.

"Prepare me also a lodging." "Also" shows that Paul anticipated that Onesimus had found lodging with his brother. If this were so, Paul's arrival in Colossæ would fill the cup of each to overflowing. Here was the result of the Lord's work as the Peace Offering. In the peace offering in the past the LORD had His portion of the fat and the blood, the offering priest had his, the priestly family theirs, the offerer had the major portion of the sacrifice, and of this everyone who was clean could eat thereof. It was the fellowship offering, the offering which reconciled men to God and to one another. In our time it speaks of the hearts of saints being refreshed in Christ whose death has brought them together and given each a portion in Himself to enjoy together. Here the eyes and faces of each participant may glow with the love of Christ. For the liberation and coming of Paul Philemon was to pray, and we are of the opinion that Paul gained his liberty for a time.

Verses 23, 24, 25: Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee; and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Epaphras is referred to in Colossians 1. 7 and 4. 12. The Colossians had become disciples by the ministry of this faithful man. It says, "Even as ye learned (as disciples) of (from) Epaphras." He strove much in prayer for the saints in Colossæ, and for those in the contiguous churches in Laodicea and Hierapolis. It is sad to think that by the time of the writing of the book of the Revelation, perhaps some thirty years afterwards, the churches in Colossæ and Hierapolis no longer existed as churches owned by the Lord; only seven churches existed in Asia by that time, and even Laodicea was in a woeful condition of lukewarmness. When Paul wrote to Philemon, Epaphras was in prison, a fellow-prisoner of Paul: it might be that he was a prisoner when Paul wrote to the Colossians, though that is not stated. Paul evidently was quite near to Epaphras when he could write of the intensity of his prayers for the Colossians.

Paul closes with his usual salutation of grace. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

This is one of the finest letters, probably the finest, that was ever written to reconcile those involved in a domestic difficulty. J. M.
BIBLE STUDIES

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

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EDITORIAL

The syllabus for 1959 will now be in the hands of our fellow-students. We hope the change to twelve topics on an important subject, as opposed to the reading of a book or part of one, will be acceptable and will encourage more to join us in our study of the Scriptures. The references in the syllabus are mainly brief: contributors will require to search the Scriptures. We are confident all are happy to do this very thing.

We take this opportunity to renew our request for special papers. This year there has been a better response in this matter; for this we are very grateful, and we express the hope that the flow of these articles will continue and will increase. We could do with a few more for this year; it is not yet too late. As to next year, now is the time to seek out subjects and to gather material, so that there will be time for prayerful meditation and for careful and accurate expression of thoughts.

May we also once again remind fellow-students of the desirability of regular and punctual contribution? It is a good plan to prepare now a programme of study for the whole year, and to arrange it so that every topic will be studied in time to allow papers to be sent early to editors.

We make these remarks in hope of improving the future usefulness of present issues of Bible Studies, and that we should profit the more by our present studies. It is our earnest prayer that all will derive much blessing from our united studies.

J. B.

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

CHAPTERS 4 and 5

"In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind" (4. 6). Because of the insertion of "us," in chapter 5. 9 (A. V.), "for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God," some have concluded that the four living creatures are the Old Testament saints, and the four and twenty elders the saints of the Church which is Christ's Body. It is difficult to see how this is arrived at, and how the distinction is made between the Church and the saints of the Old Testament. For ourselves we are of the opinion that the four living creatures are four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders are four and twenty elders. This we think is the simple and straightforward explanation of who these beings are. The likeness of the living creatures in Ezekiel 1, which we know from chapter 10 to be the cherubim, is very similar to that of Revelation 4, in that they have faces like a man, a lion, a calf, and an eagle; they are also connected with the throne of God. From this we are led to conclude that the same holy beings
are in view. There are slight differences, truly, in the descriptions given, but those differences need not necessarily lead one to think that they are different beings. Differences in the Gospel narratives need not lead us to think that different narratives are in view. If the glassy sea reveals perfect purity in those who are privileged to stand before the throne of God, here are beings with countless eyes, which penetrate to depths far beyond mortal sight; with untiring and ceaseless energy they proclaim the thrice holiness of their Creator. It may be difficult for us to say with our present knowledge whether the cherubim and seraphim are the same beings. The seraphim, in Isaiah 6, are the burning or fiery ones, and there is likeness in this respect to the cherubim of Ezekiel 1. 13. We may learn who they are in God's good time, and until then it is well not to indulge in speculation. We are nevertheless strongly of the view that the living creatures of Revelation 4 are the cherubim of Ezekiel 1 and 10.

It is a grievous fact that Satan fell from his place amongst these holy beings, for he was the anointed cherub that covereth (Ezekiel 28), and God commanded the prophet to take up a lamentation for him. From amongst the twelve apostles there was one who fell away too, Judas Iscariot, whom the Lord called a devil (John 6, 70). It is perhaps of more than ordinary interest that the faces of the living creatures are those of four distinct classes of earthly creatures; the lion, the king of beasts; the ox, the greatest among cattle; the eagle, the chief among birds; and man, the greatest of all. These symbols have from ancient time been used to set forth the different characters of the Lord in the four Gospels; Matthew, the lion; Mark, the ox; Luke, the man; and John, the eagle. The old Rabbis taught that the standards of the four encampments of the tribes of Israel round about the tabernacle were those of the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle, but the Scriptures reveal nothing of this.

When the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sits upon the throne, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him and worship, and cast their crowns before the throne saying, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created." The R. V. gives the correct rendering of the verse here. Here we have clearly stated that nothing came into being of its own will or through fortuitous chance. The great Dagon of evolution here lies beheaded before the Ark of God's word, by one single verse. This verse says that all things were created by God and were created according to His will. Nothing could be plainer than these words. Which shall we believe, God or man? The answer is obvious! The wheel of chance may do for the gaming table, and here the devil and his votaries may seek an elusive fortune, but the God of heaven works according to plan and purpose. All will be effected according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1. 11). Woe to those who set aside His will in any age. His object in creation was that He might have pleasure in His creatures and they in Him. Worship is an abbreviation of worth-ship. It is the shape or acknowledgment that worth produces upon another. In the Greek it signifies bowing down or prostrating oneself. We see this demonstrated in the act of the four and twenty elders who fell down before Him that sitteth on the throne when His worth or excellence was proclaimed by the four living creatures. When God reveals Himself the proper attitude for angel or man to take is to bow before Him. David expresses the thought of worship when he says in Psalm 95. 6,

44 *O come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker."*
NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

There is the bowing of the body and also the bowing of the spirit (John 4. 24).

Job cursed the day when God gave him being, but we shall for ever bless God, we who are redeemed, that we ever were born; though some may wish that they had never been born.

In chapter 5 we come to events in heaven necessary to the revelation of the events which are recorded in the following part of the prophecy of this book. These events begin to be unfolded with the opening of the seven seals. The reference in verse 1 to a book casts us back to what is said in 1. 1, where we read of the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him. In the hand of the Almighty is a book which is close sealed with seven seals. A strong angel proclaims with a great voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" No one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon. Upon this John wept much. One of the elders said to him, "Weep not: behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome, to open the book and the seven seals thereof." In Jacob's oracular blessing of Judah, he called him a lion's whelp (Genesis 49. 9), that is, a young lion. Here is the Lion Himself from whom Judah sprang. In Isaiah 11. 1, 10, we read of both the Shoot and the Root of Jesse, and, in Revelation 22. 16, the Lord calls Himself "the Root and the Offspring of David." The Lord is the Root of David, as to His Deity, and the Offspring, as to His humanity. The Lord overcame because of who and what He was. Hence to Him the Overcomer is given not only the work of unfolding the future to His servants, but, having authority in heaven and on earth, of fulfilling all that is revealed. John says, "And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a (young) Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth." It was not a ram that John saw, but a young Lamb, which speaks of weakness and tenderness; and having been slain, it bore the marks of death, but it was not lying dead, it was standing in the midst of the throne of God. Resurrection means the upstanding of one who has fallen in death. Here is the Lamb in resurrection in the midst of the throne and of the living creatures who are in the midst of elders who are round about the throne. Once He was enclosed and compassed about by an assembly of evil doers (Psalm 22. 16; 88. 17); He spoke of being in the midst of two or three of an assembly gathered into His name (Matthew 18. 20); He walked in the midst of the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 1. 11-13); He is now in the midst of the throne of God and of heaven's greatest beings and innumerable hosts. His place is ever in the midst. The seven horns and eyes of the Lamb are the seven Spirits of God. These are sent forth into all the earth. The horns speak of strength by which He will execute His will and defend His saints. The eyes tell of His infinite and accurate knowledge of all. In 2 Chronicles 16. 9, we are told that "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." (See also Proverbs 15. 3; Zechariah 3. 9; 4. 10). Whilst it was ever true that the Spirit moved about everywhere in Old Testament times, effecting the will of God, there was a new sending forth of the Spirit as sent by the Son from the Father, which took place at Pentecost (Acts 2), and He ever proceedeth from the Father and the Son. What a comfort it is to know that the Lamb knows all and His strength is ever availing on our behalf in every contest of the battle of life! Such was the One who came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne.
When the Lamb had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before Him, an act of worship in the light of the infinite worth of the Lamb. They had each a harp and golden bowls full of incense. Certain say that the harps and bowls apply to the elders, but not to the living creatures, but there is nothing in the Greek to support such a conclusion. Those who fell down before the Lamb were such as had harps and bowls. The Lamb is here worshipped by these heavenly beings as God is worshipped (4. 11). He is "of full Deity possessed."

The golden bowls are full of incenses, of sweet odours of various kinds. These are the prayers of the saints who are on earth. The prayers of the saints are of manifold variety, yet all of them are viewed as sweet odours.

They sing, the four living creatures and the twenty four elders, not simply the elders. In contrast to the song of creation of 4. 11, the substance of their new song, the song of redemption, is: "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood (men) of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them (to be) unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth." We have already, in our notes on chapter 4, dealt with the exclusion of "us" (Hemas), in verse 9 here in the R. V., and the change from "us" (Hemas) to (Autous) "them." In keeping with this the R. V. also changes "we shall reign" of the A. V. to "they reign." Our view is that we can safely follow the R. V. reading of verses 9 and 10. Doing this we conclude that there is no evidence whatever for the views of many that the four living creatures are the Old Testament saints, and the twenty four elders are the saints of the Church which is Christ's Body. These two groups of four and twenty-four are exceedingly exalted heavenly beings. Those who are taught in Biblical numerics may see much in the numbers four and twenty-four as to government and such like matters. The fact that the twenty-four are elders would of itself show that rule is an implied condition of their eldership, and besides, they seem to perform other functions such as offering the prayers of saints on earth as incenses.

The word "redeemed" of the A. V. is properly changed to "purchase" in the R. V. The verb egorasas is derived from Agora, a place of public concourse or market-place. Those who are viewed as purchased by the blood of the Lamb are those who will be saved on earth after the Church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air, many of whom will be martyred in the time of the Tribulation, as indicated in 6. 9-11; 7. 9-17; 20. 4.

The vastness of the scene in heaven is depicted in verse 11, where angels with the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders form an innumerable company of a hundred million and besides thousands of thousands. Perhaps the better rendering of the vast company is, "and the number of them was myriads of myriads," ten thousands of ten thousands, which leaves the vast concourse numerically undefined. In Hebrews 12. 22 we read of myriads of angels, innumerable hosts. The great voice of this vast host is, "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing." What added glory shall accrue to the Lamb because of the fact that He was slain, and has made possible the realizing of the vast purposes of grace that it was God's will to show to men! But for His death all that God wished to manifest of His pardoning mercy and all the blessing that goes with it could never have been revealed. The heavenly beings, whose unfallen nature finds them ever in alignment with the divine will, rejoice with endless delight at the triumph of Calvary. In ages past they desired to look into such things (1 Peter 1. 12), but now the vast panorama of God's grace in Christ is
revealed fully to them and in this they greatly rejoice. There had been joy in their presence over one sinner that repented, but now they think of men of every tribe and nation being brought within the circle of God's favour. The ascription of power, riches and so forth, to the Lamb will afford us food for meditation as we lift and review each separate word.

Then follows the voice of every created thing, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and they ascribe to God, and to the Lamb, blessing, honour, glory, and dominion. This is the inherent right of God the Creator and of the Lamb. This agrees with what the apostle says in Philippians 2. 10, 11 when in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. This seems to indicate that beings who shall never know the mercy of God because of their rejection of it shall with those who are redeemed be required to give glory to God. When this vast host has ascribed to God and to the Lamb the blessing, honour, glory, and the dominion for ever and ever, the four living creatures say, Amen. And the elders fall down and worship.

**LESONS FROM THE JOURNEYINGS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AS SEEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES**

Our study of the migration of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt to the blessings of Canaan, should not only serve as a basis of knowledge of God's dealings with His people in those days, but also teach us the ways in which God deals with us.

We refer in particular to the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 10. The first paragraph of this chapter is a divine commentary on the events recorded by Moses in Exodus and Numbers. Firstly he impresses upon the Corinthians that all Israel passed through the Red sea, i.e. they were delivered out of Egypt (verse 1); they were all baptized (verse 2); they all partook of the manna (verse 3); they all drank of the water from the rock (verse 4). Yet even though these things were true of this chosen people, those who were numbered (603, 550), except two, came under the displeasure of God. This brought divine judgement upon the people, so that the prospect of entering into and enjoying the land was denied to them. The apostle points the lesson of these events, that we should not fall into the same error. He then lists a catalogue of sins of which this people were guilty in their wilderness journey—lust, idolatry, fornication, provocation, murmurings: these evils stain the history of this favoured race.

The apostle continues to enforce the lesson. These things recorded of God's ancient people are written for our admonition. Evidently some in Corinth were boasting in their position, not realizing that they were exposed to dangers similar to those that befell Israel of old, and he warns them in words that will bear repetition: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall " (1 Corinthians 10. 12). Spiritual pride is a sin which is a danger to each of us, and is something against which we ever need to be on our guard. At the conclusion of the paragraph we have the assurance of victory over temptation, if we are prepared to follow the way of escape made for us. Shall we not then in times of prosperity, leisure and apparent strength cast ourselves upon the Divine Deliverer? Is it not true that in that wherein we boast we are tried and often fail?
There is a subtle danger in the tendency to pass judgement on other believers and miss the application of the passage to our own souls. To enforce this lesson we use the words of Paul to Timothy, "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching" (1 Timothy 4. 16).

One of the main incidents in our reading is found in Numbers 13 and 14. The crisis at Kadesh-barnea is briefly summed up in two words, disobedience and unbelief. This is the burden of the writer to the Hebrews especially in chapter 3. 7 to 4. 13. "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). Having then become partakers of far greater blessings than those in which the children of Israel snared, we are accountable to God Himself, that the grace He has lavished upon us may not be found in vain.

A. Hyland.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

From Atherton. —Presumptuous sin will incur divine displeasure and judgement. God bears gently with the ignorant and erring. Korah and his company knew the LORD'S will, but were not prepared to do it. Moses and Aaron were in their divinely appointed offices by the command of God. Korah, Dathan and Abiram knew this. They were men of high standing in the nation, and their rebellious act could not possibly be excused. God ever delights to see hearts subject to His will. One important principle emerging from this story is the divine requirement that God's people should acknowledge divinely appointed rule and leadership, such rule and leadership being delegated to men by the Holy Spirit's appointment.

The people murmured and said, "Ye have killed the people of the LORD." Possibly the ungodly influence of Korah had affected them and consequently caused them to err in committing the ever serious sin of failure to bow to the judgement of God. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." It is important that we observe the lesson here, that, when judgement in an assembly is pronounced and administered, all the assembly should subscribe to such judgement. Failure to do this will lead to faction, or party spirit, and will incur, as here, further judgement. Judgement, which begins at the house of God, calls for unity of action.

"Notwithstanding the sons of Korah died not" (Numbers 26. 10, 11). They did not share in the grievous sin of their father (note chapter 16. 27), and so in their descendants we see the manifold grace of God. The prophet Samuel and his grandson, Heman the singer, and the sons of Korah, associated with so many sweet psalms, stand out as trophies of divine grace.

Altar plates were to be made from the censers (16. 36-40). This would not have been necessary but for the rebellion of Korah and his company. This was likewise true of Aaron's rod placed in the ark—placed there as a token against the children of rebellion. Sadly we reflect upon the sobering words of one of Korah's sons to Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim" (1 Samuel 15. 22, 23).

A miracle was performed with the chosen rod, in that a mere stick budded, blossomed and bore fruit. Here we see a true type of the resurrection of Christ who at this time became God's appointed High Priest. The New Testament counterpart to Numbers 17 is Hebrews 5. 4-6. G. A. Jones.
From Kingston-on-Thames. — Korah was a gifted man, holding a high position among the sons of Levi, but his desire for pre-eminence led him to use his gifts wrongly. By his knowledge and eloquence he was able to draw men after him, persuading them to forsake God's way and to follow him. This is the way in which sects arise, men giving their allegiance to another on account of his forceful personality, and so embracing error in preference to the truth of God.

Moses was the man least deserving to be accused of taking too much upon himself, the meekest man in all the earth. This accusation had its proper application to those who first made it. They aspired to a place to which they had not been called by God. They would have done well, if they had rested content with their position, remembering that the priesthood was divinely instituted, and that Moses, much against his natural inclinations, was given his work by God Himself.

It is a temptation to the human heart to rail at dignities, but one which must be firmly resisted in view of its very grave consequences, stressed in this passage and in Jude's epistle. The words of the five daughters of Zelophehad (Numbers 27. 3) indicate that this was the worst of all the murmurings of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

That the authority given to Moses was divinely given, was demonstrated conclusively when his words were fulfilled to the very letter. Had the rebels been swept away by some ordinary physical catastrophe, it might have been regarded as a coincidence, but this was a new thing, they went down alive into Sheol. We know from Numbers 26. 11 that the sons of Korah died not. They must have heeded Moses' warning, so saving themselves from sharing that awful doom. "All the men that appertained unto Korah " and were swallowed up were the rebellious company (whether related or not), who allied themselves with him and ignored the merciful warning of Moses.

L. Burrows.

From Crowborough. — God appoints for men their respective spheres of service. Levi was appointed to the service of the sanctuary, but only Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. Korah was a very privileged person, having, with others, the charge and care of the furniture of the tabernacle, but he was jealous of Aaron and desired to be a priest. Moses pleaded with him, but he refused to listen and joined with others in rebellion. Dathan and Abiram, sons of Reuben, had their place in God's economy, but were not satisfied and refused to appear before Moses. This uprising was not against Moses and Aaron, but against the LORD, and stern judgement must be meted out as a warning for others. God will uphold His appointed servants. The people in general failed to appreciate that this was the LORD'S hand, and the plague was sent to chastise them. God was entreated by Moses and Aaron, and the plague was stayed—a wonderful example of the Lord's teaching, " Pray for your enemies. "

To give further proof of the appointment of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, Moses placed the rods of the princes of Israel before the LORD. Only Aaron's rod budded and brought forth fruit. This would speak to us of our Lord Jesus, who rose from the dead and was appointed to service in the heavenly sanctuary.

God was merciful in that the children of Korah died not in the judgement. In later times they had a wonderful work to do in the service appointed by David and Solomon (Numbers 26. 11, 1 Chronicles 6. 37, 9. 19). They were saved from wrath to sing the praise of the LORD.

S. Swift.
This portion of Israel's journey to Canaan teaches us in the Fellowship, that divinely appointed leaders who oversee and care for the flock must be recognised and respected. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls." (Hebrews 13. 17). Moses and Aaron were appointed by the LORD to be Israel's leaders, but there was murmuring and disaffection in the camp. It came to a head with the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who took men and spake against Moses and Aaron. It then became necessary for the LORD to make a new thing: the ground opened up and they went down alive into Sheol (R. V. M.). Their end was truly worthy of their offence: "These men have despised the LORD." (Numbers 16. 30).

"An evil man seeketh only rebellion; therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him" (Proverbs 17. 11). We read in Isaiah 14. 12 and Luke 10. 18 of Lucifer, son of the morning, fallen from heaven because of rebellion. He said "I will" five times. His activities shall cease for ever when he is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20. 10).

From Middlesbrough. —There seem to be two distinct elements in the matter brought before us, but the two groups joined together to oppose Moses and Aaron.

The judgement of God upon Korah, Dathan and Abiram was severe, to meet the heinousness of their sin.... "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Jude places Korah in the company to which he belongs—with Cain and Balaam. It is remarkable that the congregation referred to these wicked men who were "sinners against their own lives" as "the people of the LORD."

It was very desirable that there should be no possibility of this issue being raised again. Aaron and his house had been chosen for the priesthood before the incident of the golden calf, and this was a matter that should have been beyond dispute. God caused the rod of Levi to bear buds, blossom and fruit and thereby settle the issue conclusively. As a permanent testimony to God's decision God commanded that the rod should be preserved in the tabernacle.

From Belfast. —There could be no doubt that Moses was the man chosen by God for the delivering and leading of the people of Israel out of Egypt, the house of affliction, into the land of rest, Canaan (Exodus 3. 15). Moses did not take this honour unto himself, the choice was God's, and the grace of God which was bestowed upon him was not in vain, for he was also faithful as a servant in all God's house (Hebrews 3. 5). Aaron his brother was also placed in the highly favoured position of high priest, not an honour which he took upon himself; his appointment to the office was purely by divine choice (Hebrews 5. 4). The word of God was given to be the paramount guide for the people, both in relation to God and in relation to men, to lead and direct their thoughts and actions.

The seriousness of this organized rebellion, which started with the princes and men of standing in the nation (Numbers 16. 2) and spread to the people (Numbers 16. 19), lay in the solemn fact that the revolt was directed against the all-authority of the eternal God, whose rule and government among them was thus questioned (Numbers 16. 10, 11).

From Birkenhead. —The outstanding point in Numbers 16 is that God separates people for particular kinds of
service. They said, " Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy. " God taught them a lesson in the words of Moses to Korah in verse 9: " Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel. " We need this lesson today; we should seek to know what our particular place of service is in the assembly and to fulfil it well, in fellowship with those who take the lead.

God calls His people to separate themselves from the evil-doers. Often-times we are called to do this, and sometimes members of families have to act as in the case of some of the sons of Korah (26. 11), who separated themselves and did not go down into the pit. God gives instruction today for leaders to admonish the disorderly (1 Thessalonians 5. 12, 14).

Aaron's rod which was laid up was a constant reminder to the people of their rebellious spirit and its consequences. Here again the LORD showed whom He had chosen. It should be our attitude always to recognize the men of God's choosing, and to seek to do with joy the task allotted to us: to do otherwise is showing a wrong spirit. R. L. Sands, R. Hyland.

From Southport. —The two hundred and fifty men who followed Korah were princes, men of high rank. It would seem that the judgement of God at Kadesh-barnea (Numbers 14) had had little or no effect upon these misguided men. God's disapproval and wrath here forewarn all who would cause contention and faction (Psalm 106, Jude 11, 1 Corinthians 1. 11).

Moses' word and Aaron's action, in taking the censer, stayed the plague. Aaron stood between the dead and the living. As high priest he made atonement, using for the people who reviled him the appointed and acceptable means of propitiating the LORD God. His act was one of fearless courage and self-sacrifice.

In this he was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest, the supreme example of courage and self-sacrifice. On the cross Christ stood between the dead and the living, the blaspheming and the penitent, the mocking and the mourning; He is the acceptable Sacrifice, the propitiation for our sins, and our Advocate with the Father (1 John 2. 1).

Thomas Brown.

From Liverpool. —There was no intercession here by Moses. This was too serious a matter. " The LORD will shew who are His, and who is holy. " Korah and his company were they who were guilty of taking too much upon themselves. Aaron and Moses pleaded, and opportunity was given to those who had been influenced to disentangle themselves.

The test in the face of such rebellion was to be dreadful. " Hereby ye shall know... if these men die the common death of all men,... then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the ground open her mouth, and swallow them up,... and they go down alive into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have despised the LORD " (16. 29, 30). The new thing came to pass, and Israel fled at the cry of these men as they went down. Fire came forth from the LORD and judgement was enacted upon the two hundred and fifty princes. This dreadful yet righteous judgement did not have the effect upon the people that it should have had, for they accused Moses of killing the people of the LORD. We have in this a revelation of the exceeding sinfulness of the human heart.

G. Jacques, AM.

From Glasgow. —The people of Israel would seem readily to have lost sight of the God who was guiding them on their wilderness journey. A section of the people, under the rebel leadership of Korah, Dathan and
Abiram, lost sight of the fact that they would be no longer holy in the sight of God, if they envied and disputed the leadership of Moses and Aaron, and also the right of Moses and Aaron to be the only ones to draw near to God on their behalf.

The love of Moses for the people he was leading again became apparent as he interceded for them before God, who wished to destroy them. The sending of Aaron to make an atonement, when the plague struck, should have been to the people of Israel ample proof of this love.

J. R.

From Ayr Y. P. M. —Being of the tribe of Levi and of the families of Kohath, Koran's duties were concerned with carrying the vessels of the sanctuary (Numbers 4), a task of no mean order in God's economy in Israel. In despising this work he despised the One who called him to it, and thus was cut short his life of service for God. As is so often the case in the downfall of a great man, many others were involved and the number might have been much greater, but for the intercessory work of Moses and Aaron.

The view was expressed that, although we read of Korah and his company going down alive into the pit, this does not necessarily mean that they were consigned to that part of hell which is the abode of lost souls. Only God can assess the heart condition and blameworthiness of each one, young and old, and allot each to his rightful place.

In regard to the censers belonging to the 250 men, it was thought that the fire which they used would be taken from the copper altar, for there is no mention of strange fire being offered before the LORD, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu. The fact that the censers survived the judgement of God while their owners perished might bear out the thought that their fire had been associated with the sacrifice on the altar of burnt offering.

From Nottingham. —To be jealous is, according to the dictionary, to be envious of another's advantages [1], which seems to be an apt description of the attitude of those who, as recorded in Numbers 16, rose against Moses. It is instructive to note that these were men "famous in the congregation" and "men of renown." Thus are we reminded of the timely warnings of 1 Corinthians 10. 12 and 1 Timothy 6. 3-6, for leaders can fall.

This rebellion should be considered in conjunction with earlier rebellions. From what varied sources did Moses experience trial! Those who opposed him here were wrong in their accusation, "Ye take too much upon you" (Numbers 16. 3). Moreover, Moses' experience at Horeb (Exodus 3. 1—4. 17) must have been known to these people. Moses accepted his task as appointed by God, and therefore men ought not to have opposed. The importance of appreciating the divine call to service needs to be grasped by God's servants today. It is written concerning Barnabas and Saul, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13. 2). Separation and calling are also brought out in such scriptures as Romans 1. 1, and Galatians 1. 1.

Once we realise that God has called us to His service, not only should we treasure the service and seek to fulfil it, but there should be no jealousy in our hearts or envy of another's sphere, even though we may feel, rightly or wrongly, that the other is more prominent. The field of service differs considerably, from one to another, as is taught in 1 Corinthians 12, but with the diversities of gift we have the same Spirit. Envy has no part with the believer who embraces the doctrine of this portion of Scripture.

We noted that the word "pit" is used in Numbers 16. 30, but the Hebrew word is Sheol. It was thought, therefore, that the "going down" of these people was not limited to being taken into a pit in the ground, but that they did pass into Sheol.

R. Hickling.
From Wigan. —The sin of rebellion is compared with the sin of witchcraft (1 Samuel 15. 23), the penalty for which was death (Exodus 22. 18). The gainsaying of Korah finds its place in that catalogue of fearful sins and ensuing judgement recorded by Jude (5-16). The sin of Korah and his company amounted to an attempt to usurp the priesthood (Numbers 16. 10). The Kohathites were recipients of a very privileged place before Jehovah (16. 9). The favoured place occupied by them and the charge given to them is recorded in Numbers 3. 27-31, 4. 1-20; the charge involved approach unto the most holy things (Numbers 4. 19, Psalm 65. 4). "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place " (Proverbs 27. 8). This did Korah.

The trait of instability found in their progenitor, Reuben, seems to have been inherited by his descendants who were chief in the trespass with Korah (Numbers 16. 1). The two hundred and fifty princes who ranged themselves alongside Korah were men of renown, who, because of their standing would be in a position to sway the people, as indeed they eventually did, for we notice that prior to the climax Korah assembled all the congregation, who later received the warning from Moses to separate themselves (Numbers 16. 19, 26) from the wrong-doers.

It is written, "When Thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26. 9). Thus the magnitude of the sin can be somewhat estimated by the subsequent judgement, which included a new thing and the perishing of approximately fifteen thousand souls.

God has laid it down that the children shall not be put to death for the sins of the fathers (Deuteronomy 24. 16). This is confirmed in the theme of Psalm 84—a psalm of the sons of Korah.

H. Caldwell.


From Toronto, Ont. —The quest of the twelve spies embraced the entire land, " from the wilderness of Z i n . . . to the entering in of Hamath " (13. 21), and we are given a detailed list of points they were specifically to observe. There is every appearance that the people needed the assurance which was lacking because of their unbelief. When this did not materialize, their true heart condition was revealed, " an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God " (Hebrews 3. 12). After the wonderful manifestations of the good hand of their God upon them, they were prepared to accept the false report of the ten and refuse the true report of the two. The pleading and intreaty of the faithful Joshua and Caleb brought only threats of stoning. We felt that it was only the appearing of the glory of the LORD in the tent of meeting that kept Israel from their fell purpose.

The record of Scripture concerning the faithful Caleb is, " My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went " (14. 24). As a man of forty years old, lie had spied out the land and brought word again as it was in his heart (Joshua 14. 7). The promise of the LORD was that his seed should possess it. That land included the ancient city of Hebron (See Genesis 13. 18), which was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. In the wonderful purposes of God, here was a city prepared for Israel, before they were a nation and before the patriarchs even came into Egypt. We felt that there was more than a little significance in the fact that Caleb went to Hebron to spy it out. It is pleasant to read later that after the conquest of Hebron
by Caleb, the land had rest from war (Joshua 14. 15). Rest seems to be associated with this city; it was God's choice for David when he came into his kingdom (2 Samuel 2. 1). It was eventually chosen as a City of Refuge for the manslayer in Israel. Caleb and Joshua entered into the rest which God had promised to His people on condition of their obedience, but the people of Israel " failed to enter in because of disobedience " (Hebrews 4).

**COMMENT**

[1] (Nottingham). —This is but one view of the application of the word "jealous. " God is " a jealous God " (Exodus 20. 5), and His name is "Jealous " (Exodus 34. 14). Where there is love there must also be jealousy. Jealousy is not in this sense a sinful emotion, otherwise such a reflection on the Divine Being would be serious. As love in man's heart may be directed into a wrong channel and to a wrong object, so there can be a wrong kind of jealousy, damaging alike to the person in whom it is and to the person toward whom it is directed. This kind of jealousy is to be avoided. — *J. M.*

**QUESTION AND ANSWER**

Question from Liverpool. —Does the word " tabernacle " (16. 24) indicate the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, or does it indicate an attempt to erect a tent in opposition to the Tabernacle ?

Answer. —Numbers 16. 27 would suggest that " tabernacle " here refers to the tents in which dwelt Korah, Dathan and Abiram. This view agrees with the fact that the camp of Reuben was on the south side (Numbers 2. 10), and that the families of the sons of Kohath pitched on the south side also (Numbers 3. 29).

**NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS**

**CHAPTER 1**

Verse 1: Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

Silvanus is Silas of Acts 15. 22, 32, 39-41, who was one of the " chief men among the brethren, " and one of the prophets, whom Paul chose as his fellow-worker after Barnabas parted from him in Jerusalem, and they went forth, being commended to the grace of the Lord. In Acts 16. 1-3 we read of Timothy's going forth to the work of the Lord: " Him would Paul have to go forth with him. " These three men wrought together in the Lord's work in Macedonia, where they planted churches in Philippi and Thessalonica. Here they are joined together in this letter from Paul to the Thessalonians. The manner in which this church is addressed is somewhat unique—" in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. " This shows what the Lord prayed for in John 17. 20, 21: " Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. " This oneness in " Us " is seen in the church of the Thessalonians, and the effect of this unity was felt far and wide in their collective testimony.

Without seeking to enter into a discussion on the textual grounds as to whether in Paul's greeting it is simply " Grace and peace, " or whether
NOTES ON EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THESSALONIANS

"Grace and peace are from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," we may say that in others of Paul's epistles, from Romans to Philemon, grace and peace are in every one from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (the Lord Jesus Christ though present in the A. V. is omitted in the R. V., in Colossians 1. 2). I am disposed therefore to accept the wording of the A. V. as correct.

Verses 2, 3: We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

Paul writes similarly in Romans 1. 8, 9; Philippians 1. 3; and Colossians 1. 3, 4. In other epistles he gives thanks for the saints. Prayer and thanksgiving make an excellent combination. It is well when we have many things and persons to thank God for, and many persons and things to pray for. The remembrance of these three servants of God was unceasing on behalf of the Thessalonians; of their work of faith, a work which sprang from a living faith ("Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself."—James 2. 17); their labour (Kopos, wearisome toil, such as only love can bear without murmuring) of love; and their endurance of hope. All three things originated in and sprang from our Lord Jesus Christ, not simply that their endurance of hope was in Him. Indeed the words are in the genitive, and should read, "of our Lord Jesus Christ." The remembering of their work, labour and hope was before God the Father. These holy men were acting as the Lord's remembrancers (see Isaiah 62. 6, 7).

Verses 4, 5: Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election, how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance; even as ye know what manner of men we shewed ourselves toward you for your sake.

Election here is that of Ephesians 1. 4, in that God chose believers in Christ before the foundation of the world. This is referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2. 13, 14: "But we are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that 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." Paul was ready to endure all things that God's elect might be saved, even as he wrote to Timothy, "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Timothy 2. 10). Thus it was with the elect in Thessalonica, that to them the gospel did not come in word only, but in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance. Some commentators associate these words with the manner in which Paul preached the gospel. It seems to me rather to indicate the manner in which the gospel came to the Thessalonians. There is undoubtedly a relationship between how the gospel is preached and the effect it has on the hearers, as there is between the arrow leaving the bow and striking the target. What Paul is saying is like the arrow striking the target, as to the power it had on the hearts of the hearers. The gospel came unto them in power, etc. Literally it "became" (Egenethe, a form of Ginomai, to become) unto (Eis, into) them, in word, in power, in the Holy Spirit, in much assurance. The assurance was clearly not Paul's assurance that he was preaching the right gospel or preaching the gospel aright, but the assurance of those that heard it. Paul and the others backed their gospel preaching with their Christian living—"toward
you for your sake. " They practised what they preached. It ill becomes preachers to be as the Pharisees, who said and did not.

Verses 6, 7: And ye become imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit; so that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.

Ye became (the same word as in verse 5 above, a form of Ginomai), imitators (Mimetes, from which the English word "mimic" is derived) of us, and of the Lord, whose behaviour was seen in that of the preachers. They accepted the word of the preachers in much tribulation (from men) and with much joy of the Holy Spirit (from God). They were a happy, suffering people. Thus the whole church became a pattern of behaviour to the new-born believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia; this work of the Lord was a new work in those parts. Thus it was that Paul and his fellows imitated the Lord, their converts imitated them, and other believers elsewhere found in the Thessalonian church a pattern to imitate. Happy are young converts who find in others an excellent pattern to follow.

Verse 8: For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything.

A brilliant light had been lit in Thessalonica, and from this church the light streamed out to distant parts. Aristarchus and Secundus, of Acts 20. 4, and Gaius, of Acts 19. 29, were possibly men in the forefront of the work and used by the Spirit in the diffusion of the word of the Lord. So powerful was the testimony of the Thessalonians that it reached far beyond the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, for in every place their faith towards God had gone abroad. We have here a pattern assembly in testimony; one in which preaching and practice were in harmony.

Verses 9, 10: For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come.

Paul did not need to say anything about the Lord's work in Thessalonica, for the report of the entrance of the Lord's workers there had been related far and wide, of how the Thessalonians had turned to God from their idols. They first found the living and true God, and then their idols were given up. Their service (bondservice) was from henceforth to God who is both living and true, in contrast to the service of lifeless false idols, which are nothing at all in the world (1 Corinthians 8. 4). They served God as they waited for Jesus His Son from heaven. " Which delivereth (delivered, A. V. ) us from the wrath to come" (R. V. ), is not to be understood as though the Lord is continually delivering us from the wrath to come. The word " delivereth " in the Greek is a present participle, which simply means that He is the delivering One from the wrath to come. He delivered us from coming wrath when He saved us through grace.

CHAPTER 2

Verses 1, 2: For yourselves, brethren, know our entering in unto you, that it hath not been found vain: but having suffered before, and been shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God in much conflict.
The Thessalonians knew that the entering in of these servants of God among them had not been in vain (see Acts 17. 1-9). The gospel had wrought great and blessed changes among them. Paul and Silas before they came to Thessalonica had been shamefully treated in Philippi. The prison, the rods, and the stocks, had left deep marks in their memory, which the kindly treatment of the jailor had not effaced (Acts 16. 19-40). We can see the boldness of the Lord's servants in Acts 17, and also the conflict that they faced in the preaching of the gospel in Thessalonica. The Jews incited the rabble fellows of the city to make an assault on the house of Jason, and they dragged him and certain brethren before the rulers of the city. In consequence of the general uproar, the brethren sent away Paul and Silas to Beroea by night.

Verses 3, 4: For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but even as we have been approved of God to be intrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God which proveth our hearts,

Paul calls the preaching of the gospel by himself and the others, "our exhortation" (Paraklesis, either exhortation or comfort according to the context). The gospel may be of exhortation and persuasion, exhorting men to be reconciled to God, and the gospel may be taught, in which the fundamental facts of the gospel are expounded. The former is how the gospel should be presented to the sinner, the latter to the believer. Paul's gospel was not of error (Planes, wandering), a delusion causing people to wander in their mind. It was not of uncleanness or impurity, such as were the practices associated with pagan religions. It was not of guile or fraud. As men whom God intrusted with the gospel, which brings boundless blessings to men, they were not men-pleasers, but their object was to please God who proved their hearts.

Verses 5, 6: For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness, God is witness; nor seeking glory of men, neither from you, nor from others, when we might have been burdensome, as apostles of Christ.

Flattery is a deadly bait used by crafty men to catch simple souls. It was practised in Eden's garden by the old Serpent when he said to Eve that they would become as gods if they ate of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3. 4, 5). David spoke of the unfaithful in his time:

"They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: With flattering lip, and with a double heart, do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaketh great things" (Psalm 12. 2, 3).

The Thessalonians knew that Paul used no flattery in his preaching when he laid the charge of sin against them (Romans 3. 9, 19). Their preaching was no cloke to cover a covetous heart. They were not preachers, as some who preach according to their stipend, with one eye on their sermon and the other on the collection bag. Persons not pounds were what Paul and his fellows sought. They did not seek glory of (Ek) men, neither from (Apo) the Thessalonians nor others; and though they might have been burdensome (for such as preach the gospel should live of the gospel—1 Corinthians 9. 14), as apostles of Christ, they did not exercise their right in this respect.

Verses 7, 8: But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children: even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us.
The preachers were placid, mild (or gentle) among the Thessalonians. Their gentle demeanour was like that of a nurse (a suckling mother) who cherishes (Thalpo, to impart warmth, as a hen by brooding) her own children. Their loving desire for the Thessalonians was such that they were well pleased or delighted to impart the gospel of God to them, but, like a suckling mother, they imparted their souls or lives to them, because they were very dear to them. Nothing could be more tender than this Christlike love.

Verse 9: For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

There is little difference of meaning between labour and travail, though the latter includes the idea of pain. The apostle and his co-workers wrought in manual labour in Thessalonica, as he did in Corinth, in Acts 18. 3, when he wrought with Aquila at tent-making. He says here, that they so wrought that they might not be a burden to the Thessalonians in preaching the gospel to them. What suffering, self-denying, and loving servants of Christ these men were, and what an example they have left behind!

Verses 10, 11, 12: Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe: as ye know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying, to the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who calleth you into His own kingdom and glory.

Men could only testify to the outward actions of righteousness and blamelessness, but God witnessed to the holiness of the hearts from which those actions sprang. Such was the standard of conduct of himself and his fellows toward the Thessalonians. The person who lives holily before God will not fail to live righteously and blamelessly before men. Without holiness of heart a man's righteousness is but the garb of the Pharisee. As a father must be careful of his behaviour before his children, the apostle was careful of his behaviour before his spiritual children. In verse 7, they acted as a mother, and here, in this verse they acted as a father. Paul says that they dealt with each one of the Thessalonians, exhorting, encouraging or consoling, and testifying; the object in all this was that they might walk worthily of God, the one who calls (Kalountos, present participle, the calling one) into His own kingdom (i.e., the kingdom of God) and glory. This is the present kingdom of God, expressed in the churches of God, God's little Flock. The glory is that of John 17. 22, 23, which was given by the Father to the Son in connexion with His work on earth, as He said, "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me." "Given" is in perfect tense in the Greek showing that the giving in the past remains to the present; and the object of giving this glory is that the Lord's disciples may be one in a visible unity which has a bearing on testimony to the world.

J. M.
Numbers 20 and Deuteronomy 34 describe the end of the joint leadership of Moses, Aaron and Miriam, which terminated while the children of Israel were still in the wilderness. Miriam the prophetess died first (Numbers 20. 1) and little is said in her case. We are not concerned at present to discuss whether her name, which is related to the name Marah (bitter) and means "rebelliously" (Strong), is to be taken as prophetic and descriptive of her as a person, but rather to note that at her death the question of succession did not arise. Prophecy is one of the things that will cease (1 Corinthians 13. 8), and, while it is true that Elisha took up the mantle that fell from Elijah (2 Kings 2. 13), there is no rule as to succession in the work of prophecy. In this sphere of service God chooses according to His own will. Aaron's case is entirely different. The priesthood was given to Aaron and his family, and his son must succeed. To Moses fell the solemn task of disrobing Aaron and investing Eleazar. Prophecy will cease, but worship will continue, and will continue in eternity.

In the interval between the deaths of Miriam and Aaron joint responsibility in leadership was still in evidence. Note the repeated coupling of the two names Moses and Aaron, and also the plural pronouns, "ye" used by the LORD (20. 8, 12) and by the people (20. 4, 5) and also "we" used by Moses (20. 10).

At the time of the death of Aaron there was still much work to be done by Moses in instructing the people in the commandments and judgements of the LORD, and God spared him till this work was finished (36. 13). During that time it was his lot to share with the people the distress caused by Edom's refusal (21. 4, 5). In such circumstances Moses would have found his burden of leadership much lighter, if only the people had accepted the true reason for their distress and sought to walk in fellowship with their leader and in complete dependence upon God. The present-day application is obvious; the leaders of God's people should work in full harmony among themselves, and the others should seek to understand the difficulties under which they sometimes have to work in serving the Lord. We should never add to a burden which we do not ourselves carry, but we should bear one another's burdens, "and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6. 2).

J. B.
NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

CHAPTER 6

In chapter 6 we have the Lamb opening six of the seven seals with which the book of chapter 5 was sealed. The seventh seal is not opened until chapter 8, when, after the silence of half an hour in heaven, the seven angels which stand before God were given seven trumpets. The soundings of the last three of these angels are the three Woes (chapters 8. 13; 9. 12; 11. 14).

The horses and horsemen of Revelation 6 bear a striking resemblance to those of Zechariah 1. 8-17, and these horsemen of Zechariah have to do with the Lord's purpose in connexion with His return in His mercies towards Jerusalem, where His house was to be built. It seems to me that the same consideration emerges in connexion with His purpose regarding Jerusalem in days yet to come, for we can see that the opening of the sixth seal brings us to the coming of the Lord to the earth (verses 12-17; Acts 2. 19, 20; Matthew 24. 29-31; Isaiah 2. 19-21). In Zechariah we see a man riding on a red horse standing among the myrtle trees. This man said of the horses, red, sorrel, and white, "These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth." These answered the angel of the LORD who stood among the myrtle trees (who seems to be the same as the man on the red horse), "We have walked to and fro through the earth and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest." The whole paragraph is interesting and instructive as to the state of quietness among the nations at the close of the Babylonian empire, and of God's displeasure at this while His house lay waste. This scene finds its place towards the end of the seventy years of Babylonish captivity. Then followed the destruction of the Babylonian empire and the liberation of the Jews by Cyrus, who were freed to go up and to build the temple.

God will again begin to move in regard to Jerusalem and the fulfilment of His prophetic word, and He will send forth His horsemen again. In Zechariah 1 the horses were red, sorrel (or bay, a reddish-brown colour), and white. In Revelation 6 they are white, red and black. There is also a pale horse, in Revelation 6: he who rides upon him is Death, and Hades follows with him, and he seems to complete the work of the previous two horsemen.

He who rides on the white horse is not the Lord. He is not crowned because of past victories, but because he is going forth to conquer. The crown here is (Greek) Stephanos, which is a token of honour conferred upon him. In the Lord's case, when He rides forth to victory on a white horse, in Revelation 19. 11, 12, He is not crowned with a crown (Stephanos), but with many diadems ("Diadema, a diadem, tiara, i. e., a white band or fillet; worn by kings around their usual headdress"). Such diadems are an evidence that He is King of kings. God's purpose among men cannot fail despite all the forces of the devil, demons and men. Hence He who sits on the white horse goes forth conquering and to conquer. The possibility in the interpretation of the meaning of the rider on the white horse is, that he goes forth to conduct the spiritual battle which will be waged between God's saints and the Devil, as is indicated in Revelation 12. 11: "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death." Though it is said, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Revelation 13. 7), this does not mean that he, the beast, overcame them spiritually, but by physical persecution he overcame them
in a bodily sense. He will undoubtedly slaughter them in vast numbers, as Revelation 7. 9, 13, 14, shows, but they will never yield to him, to render to him the worship that He will demand.

When the Lamb opens the second seal and the second living creature says, "Come," there comes forth a red horse. The result of his going forth is that peace is taken from the earth, and mankind enters upon a time of world-wide, international, slaughter. At the present moment the nations seem to be preparing for such slaughter with destructive weapons in their possession which make the deadly weapons of past times seem mere toys.

At the opening of the third seal John saw a black horse, and his rider had a balance in his hand. After this world-wide slaughter famine stalks the world. Cereals are in short supply. It is a black period of famine and mourning. Such times follow wars. Oil and wine, unlike cereals, are not vital to life, and these are available to those who can get them, but the shortage of cereals, in consequence of world conflicts, strikes at the lives of earth's inhabitants.

With the opening of the fourth seal we have another kind of horse, a pale horse of death-like colour, whose rider is Death, and Hell follows with him. Theirs is a joint commission, they being given authority over the fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword, famine, death and wild beasts. It would seem that they go forth to gather the wreckage of humanity from the wars and famine, etc., left by the former horsemen. Death claims the body and Hell the soul.

Whilst God is marching against men through the horsemen who were sent forth, men have been turning in their fury upon His saints who have been faithful in their witness to the word of God. Thus with the opening of the fifth seal John "saw underneath the altar the souls (not their bodies, for their resurrection had not taken place) of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." The altar was the place of public testimony, at the base of which the blood of the sin offering was poured in past times, so that the testimony of God's people might continue. Here are the souls of saints beneath the altar, saints who on earth had given their lives in public witness for God, and after death they are at rest beneath the altar. The brazen or copper altar was the place where divine judgement fell upon the sacrificial victims, and here those who had been slain, who had sacrificed their lives, not for sin, but in testimony, cry for judgement, "How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" [Here the cry is unlike the Lord's and Stephen's (Luke 23. 34; Acts 7. 60), for then the day of grace lay ahead, but the cry is like that of Psalm 79. 5, 6, 7; 74. 10, 11; Jeremiah 10. 25, etc.]. They were each given a white robe and told to rest for a little time until their fellow-servants and brethren should be killed as they had been. This company of the slain martyrs of the Great Tribulation, which is in the last three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week, are seen in chapter 7. 9-17, where they stand with the rest of their fellow-servants who had been slain in the time of the Great Tribulation (verse 14). These, I judge, are the same as those that come triumphant from the beast and from his image (chapter 15. 2-4).

As we have already indicated, the opening of the sixth seal brings us to the time of the coming of the Son of Man in judgement to the earth, at the beginning of the day of the Lord. This paragraph must not be spiritualized and interpreted as being one of the convulsions on the earth during the time of God's judgements which fall thick and fast, as they fell of old on
Pharaoh and the Egyptians prior to the deliverance of Israel and the destruction of the firstborn of man and beast. "The great day of their wrath is come;" "their wrath" is that of God and of the Lamb. Here is a time of unspeakable terror, of signs in heaven, the sun black as sackcloth, the moon as blood, the stars falling from heaven, and heaven removed as a scroll; on earth there is a great earthquake (possibly that of Revelation 16. 18-21), and mountains and islands are moved out of their places. Utter consternation reigns. Kings, princes, chief captains, the rich, the strong, bondmen and freemen are in flight to the mountains and to the rocks, as perchance men fled before the flood waters of Noah for safety, but there was none. So there will be no hide-out for man when He rises to shake mightily the earth. There will be no safety for men then, save for those that trust in Him and call upon His name; such will be saved according to His sure promise. As the coming events of Revelation are not given in serial form, it is vain to attempt to make this scene something other than the Lord's coming to earth in judgement.

CHAPTER 7

In chapter 7. 1-3 four angels are seen standing in the four corners of the earth holding the four winds that they should not blow (in divine judgement), and they are commanded not to hurt the earth, the sea, and the trees, until the servants of God are sealed upon their foreheads. These servants of God are from the twelve tribes of Israel, Dan being excepted. To what purpose is this sealing? we may ask. Are these all of the tribes of Israel that will be saved and left to populate the land of Israel in the Millennium? I would answer, No, to this question, for Dan, who is not mentioned in Revelation 7, is the first to be mentioned in the apportionment of the land, in Ezekiel 48. In the land Joseph has two portions, Manasseh and Ephraim (Ezekiel 47. 13; 48. 4, 5). In consequence of the inclusion of both of the sons of Joseph, Levi is left out of the twelve portions of the twelve tribes; the Levites having their portion next to the priests (Ezekiel 48. 12, 13). Israel is ever twelve tribes, and the different enumerations of the twelve tribes is an interesting study.

God made provision to meet the consequences of the sin of Israel in the oracular blessing by Jacob of Joseph's two sons, whom Jacob adopted into his family, in view of the rejection which was yet to take place of the firstborn sons of Israel, when they committed idolatry in the matter of the golden calf. At that time Levi, who took the LORD'S side and went forth to Moses and executed the LORD'S judgement, obtained the nearer place of the firstborns in the service of God (Exodus 13. 2, 15; 32. 26-29; Numbers 3. 40-51). Thus it came to be that Israel was thirteen, but Levi was not numbered with the twelve; this tribe was sanctified from the others and had a place of service apart from them. This was true of their place around the tabernacle, and will also be true in the Millennium. Levi is present in Revelation 7, and Dan is left out. Why is this? Was it because of Dan's idolatry when they took Micah's graven image as they migrated northwards in the days of the Judges (Judges 17, 18) and set it up among them? This continued all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh. But not only so, for we read of Jonathan, who had been priest to Micah, that he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land. It makes sad reading, that Jonathan was the son of Gershom, the son
of Moses. How quickly may sons throw away their father's riches! Let sons of worthy fathers hear and fear!

If these 144,000 are not all of the tribes of Israel who will be preserved of Israel for Millennial blessing, then the sealing must be for another purpose. The sealing, we are told, is that of the servants of God; they are sealed for service and for protection in that service from the dire judgements that will come upon others. This seems to be implied in the words of the angel, who is commissioned to seal the 144,000 on their foreheads (see Revelation 9.4), to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads" (see Revelation 7.4). It will be remembered that in the land of Egypt Israel was preserved from certain of the plagues that fell upon the Egyptians. It would be grievous to think that God's servants should bear their part of His judgements on the wicked as well as the dire persecution of the wicked because of their faithful testimony. This would be a double portion of suffering at the hands of God and men. It seems to indicate that those who are sealed of God in their service are sealed also for protection from the judgements of God. There are twelve thousand sealed of each of the tribes with the exception of Dan, as we have seen. Saints today are also sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. We do not think that this is done by an angel, nor does the sealing, in Revelation 7, seem to be the same. Nevertheless we are set apart by our sealing and empowered by the Spirit for service, as well as being assured by the Spirit of that inheritance that lies before us (Ephesians 1.13, 14).

While we have, in verses 4-8, this sealed company of 144,000 out of the twelve tribes, we have, in verses 9-17, a vast unnumbered company, a multitude, which no man could number. These, in contrast to those of the twelve tribes, are from all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues. Those whose souls were under the altar, in Revelation 6.9-11, who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus, and who were given a white robe, seem to be similar to those mentioned here. They seem also to be the same as those indicated in chapters 15.2-4; 20.4, 6. No doubt in this martyred host are both Jews and Gentiles, for they are of every nation, tribe, people, and tongue. They are identified by one of the elders as, "These are they which come out of the Great Tribulation." The A. V. says, "out of great tribulation," which might be thought to mean tribulation at any time. The definite article before tribulation shows that it is tribulation of a certain time and kind. They are the hosts martyred by the beast, such as would not worship him or his image. The scene is a most delightful one and is calculated to fire the imagination of God's saints of that coming time with an unquenchable fervour to resist to the last the wicked idolatry of the time of the beast. One cannot but feel within one's being a rising courage to stand for God in the light of the valiant stand others will take in times yet to come. Here is seen the vast host of martyred saints "standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands". They ascribe, "Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb."

As one tries to visualize the scene one is overwhelmed with its vastness. Besides the innumerable host of the martyrs, here are gathered all the angels round about the throne and the elders and the living creatures. The greatest of earth's concourses is but as nothing to this heavenly scene. All these heavenly beings fall on their faces before the throne and worship God, saying, "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

J. M.
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

FROM SINAI TO MOAB (5): DEATH OF MIRIAM, MOSES' SIN, EDOM'S REFUSAL, AARON'S DEATH, THE BRAZEN SERPENT, SIHON AND OG (Numbers 20. 1—22. 1).

From Middlesbrough. —This passage is rather a sad one from the point of view of Moses, who lost both his sister and his brother, and also through his sin forfeited his right of entrance into the land of promise.

We remember many aspects of the life of Miriam from the time that she first watched over Moses. She had many qualities to be commended, but we also remember the lesson her sin teaches.

Moses was not commanded to strike the rock; he was told only to speak to the rock. He became irritated and failed to sanctify God in the sight of the people.

There is an element of pathos in what took place at mount Hor. Here Aaron was divested of his garments for glory and beauty, and his office passed to his son. Christ in resurrection was appointed a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. His Priesthood will never pass to another. To prevent any difficulty, Aaron's son was appointed before the death of Aaron.

Edom refused Israel permission to pass through, so they began a long detour. There were renewed murmurings against God, and divine judgement followed. It is the younger generation who are chiefly involved here. When the people cried, God provided a means whereby they could be healed. The Lord Jesus said that this spoke of the fact that He Himself would be lifted up. In both cases faith is required for healing. "There is life in a look!"

It is a pity that later the brazen serpent became an object of worship, and had to be destroyed. Hezekiah broke it in pieces.

From Toronto, Ont. —The account of the death of Miriam is limited to one verse (20. 1). No details are given us, except as to the time and location. We do not read of any lamentation being made for her, as is recorded in the accounts of both Moses' and Aaron's deaths. One has said in respect to Israel in their wilderness journeyings that individual and collective responsibility were indissolubly characteristic of them. Thus, when Miriam was moved to speak unadvisedly against Moses and became a leper because of her sin, she was shut up without the camp seven days. What follows in the divine record is significant: "The people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again" (12. 15). The entire camp of Israel was brought to a standstill because of this woman's sin. During the periods of lamentation for Moses and for Aaron, even thirty days, we read that the camp did not set forward; but it would appear that Miriam's death occasioned no such delay. It is noteworthy that chapter 20 opens with the death of one who led the song of praise and thanksgiving and ends with the death of the one who led the worship, even Aaron.

Israel said to Edom, as he said also to Sihon "neither will we drink of the water of the wells. "The water from the rock must have been a veritable stream to quench the thirst of over two million people, beside their cattle. The words, "If we d r i n k . . . then, " were uttered by a people whose thirst had been quenched at the riven rock. They drank of a spiritual R o c k . . . the Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10. 4). We too have drunk of the living water: "Whosoever d r i n k e t h . . . shall never thirst" (John 4. 14). Having drunk, we became possessors of everlasting life; but to maintain our spiritual life we must, like Israel, have daily recourse to the refreshing
streams. Do we individually experience that panting and longing after the waterbrooks? If a man drink of the living water, not only will his thirst be quenched, but also from within him shall flow rivers of living water (John 7. 38). Our exercise in bringing thirsty ones to the Source of the water of life will fulfill in us, as a together people in testimony, the words of Isaiah 58. 11, "Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

From Southport. —Men are poor learners, especially in the school of trial. In spite of the fact that Israel had seen the power of God manifested for their benefit and deliverance so often since they left Egypt, still they murmured. They seem not to have called upon God and waited for Him. God proved them, but they failed. Their experience with God would have been wonderful had they trusted His love and power.

In this section we have two striking figures of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great work He accomplished at Calvary, even though the incident is marred by the action and words of Moses.

The rock was only to be smitten once (Exodus 17. 6), as the great Antitype could only be smitten and die once. Moses was still the intercessor for the people, yet doubtless under great stress he sinned in bringing himself and Aaron before the people as they who were to bring water from the rock, and in smiting instead of speaking. God judged them for this act. They were not permitted to bring the people into the land.

Edom refused passage to Israel, yet Moses did not contend with him, because he was Israel’s "brother." The land had been promised to Esau, but the judgement of God came upon Esau and his posterity in a later day (Jeremiah 49. 17, Isaiah 34).

The death of Aaron reminds us of Hebrews 7. 23-28. His death is in keeping with the record of his life. It must have been a painful scene, yet no resentment is recorded.

The people always seem in the best condition when aggressive; otherwise there was constant murmuring. To be abounding in the work of the Lord is a sure safeguard for us all. Murmuring brought the judgement of God upon His people by fiery serpents, yet again for those who still lived, having been bitten, God used the simple means of a look at the brazen serpent placed upon a pole. Here again we have one of those many outstanding types and foreshadowings of Him who was to be made sin for us. It is not without significance that these two types of the Lord Jesus Christ are both referred to in the New Testament.

Paul links them together in 1 Corinthians 10. 9-13. Spiritual meat and drink seem to refer to the direct provision of God for His people. The word of God to us is spirit and life. The happenings to Israel were by way of example. God will prove His people, but is with them in the trial. The setting of this passage dealing with our subject is interesting. Paul deals with himself as an individual in chapter 9 of 1 Corinthians; and in the last part of chapter 10 and in chapter 11 he deals with the people of God in the church of God in Corinth. Self-judgement prevents God’s judgement.

From Edinburgh. —The LORD said through Micah, "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron and Miriam" (Micah 6. 4). These two brothers and their sister were the instruments whom God used in the bringing forth of His people from Egypt. In Numbers 20 we see how they did not reach the promised land. First Miriam died. Then Moses failed (trespassed), and then Aaron died. This chapter follows the words of the LORD to Moses (Numbers
and resumes the chronological narrative of chapter 14. The children of Israel were in Kadesh (13. 26); there they were turned round to wander in the wilderness (14. 25). As the wanderings of the people were drawing to a close, they came to Kadesh again, and there Miriam died and was buried.

Here there was no water, and thirst afflicted the, people just as it had done their fathers (Exodus 17). The multitude would rather have joined themselves to Korah and his company, and their uprising caused Moses and Aaron to draw near to the LORD'S presence. The LORD'S answer was that Moses was to speak to the rock, not to smite it, as in Exodus 17, and he was to use the same rod which brought water from the rock at Horeb. Wherein then did Moses transgress? " It went ill with Moses for their sakes: . . . He spake unadvisely with his lips" (Psalm 106. 32, 33). He trespassed against God in the midst of the people (Deuteronomy 32. 51). He failed to sanctify God. He showed a spirit of unbelief. The smiting of the rock is a type of the smiting of the Rock of Ages at Calvary; certainly it should never have been smitten more than once. It should not have been smitten here at all. But "the judgements of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether, " and Moses' trespass against the LORD deprived him of the privilege of leading into the land the people whom he had led out of Egypt.

Forty years after leaving Egypt, Aaron died on the top of Mount Hor (33. 38). This followed soon after Miriam's death. Moses was to strip Aaron of his priestly garments, the garments which Moses had first put upon his brother (Leviticus 8. 7-9), and clothe Eleazar with them. Aaron's elder sons had already died (Leviticus 10). The high priesthood changed from Aaron to Eleazar, later to Phinehas, who are numbered among the many who because of death were hindered from continuing. But the Lord abideth for ever, having a Priesthood that does not pass to another (Hebrews 7. 23, 24, R. V. M. ). A. M. Hope.

EXTRACTS

From Atherton. —Miriam filled a unique place in the history of the people of Israel. She showed wonderful initiative at the birth of Moses, and, at a later date, in leading the women in praise to Jehovah at their great deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 15. 20, 21). She was called a prophetess in Israel; generally her work was of a very high order, as indicated in Micah 6. 4. While the Holy Spirit frequently refers to the death of men, a woman's passing is rarely recorded, but Miriam's case provides an exception. She had completed her work, and reached a ripe old age.

The little rock of Exodus 17. 6 speaks of Christ smitten in humility: the rock of elevation of Numbers 20 provides the type of the One who need not be smitten again, but simply spoken to for a blessing.

Israel's comment upon the manna is significant: " Our soul loatheth this light (vile) bread. " Thus the sweetness of the bread from heaven was no longer experienced. Equally sad it is today when the word of God is so viewed, when the literature of a world at enmity with God is the desired substitute, to attract and delight the heart and mind.

The powerful arm of Jehovah is revealed in dealing with the nations, through whose territory His people wished to pass. He abode faithful to His promise to them, and to their forefathers, to bring them into the land. (See Psalm 105. 42-45).

From Belfast. —Moses reminded us of the law, and Aaron of the failing priesthood, which could never bring a person into the heavenly Canaan. Joshua's bringing the people into the promised land gave rise to considerations of Christ's bringing people into the spiritual Canaan.
The deaths of Moses and Aaron on the borders of the promised land are solemn warnings to all. They failed to sanctify the LORD before the people and smote the rock as if they were responsible for the provision of the water. The guidance of the leaders of God's people today should be characterized by the principle that was so prominent in the case of John the Baptist. This principle was suitably defined in his own words, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Edom knew about the journeyings of the children of Israel and their hardships. This should have been sufficient evidence that God was with them. However, by failing to show kindness to the people of God, Edom missed the opportunity of special blessing.

The fiery serpent of brass was a replica of the source of Israel's trouble, yet it was a channel of blessing, for all who look to Christ, who, was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, are blessed eternally through God's unmeasured grace to the ruined race of Adam. Although the children of Israel were brought near to death, a look at the fiery serpent was sufficient to restore them.

**From Kingston-on-Thames.** —The death of Miriam the sister of Moses is recorded in Numbers 20. 1. She played an important part in God's purposes. She was a prophetess. When the baby Moses was put into an ark of bulrushes and laid in the flags by the river's brink (Exodus 2. 3), Miriam stood by to watch, and when Pharaoh's daughter appeared, Miriam said, "Shall I go and call thee a nurse?" (Exodus 2. 7).

After Israel had passed through the Red Sea, Miriam led the women, with timbrels, and sang unto the LORD (Exodus 15. 20, 21). We too, like the psalmist, can sing a new song unto God (Psalm 144. 9), for sin held us by a stronger cord, yet by God's mercy free are we.

Miriam spoke against Moses, but God defended Moses, and Miriam was made leprous. We should be careful in this connexion (1 Corinthians 10. 11), for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10. 31).

Once again Israel complained that they lacked water, and this time the LORD told Moses to speak to the rock, instead of which he smote the rock twice, and spoke angrily to the people. Are we not reminded of another Rock, who was stricken, smitten, and afflicted—our Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock of our salvation?

**W. H. Humphris.**

From Birkenhead. —We have mention of the death of a faithful woman, Miriam the prophetess. Faithful to her parents and brother in early life, she later led the people in song in the day of triumph (Exodus 15. 21), and followed with the people, faithful to the end. We all have a beginning and an end to our days of service. May we seek to be found faithful to the end.

Once again we are told of murmuring, and again, see God dealing in judgement; but a good feature of this episode is that the people realized their sin and confessed (21. 7). This immediately brought divine grace and forgiveness (21. 8, 9). This is one of the beautiful Old Testament types of the provision of God for the repentant sinner, as is clearly set forth in John 3. 14, 15.

The people, having known the need for confession and the blessing of forgiveness, were led on until they came to Beer, which is a well. They were happy and joyful (21. 17-50). In this joy they went forward fearing not the Amorites, the Moabites, or the people of Bashan and others, and possessed
their lands. We too, through our daily confession of weakness and sin, can receive the forgiveness of God (1 John 1. 9), and go forward to fresh triumphs, knowing that our God will be with us.

David Horne, Gordon Roberts.

From Wigan. —Numbers 20 opens in the first month of the year, when Israel should have been rejoicing in the remembrance of their great deliverance from bondage. Instead they were full of murmurings and discontent. They saw the place only as barrenness, with nothing for them. After forty years they should have known what God was able to do for them. It is sad to find a spirit of murmuring among the people of God. Here Moses, the meekest man in all the earth, was provoked to wrath. " It went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they were rebellious against his spirit, and he spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Psalm 106. 32, 33). We have a solemn warning that a sinning one, though he may find forgiveness according to God's mercy, yet his place in the things of God may be lost.

In Edom's refusal to let Israel pass through his border we have a renewal of the struggle between Esau and Jacob. Israel turned away from him (Numbers 20. 21) and journeyed from Kadesh and came unto Mount Hor, where Aaron died in the fifth month on the first day of the month in the fortieth year after Israel had left Egypt. Aaron was then a hundred and twenty-three years old. He had ministered forty years (Numbers 33. 39). Who was better fitted than he for this office? He had been a sharer with the people in all their trials in the brick kilns.

Because Sihon and Og opposed God, they lost their lands, as Jephthah recalled in a later day. The LORD dispossessed them of the land from Amon to Jabbok. "Whomsoever the LORD our God hath dispossessed from before us, them will we possess" (Judges 11. 18-24).

J. H.

From Glasgow. —The sons of Israel had experienced much of the blessings of the God of Jacob on their wilderness journey. Now they have come to the wilderness of Zin. The word " Zin" means "a low palm tree." Again rebellion filled the hearts of this wayward people. They walked by sight, as they journeyed onward to the promised land. We are taught by the apostle, " We walk by faith, not by sight " (2 Corinthians 5. 7).

To Rebekah it was said of Jacob and Esau at their birth, " Two peoples shall be separated even from thy bowels." They were ever at enmity the one with the other, and at Kadesh their children are seen still at enmity.

Aaron's death brought mourning into the hearts of the people at Mount Hor. Many of those with whom he had companied would by now have passed on, and the new generation were rebellious in their murmurings against the high priest. We thought it probable that their feelings at his death gave rise to a spirit of remorse.

When we studied the subject of the serpent of brass, we observed that, whilst the serpent itself may not be a true type of the Saviour, its elevation upon the standard would speak of the "lifting up" of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3. 14) [1]. The people who looked at the means of their salvation with their natural eyes received temporal life: whosoever today looks by the eye of faith to the Saviour of Calvary, receives eternal life. This agrees with the words of 2 Corinthians 4. 18, " The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

R. I. Shaw.

From Crowborough. —The death of Aaron the high priest shows the imperfection of the Aaronic priesthood. At his death his office passed on to another (20. 26). The office of High Priest that the Lord Jesus holds is for
Regarding the sin of Moses, in which Aaron too is included (20. 12), which followed the murmuring of the children of Israel, we should note that they failed to believe in God. The fact that water came from the rock was of God's grace, and not because He condoned the sin of His servant.

Moses, who here "spake unadvisedly with his lips", spoke also of another Prophet whom God was to raise up, and unto whom Israel should hearken. This One never spake unadvisedly, for "never man so spake."

From Liverpool. —Moses and Aaron were sorely provoked by the attitude of the people. There is no record of any reply by Moses or Aaron. There is wisdom here: their action shows it, for, leaving the presence of the people, they fell on their faces before the LORD, at the door of the tent of meeting. He who knows the heart heard, "and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them."

The rock speaks of Christ. Moses, in striking the rock on this second occasion, broke the type established in Exodus 17. The One who was smitten once for sinners, and from whose work at Calvary every blessing has flowed and every provision has been made for us, will never be smitten again.

The plea of Moses was cast aside by Edom's king, who knew Israel's need. Direct and aggressive opposition was promised if any attempt to pass were made. A further plea brought active opposition at which Israel turned away from Edom. Lack of sympathy, and opposition are known by those who hold the truth today. Sad to say, such opposition comes from many who once held the same truths. The death of Aaron and the thirty days of mourning no doubt reminded the people of the service he had rendered them Godward. They, no doubt, were caused to remember the trouble they had caused him during his lifetime.

The symbolism of the serpent of brass (copper) is revealed in John 3 by the Lord Jesus Himself. Both divine grace in providing a remedy in face of sin, and the necessary faith which grasps the provision are seen here. The serpent, a replica of the creatures by which judgement came, would remind them of their guilt and Jehovah's righteous judgement upon their sin. Brass (copper) speaks of judgement; and thus we have portrayed a type of Christ who was made sin for us.

From Brantford, Ont. —The first month of the year was a time when the passover was to be observed, the feast of unleavened bread kept, and a month in which the future according to divine promise they should offer and eat of the fruit of the land (Leviticus 23, 10). Moreover, it was in the first month in the second year of their journey that the Tabernacle had been erected, and God commenced His dwelling among the people. The remembrance of God's goodness, the separation from the leaven of Egypt and the promise of God for the future should have made Israel a happy people. Instead of gladness, there was chiding.

We noted with regard to Aaron's death, and the later death of Moses, that there was not the chance for repentance from their sins that seemed to be given to the people at large. James 3. 1 likewise declares the responsibility toward God of those who are given the care of His people.

The Amorites, descendents of Ham, were an iniquitous people (Genesis 15. 16) as well as a great nation in their day. Bashan throughout Scripture is linked with giants, oppression and great power (Amos 4. 1, Psalm 22. 12, Psalm 68. 15, Numbers 13. 33). The defeat of these two was great testimony to the ability of God to fulfil His promises. Og (round or rolling) is seen in
Deuteronomy 3. 9-11 as one who loved comfort. We are reminded of the proverb (Proverbs 26. 14), "As the door turneth upon its hinges, so doth the sluggard upon his bed." Deuteronomy 3. 11 also makes us realize that treasure on earth is of little lasting value. Alas for the life that excludes the will of God!

G. T., E. N.

From Nottingham. —The host was so vast (26. 51) that the brooks and streams of the area would prove inadequate, and the children of Israel forgot that the God, who had led them there, was able to supply their every need. Sight took the place of faith. May we all learn to give faith the first place in our lives.

The people called the place " an evil place " (20. 5), yet it was the place into which God had led them; and, we believe, there would still be the evidence of God's presence in the cloud overhead, and of God's providence in the manna which fell around. How easy it is to despise the place where God is!

It is interesting to note that in Psalm 106. 33 reference is made to Moses' sin in that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. No specific mention of his striking the rock is made, although this was certainly contrary to God's command. Does the reference to his speaking unadvisedly with his lips mean that God rebuked him for this only and not for his action? [2].

R. Hickling,


From Toronto, Ont. —Some felt that the designs of Dathan and Abiram were toward the position of Moses as leader, and that Korah and the rest would have taken over the service of the priests. Dathan and Abiram were in open rebellion against divinely constituted leadership. In rebellion of this type God acted in judgement. Swift and summary was the punishment for their words and actions. This was shared by their families, who would, no doubt, be sympathetic to their cause. But the sons of Korah escaped (Numbers 26. 11). It would seem that they were like Levi, who said of his father, " I have not seen him " (Deuteronomy 33. 9).

The two hundred and fifty censers presented an interesting point. Judgement had already fallen on them that bare them, and the censers were beaten to form a memorial covering for the altar. Because the censers had carried those holy things and were consecrated to the offering of incense to God, they remained holy even though they had been in the hands of wicked men.

S. K. Seath.

From Hamilton, Ont. —The Scripture declares: " Rebellion is as the sin of watchcraft. " Rebellion and personal pride have been at the root of much of man's troubles from the very beginning. They characterized Satan when he exalted himself against God in a past eternity. They were also seen in Eden's garden, and through Adam have contaminated the whole human race.

We note that those who were gathered with Korah were 250 princes, " men of renown. " Many years after this, a Greater than Moses would also be in the same position, for Psalm 2. 2 declares, "The rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Anointed. " Jealousy was at the root of Korah's trouble; and in the case of the rulers of the Jews in the days of the Lord Jesus, it was for envy they delivered Him up.

After the terrible plague had destroyed those who rebelled, we should expect that there would be no more need of proof as to whom the LORD
had chosen to stand before Him. Two things suggest themselves here. One is that Aaron's rod that budded was laid up in the ark of the testimony as a sign to Israel and a reminder of their rebellion. The second point is that it typifies a Greater than Aaron, even the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Isaiah says, "A Branch... shall bear fruit." The cross-work and resurrection of Christ are a permanent reminder of man's rebellion against God and also of the fact that the Lord is God's Chosen in whom God's soul delighteth.

N. MacKay.

COMMENT

[1] (Glasgow).—Whilst it may in one sense be right to conclude that a serpent is not a true picture of Christ, yet some of our contributors have seen a type in the fact that the Lord appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, and that in the flesh He became sin for us, He who knew no sin. As sin and death entered the world by man, so sin and death were dealt with by Man, the Man Christ Jesus. We think, however, that our friends are right, that the Lord's words in John 3 show the type in the act of Moses—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Note the force of the words "As" and "even so."—J. M.

[2] (Nottingham).—The words of Numbers 20. 8, as to the Lord's command, and those of verse 12 and chapter 27. 14 show the rebellion of Moses and Aaron in not carrying out the Lord's command to speak to the rock that it give forth its water. Instead, in the heat of his spirit, Moses spoke unadvisedly with his lips in saying, "Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?" And he lifted his hand and smote the rock with his rod twice. This rod is the same rod as Moses used in Egypt and at the Red Sea. It is also Aaron's rod that budded, etc., and also it was the rod of the house of Levi. It is also called the rod of God. —J. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Toronto, Ont. —What is implied in Micah 6. 4, where Miriam is linked with Moses and Aaron as a sent one?

Answer. —It shows that Miriam was in the work by divine appointment within the woman's sphere. It may well be that as a counsellor of Moses behind the scenes she played a much larger part in the work of Moses than is seen in the public narrative in the Scriptures. I do not share the view of certain of our friends in their rather severe criticism of Miriam. The fact that she erred once with Aaron about Moses' wife does not mean that this was characteristic of her as a neurotic, meddling woman.—J. M.

Question from Toronto, Ont. —Was the rod used in smiting the rock the same as that mentioned in Exodus 14. 16?

Answer. —Yes. See comment [2] in this issue.—J. M.

Question from Toronto, Ont. —What was the purpose in commanding the two hundred and fifty princes to bring censers and to offer incense? Did they seek a place in the priesthood?

Answer. —See Numbers 16. 16, 17, where Korah and his company were to bring their 250 censers and Aaron also was to come with his censer, and there before the Lord He would show who was chosen to be priest, for Korah, a Levite, quite evidently sought the priesthood. See verse 10 and also verses 4-7. The purpose of Korah and his company was to overturn the leadership and priesthood as vested in Moses and Aaron.—J. M.
NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESALONIANS

CHAPTER 2

Verse 13: And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.

Here thanks are given to God for the reception from (Para, from, of, indicating source or origin) Paul and his co-workers of the word of the message or of hearing the word of God and not of men which wrought in the believing Thessalonians, as the living word should ever do.

Verses 14, 15, 16: For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judoea in Christ Jesus: for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews; who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins alway: but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

The brethren in the church of God in Thessalonica became imitators of the churches of God in Judaea, because the same doctrine which was taught in the churches of God in Judaea was taught in Thessalonica. Unity in doctrine results in unity of practice. The churches of God in the Fellowship of God's Son (1 Corinthians 1. 9) in the time of the apostles were taught and held the same doctrine, even as Paul wrote of "my ways which be in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Corinthians 4. 17). The result of the same doctrine held and practised led to similarity of suffering. The Jews killed both the Lord and the prophets and drove out the apostles and others. Likewise the brethren in Thessalonica suffered the same things of their countrymen. Paul adds concerning the Jews, that they pleased not God, and were contrary to all men. They also forbade Paul and the others to preach the gospel to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up to the full the measure of their sins. God's wrath came upon them to the uttermost, as Paul shows in Romans 11, in their being cast away nationally, except a remnant according to the election of grace. The wrath of God which appointed that they should stumble nationally at Christ, the Stone of stumbling and Rock of offence (1 Peter 2. 8), and on whom they could not believe (John 12. 36-43), was until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in (Romans 11. 15, 25).

Verses 17, 18: But we, brethren, being bereaved of you for a short season, in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more exceedingly to see your face with great desire: because we would fain have come unto you, I Paul once and again; and Satan hindered us.

"Being bereaved," here, is similar to the experience of parents who have lost their children, but Paul speaks of bereavement for a season, for an hour, and that in presence, not in heart. He greatly desired and endeavoured to see the Thessalonians time and again, but there was always some hindrance which Satan (the Adversary) put in the way. Whom or what he used we are not told. We see here the Adversary unveiled as the opposer of the Lord's work and workers, as he is in some other parts of the Scriptures (Zechariah 3. 1, 2).
Verses 19, 20: *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His coming? For ye are our glory and our joy.*

Here the apostle contemplates the Lord’s coming again, and the presence of the Thessalonians in that coming as a sufficient reward for the labours that these servants of God had expended. He views them as their hope, joy and crown of glorying. Indeed, this will be the chiefest of all crowns of God’s servants, when they see in the glory the fruit of their labours.

CHAPTER 3

Verses 1, 2, 3: *Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone; and sent Timothy, our brother and God’s minister in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith; that no man be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed.*

Paul could not bear the suspense of not knowing how the Thessalonians were faring, and he decided to send Timothy, and himself be left alone at Athens. Timothy therefore was sent to Thessalonica to establish and comfort the saints in their faith, that they should not be moved, disquieted or shaken in mind, by the tribulations which were common to both Paul and themselves. He said that they knew that saints were appointed to these afflictions. Paul in sending Timothy was acting similarly to both Jacob and Jesse in past times, who sent Joseph and David to see how it fared with their brethren. All parents know the common anxiety of love for their absent children. This epistle is said to have been written by Paul from Athens at the time of the arrival back of Timothy from Thessalonica. (See end of A. V. which says, "Written from Athens." Certain modern commentators say, "Written from Corinth").

Verses 4, 5: *For verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labour should be in vain.*

The affliction of which Paul had beforehand told the Thessalonians and others came to pass, as we see in chapter 17 of Acts, and as is alluded to in the previous chapter. But lest that they should have been tempted by the Devil to give up the Christian warfare, like the rocky ground hearers of Matthew 13. 20, 21, he sent Timothy that he might know their faith, lest his work should be in vain, for he feared the evil work of the tempter.

Verses 6, 7, 8: *But when Timothy came even now unto us from you, and brought us glad tidings of your faith and love, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, longing to see us, even as we also to see you; for this cause, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our distress and affliction through your faith: for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.*

The arrival of Timothy in Athens from the Thessalonians with the good news that their faith had stood the shock of the afflictions which they were enduring brought great joy. They also held the apostle and his fellows in loving regard, for Timothy bore testimony to their faith and love, and of how they longed to see Paul and Silas; this longing was mutual, for Paul longed to see them. Midst the present distress of the apostle the tidings brought by Timothy were a great comfort. "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord," said Paul. If the work of the apostle had collapsed after he...
left the different cities he visited, then the memory of Paul would have perished. But when saints stood fast in the Lord, God's servants lived on, as they do now, embalmed in the imperishable records of Holy Scripture. These records will live for ever, and further, they are the test which God applies and will yet apply to the lives of those that have followed after, as to whether they will walk in the light of, and in obedience to, these divine truths therein contained.

Verses 9, 10: For what thanksgiving can we render again unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

" Thanks is itself a return for God's favours. " Praise is the declaring of God's excellencies. Here Paul asks what thanksgiving he could render to God for all the joy he had in the Thessalonians. Here we see the up-surge of the tide of joy in this great-souled man; in him surged the joy of the Lord. In the face of the hindrance of Satan, Paul's prayers abounded exceedingly, beseeching that he might see again the face of these beloved Thessalonians. Only God could rebuke Satan for his hindrance (Jude 9); and until God did this Satan would continue to hinder the desire of the apostle. Paul's object in again visiting the Thessalonians was to perfect (Katartizo, which means, sometimes, to repair or mend, to render perfect, also to supply or make good what is lacking; it is used in the second sense here, in verse 10) that which was lacking or deficient in their faith; for it must be remembered that the Thessalonians were but young believers.

Verses 11, 12, 13: Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way unto you: and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you; to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

Paul, following his earnest pleading that he might see the face of the Thessalonians, leaves the matter with God, that He and the Lord Jesus might direct his way towards them. His desire was for an increase of their love to each other and toward all men. If this is so, there will be no fear but that the behaviour of saints towards others will be as it ought to be. The love of Paul and his fellows abounded towards the Thessalonians. The object of this was the establishing of their hearts blameless in holiness before God the Father at the coming of the Lord. John writes somewhat similarly, when he says, " that if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John 2. 28). "With all His saints"—" with" (Meta, with a genitive, as here, means, with, together with) may signify the coming of the Son of Man, when His saints shall come with Him, as in 2 Thessalonians 1. 10. But, if we read coming (Parousia) as presence, it would read—" at the presence of our Lord Jesus with all His saints," and would indicate His coming for His saints. As the construction of the passage indicates our hearts being established in holiness before our God and Father, it seems to indicate the latter view and not the former.

J. M.
"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).

EDITORIAL

Among the points most frequently treated (in the papers as sent to us) is the fact that though Balaam had at least some little knowledge of the LORD and His ways (22. 9, 10, 18), he displeased God by persisting in a sinful course. Though alien to Israel, he would appear to have been used of God in prophecy, for Balak said, "He whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed" (22. 6). His error would be the more reprehensible on account of such knowledge of God as he might have had.

It is profitable to bear in mind that Balaam sinned as a result of temptation; if we overlook this, we may miss a lesson of value to us in our individual testimony. The course of Balaam's error is strictly according to that set out in James 1. 14, 15. Through Balak Balaam was tempted (22. 7, 17, 37); the sinful nature within was thereby stirred up, and Balaam was "drawn away by his own lust, and enticed." The lust for gain and for eminence seem to have gained the upper hand in Balaam, but James 1. 14 places the full responsibility on Balaam himself. Further, according to James, "The lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death." This progression may be clearly traced in the story of Balaam. The outcome for Balaam was grave indeed: for many others, alas, his words and Balak's deeds were to gender the same evil process with death as the end. Temptation cannot be lightly regarded.

When tempted, we should seek the Lord's help to give us strength to resist and to endure. We may rest confident in the Lord that we shall never be tempted above what we are able to bear: God will not suffer us to meet undue temptation (1 Corinthians 10. 13). God goes even beyond this, for He provides also the way of escape. Had Balaam obeyed God, he would have found the way of escape that God had provided (22. 20). The general trend of the story would suggest that the non-arrival of Balak's men was Balaam's opportunity to overcome the temptation. The Lord will honour overcomers (Revelation 2. 7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3. 5, 12, 21); and in Balaam's case God would have honoured him above all that lay in the power of Balak to do. We note that Balak offered not only the rewards of divination, but also promotion to great honour: in the hope of gaining these Balaam disobeyed God. If children of God today walk in disobedience to God with a view to material gain and preferment, how can they do other than lose the rich eternal reward that might otherwise have been theirs? We should hold the things of this life with but a light grasp and seek rather to lay up treasure in heaven, even at the cost of much that would appear profitable in this life.

Though Balaam erred through temptation, his sin was fully charged against him. No man is excused on the ground that he was tempted by another. We must endure temptation (from within and from without),
and if by the grace of God we should endure unto approval, we have the assurance of the promise of the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him (James 1. 12). Herein is the secret of safety; love to the Lord Jesus will enable us to endure much for the sake of the testimony of Him who first loved us.

J. B,

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

CHAPTER 7

It is said of the martyrs, "They washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. " Their robes were not themselves. Robes signify their habits, their behaviour. They applied the blood of the Lamb to their way of life; being saints they were also saintly in their manner of life. " Therefore, " it says, " are they before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them. " Because they washed their robes they are before the throne. They serve (Latreuo) God night and day in His temple; this is the same temple as in chapter 11. 19; 15. 5. Neither the A. V. nor the R. V. gives a correct rendering of the last part of verse 15. It should read, " He who sits upon the throne shall tabernacle over (or upon) them. " Their days of thirst and hunger are over. The Lamb shall be their Shepherd and guide them to the fountains of the waters of life; how tender will be the compassions of God to them, for He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes! This is one of the touching statements of Scripture. It seems to me that those who are in view in this part of the chapter are such as have not yet been raised from the dead. Such as die after the Church has been caught up into the air are not raised until the coming of the Lord to the earth.

CHAPTER 8

After the silence in heaven for about half an hour, and the seven angels had received the seven trumpets, another angel stood over the altar having a golden censer, and there was given him much incense to add to the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne. This golden altar is again referred to in chapter 9. 13. We read of both an " ark of His covenant" (11. 19), and " the golden altar. " In the tabernacle we have the earthly copies of these things. Both the ark and the golden altar belonged to the Holy of Holies, though the golden altar was placed outside, immediately in front of the veil, so that the priests might be able to burn incense at the hours of prayer, at the time of the offering of the morning and evening sacrifices. Hebrews 9. 3, 4 and 1 Kings 6. 22 show that the golden altar belonged to the Holy of Holies. Luke 1. 10 makes plain the relationship of the burning of incense and prayer. There is no reference to any golden altar in connexion with the prayers of saints in this dispensation. Prayer in this Dispensation is in the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father (Ephesians 2. 18; 5. 20; 6. 18; Colossians 3. 17; Hebrews 13, 15; John 15. 16; 16. 23, 24; Matthew 6. 9; Romans 8. 15). Here in this chapter the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints went up to God out of the angel's hand. After offering the incense and the prayers the angel filled the censer with fire from the altar and cast it upon (into) the earth, and there followed thunders, voices, lightnings and an earthquake. There may
be in this an evidence of divine displeasure in consequence of the prayers of the saints, because they were being oppressed by the wicked. David speaks of the great commotions which had taken place when God delivered him from the hand of Saul and from all his enemies (Psalm 18. 1-17). Certain have thought that the angel of verses 3-5 is the Lord. I do not share this view.

With the sounding of the angels with the seven trumpets follow fearful outpourings of divine judgements on the earth. The first sounded and there were cast into the earth hail and fire mingled with blood, and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of trees and all green grass was burnt up. Is this actual or symbolic? If we say it is symbolic, we are faced with a great difficulty to explain what the hail, fire, blood, trees and grass signify. It seems that the literal meaning of these things is the right one, and that this divine judgement falls upon the earth because of the wickedness of mankind.

The second angel sounds and another judgement falls. This time a great burning mountain is cast into the sea and the third part of the sea became blood; in consequence of this the third part of the living creatures therein died and the third part of the ships was destroyed. It is not for us to enquire how the salt sea water became blood. In His judgements upon Egypt in the days of Moses, God turned the water of the Nile into blood and also the water in the pools and ponds of Egypt (Exodus 7. 19-21); if God can give such power to men (see chapter 11. 6), it is no difficulty for Him to turn sea water into blood.

When the third angel sounded, a star called Wormwood fell on the third part of the rivers and fountains of water, and they became wormwood, and men died from drinking the bitter water.

The fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, were smitten that they should not shine for a third part of the day and night.

These violent and fearsome judgements are followed by events yet more fearful. The sounding of the last three angels are the three Woes which are pronounced by an eagle (probably an angel) flying in mid heaven (verse 13). The sounding of the seventh angel, which is the third Woe, is the worst of all judgements for the earth, for it is the coming of the Lord to earth in judgement (see chapter 11. 15).

CHAPTER 9

When the fifth angel sounded, John saw a star (probably an angel) fallen from heaven upon the earth. This star was given the key of the pit of the abyss or bottomless pit, and he opened the pit of the abyss. There went up out of the pit of the abyss smoke as from a furnace, and out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth. These locusts had the power of scorpions. They were not to act as ordinary locusts to hurt any vegetation, but only such men as had not the seal of God upon their foreheads. We see here the confirmation of what we said on the sealing of the 144,000 in chapter 7, that the sealing protected those who were sealed from God's judgement which would fall upon the wicked. The scorpion poison of these locusts was not to kill men, but to torment them for five months. The pain of the poison was so severe that men in their torment would seek death, but would not find it, death would flee from them. This is a unique event. Though these are not the ordinary kind of locusts, thus far the narrative seems simple and straightforward. What follows is not so easy to understand when
John describes what the locusts are like. A locust has a head somewhat the shape of the head of a horse, but the other descriptions of these locusts leave us wondering what God is saying to us by the pen of John. In verse 11 we are told that these locusts have over them as king the angel of the abyss. Solomon tells us that locusts have no king (Proverbs 30. 27), but these have. Who is he? In Hebrew he is called Abaddon (Destruction), and in Greek, Apollyon (Destroyer). Some have said that Apollyon is the devil, and the star that fell from heaven in verse 1 is the antichrist. The antichrist never fell in any sense from heaven, nor do I think that "fallen" is to be understood in a moral sense. For myself I shall reserve judgement on who these two persons are until one knows more. Speculation in the interpretation of Holy Writ is a very doubtful method of dealing with the Scriptures. Many questions arise in one's mind as to this part of the Scriptures, which, possibly, cannot be cleared up in our time, but may be understood, when these events transpire, by those to whom they are revealed. This is the first Woe.

When the sixth angel sounded there followed a plague much more terrible than that of the locusts which had tails and stings like scorpions, as happened with the sounding of the fifth angel. Here is a scene of worldwide death, not merely of those who are inhabitants of Palestine or within the bounds of the Roman empire. The voice from the golden altar commands that the four angels which were bound at the river Euphrates should be liberated. These angels had been prepared for an exact time in connexion with divine judgement on men, for the hour, day, month and year. We are not told at which point on the Euphrates the angels are bound (the Euphrates is 1,780 miles long), nor are we told the year when they are loosed. It may well be that this fearful judgement is in the time of the beast's kingdom, in the second half of Daniel's seventieth week, for the sounding of the seventh angel, which follows this, brings us to the Lord's coming to earth, as we have already pointed out (chapter 11. 14-18). There are certain things in this vision which are literal, the river Euphrates, the hour, day, month and year, and the killing of the third part of men. But are the horses literal? and who are the riders? Is this vast army of 200,000,000 cavalry in the ordinary sense? We must dismiss the idea that these are ordinary horses and men, as we must dismiss the thought that the locusts of the previous vision were ordinary locusts. At the same time it is wise not to attempt to rename these creatures that appear in these two visions. No such horsemen have ever been seen on earth before which had breastplates of fire, hyacinth, and brimstone, and horses which had heads like lions, and tails like serpents, tails which had heads, and mouths from which proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. Some have tried to spiritualize these things, and have reduced such a fearful vision to but a weak picture of symbolism and conjecture. Indeed many who have written on the Revelation, whose minds seem to have wandered in a land of dreams, have given the most fanciful explanation of these things. For ourselves we see in the killing of the third part of men a most appalling divine judgement, and it may be that in the time when those things occur enlightened men may understand what is taking place, though it may well be that none of the wicked shall understand. For despite the wide-spread destruction of human life, those that were left continued in their demon worship, idolatry, murders, fornication, and thefts. Surely we are on the borderland of such times, for such things are becoming rampant in our time. Men become like mere beasts, for though they see their fellows die, it has no reaction upon them, and they rush on greedily in their quest after sin. The second Woe is past.

J. M.
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

FROM SINAI TO MOAB (6): IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB, BALAK AND BALAAM (Numbers 22. 1—24. 25).

From Wigan. —The Moabites and the Ammonites were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew (Genesis 19. 37, 38). Moses was commanded by God neither to vex nor contend with them in battle (Deuteronomy 2. 9-19). At the approach of Israel Moab was sore afraid, as Moses had foretold of Moab in particular in Exodus 15. 15, and as the LORD Himself promised concerning the nations in general (Deuteronomy 2. 25). It was a custom amongst the heathen nations to consult their gods by various means of divination. Thus Balak was desirous, before engaging in war, to interest the gods in his cause and seek for their power to be turned against his enemies. Balaam was requested to perform these rites. It would seem that Balaam was instructed by God to go, only if Balak's messengers should call on him (22. 20), but Balaam was so intent on his evil way that he himself took the initiative and rose up early to join them (22. 21). Pursuing his covetous and ambitious designs, he ran greedily seeking the wages of unrighteousness (Jude 11, A. V.). God's anger was kindled thereby. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76. 10, A. V.), said the psalmist. The wonderful panorama that presented itself to Balaam, as he viewed the utmost part of the people, was indeed an awe-inspiring one, as there, in the plains of Moab, he beheld that unique divinely ordered arrangement. Israel were one people, comprising twelve tribes, and marched in the order of four camps (Numbers 10, Psalm 80). In keeping with God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 22. 17), even a fourth part could not be numbered. Balaam prophesied concerning the shout of a king (23. 21), a king higher than Agag in an exalted kingdom (24. 7, 1 Samuel 15. 32), the star out of Jacob and the sceptre arising out of Israel (Genesis 49. 10), one that shall have dominion (24. 19). These undoubtedly find their sublime fulfilment in Christ.

The sin of Moab in hiring Balaam, coupled with the fact that Balaam was only too ready to comply, was of such a serious nature as to cause God to sound repeated warnings in the Scriptures. This incident is referred to in Deuteronomy 23. 3-6, ere Israel crossed the Jordan. Joshua recalled the episode in the closing days of his life (Joshua 24. 9): Nehemiah reminded the remnant (Nehemiah 13. 2): and the prophet Micah brought it to mind (Micah 6. 5). The warning note is sounded in this dispensation by Peter (2 Peter 2. 15) and by Jude (verse 11). The last warning is from the Lord Jesus Christ to the church in Pergamum (Revelation 2. 14). H. Caldwell.

From Liverpool. —From his words to the men from Balak, it is clear that Balaam had some knowledge of God and that he expected a communication from the LORD on the matter. The LORD whose eye misses nothing, spoke to Balaam, whose reply was a truthful one. A simple clear command was given to Balaam, so clear that it left no room for doubt or question. God gave a reason: —"Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed" (22. 12). It would seem from Balaam's answer to the princes of Moab that the matter was once for all settled. Balak, not to be put off thus easily, sent other more honourable princes, saying, "Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me: for I will promote thee . . . come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people" (22. 16, 17). This was an affront to Jehovah. We believe that what the LORD had said should have been sufficient and final for Balaam.
Even the miracle of the speaking ass had no effect upon him in the madness of his purpose. His sole objective, being gain, blinded him to his error (Jude 11). When his eyes were opened by the LORD, he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand. He then realized his error and confessed his sin. Still his purpose of heart showed itself, and he said, "If it displease thee, I will get me back again." The command now was, "Go with the men: but only the word I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak." To Balak he acknowledged that he had no power to speak anything save what the LORD commanded.

Balak was incensed by that which he witnessed and pursued his purpose against Israel. When God spoke again to Balaam, there was a special word for Balak, including these remarkable words: "Behold I have received a commandment to bless: and He (God) hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." God viewed them here in covenant relationship with Himself. He would not recognize faults before such men as Balak, which reminds us of our acceptance in Christ (Ephesians 1. 6, A. V.). This was too much for Balak who said, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all." Revelation 2. 14 refers to "the teaching of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication." There were some in the church of God at Pergamum who for the testimony's sake should have been put out for holding such teaching.

**EXTRACTS**

From Portstewart. —The plains of Moab were the last camping place of the children of Israel before entering the promised land. Five things worthy of attention took place there. Israel committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab (25. 1-11). Moses and Eleasar numbered all the Israelites over twenty years old (26. 1-4). Commandments were given concerning the set feasts (28, 29). The six cities of refuge were appointed, and particulars about the division of the land of Canaan were given (Numbers 34, 35). Moses died, and was buried in the land of Moab (Deuteronomy 34. 5, 6).

Balak (devastator or destroyer) was king of the Moabites. He called the children of Israel his enemies (23. 11, 24. 10). Surely such a man was an enemy of God! We are reminded of the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18. 6. Balak was indeed trying to offend the children of Israel, and such a warning would be applicable to him. In Genesis 19. 36-38 we have related to us the origin of the Moabites, and in Deuteronomy 23. 3, 4, we see that the Moabites were not allowed into the assembly of the LORD until the tenth generation.

Balaam (destruction), the son of Beor, lived in Pethor, a town in Mesopotamia. His father was a soothsayer (Joshua 13. 22). The question arises, "Was Balaam a soothsayer or a prophet of the LORD?" [1]

W. Glenn.

From Edinburgh. —Balaam belonged to Mesopotamia (Deuteronomy 23. 4), and we therefore conclude that he was a Gentile and not a Jew. Nevertheless he knew something of the God of heaven and he had acquired a reputation beyond his own land. Balak said of him, "He whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." This was his reputation.
Six times Balaam took up his parable and spoke some remarkable words of prophecy. Israel was a separate people, a people dwelling alone, God's holy nation, not numbered among the nations of the earth. His use of the words "Jacob" and "Israel" refer, we suggest, to God looking upon His people as the priesthood, spotless; and the nations looking upon His people, walking apart.

We looked at the New Testament references to Balaam. The counsel of Balaam (31.16) eventually led to the trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor; his spoken word was the death sentence of 24,000 men. He knew that he could not curse those whom God had blessed, that he could not separate God from His people, but by his counsel he separated the people from their God. As to the error of Balaam (Jude 11), he ran riotously for hire; others followed in his way. He loved the hire of wrongdoing and earthly values had replaced spiritual values in his eyes. He was prepared to withstand God if thereby he could profit on this earth. Here is a solemn warning for us today. Wealth, position, education, are often secured at the sacrifice of truth and the principles of God's together people. Then there is the way of Balaam (2 Peter 2.15). He led; he did that which was wrong; others followed in his way. As he persisted in his way God spoke to him in the voice of the ass, and such was his condition that he even reviled and argued with the beast without realizing that the power of God was there. We may persist in our way and blind ourselves to everything, refusing to recognize the voice of God when He speaks to us. The teaching of Balaam (Revelation 2.14) would seem to be twofold in character: there is that which affects the spirit—eating things sacrificed to idols, and that which appeals to the flesh—committing fornication. God's people may be drawn away from Himself by the lusts of the eyes and of the flesh and by the pride of life.

A. Hope, T. Hope.

From Middlesbrough. —In this passage the adversary used a new method of attacking Israel. Previous attacks had been direct, but this was a more subtle approach. Balak had seen what had happened to those who sought to engage in battle with Israel, and resolved to try another method. After conferring with the elders of Midian, he resolved to call Balaam and induce him to curse Israel. He sent messengers with gifts which he hoped Balaam would be unable to resist. Balaam did not claim to have any magical power, but possibly Balak was under the impression that he had [2]. Balaam's first mistake was to enquire of the LORD a second time. The situation had in no way changed, and he should have immediately confirmed his first refusal. There was really no need of further light; it was obedience which was now required; partial obedience will not suffice. When the Lord Jesus was tempted of Satan he continued to resist, even though Satan was persistent.

We have no difficulty in accepting that the ass spoke. If Satan could speak through the serpent, God could speak through an ass.

Four times Balaam declared the word of God. Balak took him from place to place, hoping each move would have the desired effect. In his last prophecy Balaam counselled Balak regarding the future of his people. The events of which he spoke may have had a partial fulfilment in the days of king David, but they do also appear to be Messianic. Their fulfilment may well be when the Lord comes as the Son of Man to set up His kingdom and reign.
From Crowborough. —In 2 Peter 2. 15 we read of Balaam the son of Beor that he " loved the hire of wrong-doing." This is the key to his character. The LORD caused Balaam to utter words of blessing rather than a curse on His people. When God blesses none can reverse it.

Among the many wonderful words Balaam uttered we find: "It is a people that dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (23. 9). This has a voice for us. God's people in the present day should make it evident that they are a separated people.

In Numbers 24. 17 we have a precious reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus. It is wonderful that God should cause Balaam to utter such words.

J. Robertson.

From Belfast. —We felt that, if Israel had known what was going on behind the scenes on this remarkable occasion in their wanderings, it would have been another proof to them that God was for them and with them. Their subsequent history proved it to be only too true that they were not often in the current of God's thoughts, and in some respects were like Balaam, who sought to accomplish his own will despite repeated warnings by God and supernatural intervention.

We noted Balaam's desire—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" (23. 10). Many are likewise minded, but this can only come about by living the life of the righteous, and one paramount requirement is submission to the word of God, and this Balaam, like many more, was not prepared to do.

The way of Balaam (2 Peter 2. 15) was the way of selfwill, and therein lay the error of the man (Jude 11). As for God his way is perfect, and no fanciful notions of men will ever cause the way of God to be changed, nor will they ever justify men in walking in that way which seemeth right unto them, for the end thereof is the way of death. This applies both to saint and sinner.

Balaam's actions and perverseness were set forth centuries afterwards in the New Testament as a warning to all. His way, his error, his practice, his doctrine as a man who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and commit fornication, should ever be avoided (Revelation 2. 14).

D. Rea, W. Smith.

From Southport. —The children of Lot had been given Ar as a possession (Deuteronomy 2. 9), and the children of Moab dwelt on the east side of the Dead Sea and the river Jordan. There came a time when Sihon the king of the Amorites took and occupied the part of Moab between the river Jabok and the river Amon (21. 24-31). When the LORD led the children of Israel towards the promised land, they overcame Sihon king of the Amorites (Numbers 21). When Moab saw this and the numbers of the children of Israel then Moab was afraid (22. 3).

Balak the king of Moab does not appear to have heard of the command of the LORD to Moses that Israel should not vex Moab, neither contend with them in battle (Deuteronomy 2. 9). The Moabites did not meet the Israelites with bread and water (Deuteronomy 23. 4), but neither did they fight against Israel (Judges 11. 25). Balak had heard of the powers of Balaam, although Balaam dwelt some four hundred miles away in Pethor by the river Euphrates, and it is stated in Deuteronomy 23. 4 that he hired Balaam to curse Israel. The messengers of Balak carried rewards of divination with them.

W. S. Holden.
From Birkenhead. —The actions of the ass should have brought Balaam to his senses and checked his waywardness. God made His way clear to him, "Thou shalt not go" (22. 12), but he was a self-chooser and went his own way. It would appear that he wished to please Balak. He said, "The LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you." But he was tempted by earthly gain and hoped to the end that he would be able to go to curse the people.

Balaam was called a prophet, but he was not a prophet of Israel: God uses whom He will for the fulfilment of His purposes.

From the top of Mount Peor Balaam viewed Israel as a desert people with a pilgrim character. The sight must have been awe-inspiring. They were a together-people and were strong as a wild ox. No power could be used against them without divine permission. It is God's will today that His people should dwell together in unity (Psalm 133). We are exhorted to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (Ephesians 6. 10).

Whoever turned their hand against the people of God suffered for their folly, for Israel was the apple of His eye. Even in our times nations have suffered and will still suffer because of their ill-treatment of the Jews.

K. Home, P. Roylance.

From Atherton. —Balaam is referred to in Joshua 13. 22 as being a soothsayer. This word is always used in Scripture in an unfavourable sense. Soothsaying is expressly forbidden and is characterized as the mark of a false prophet (Deuteronomy 18. 10, Jeremiah 14. 14). That Balaam had a knowledge of God cannot be disputed, and the summons of Balak proved to be a crisis in his career, for he was brought into immediate contact with God's chosen people, which gave opportunity for closer communion with God Himself. Such influences are not sufficient in themselves, however, to change the heart of a man or to turn his stubborn will. Like Judas and Ahithophel, he set in motion a train of events which brought about his own downfall, for he was finally destroyed in the avenging by the children of Israel of the Midianites just prior to the death of Moses (31. 8).

It was queried as to whether Balaam was directed by the Holy Spirit in his prophecies, the difficulty being to see how the Holy Spirit could direct a man who was opposed to God's will. From such a scripture as Numbers 24. 11 it is clear that the Holy Spirit came upon Balaam, but some doubted as to whether we could infer from this that He directed him [3]. The case of Caiaphas was considered—a man totally at enmity with God and His Christ, who spoke words which the Holy Spirit has caused to be recorded for our benefit. Balaam was also compared with Simon Magus, a sorcerer who sought his own aggrandizement. E. Birchall, D. S. Jones,

From Cowdenbeath. —It is interesting to note that Balaam ascended on three different occasions with Balak to curse Israel, opened his mouth, and God (through him) spoke blessed words concerning Israel.

From the bare height, Balaam saw Israel in a state of separation among the other nations. [God's present-day people is essentially a separated one.] Worthy of note, at this point, is the fact that Balaam, at the end of his parable expressed the desire to die a death like Jacob's (23. 10), yet it was God's will that his life should terminate at the point of the sword (31. 8). On Pisgah, God (through Balaam) spoke of the way in which He viewed the perfection of Israel (an erring people). These words remind us of how God sees His present-day people—perfect in Christ. From the top of Peor,
Balaam saw the orderliness and beauty of Israel's encampment and environment, and prophesied concerning the might of God. Finally God used Balaam to prophecy concerning His Son, the Messiah of Israel.

Ian Ross.

From Nottingham. —Men from Balak came to Balaam, who was charged by God (22. 12) not to go with them. When they appeared a second time, although Balaam professed that unlimited reward would not turn him from obeying the word of God (22. 18), he invited the men to stay with him and referred to the further speakings of God (22. 19). We suggest that here Balaam was seeking to gain his own will. The first command of God should have sufficed without any further message. Further, we suggest that here was a case of a man doing something which God permitted even although it was not strictly His will. We believe we may have similar experiences in our own lives.

This, we think, may explain why, although God permitted Balaam to go, yet God's anger was kindled because he went (22. 22). It was pointed out that the A. V. rendering, "If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go" (22. 20), allows for the thought that God was angry with Balaam for going without this call.

It was considered to be questionable as to whether or not the seven altars and burnt offerings were acceptable in God's sight. It was thought that Balaam was seeking to find favour with God by resorting to things similar to those used by Israel.

Kittim (24. 24) we understand to be Cyprus. In view of present circumstances there, it was discussed whether this prophecy relates to some future event, which may now be casting its shadow, or whether it has reference to the raising up of the Greek empire under Alexander [4]. R. Hickling.

From Toronto, Ont. —Balaam was a very gifted man and could have been a great blessing to the people of God. Even when he was attempting to curse Israel God worked through him in prophecy. Because of his failure to employ such vast gift he can be described as a tragic character. Peter underlines the tragic flaw in his character when he states that Balaam loved the hire of wrong-doing. We can see therein a warning for us.

Many, no doubt, can and will be tempted to despise the truth which has been entrusted to us in order to gain a position of prominence among men. Perhaps some are tempted to misuse, or not to use at all, gifts which God has given for the purpose of strengthening His people. Once again, we can see in this almost certain spiritual suicide.

It is likely that many in Israel learned that Balaam was prophesying wonderful things about them. Perhaps they wondered if it was God that was speaking through an outsider. Malcolm Seath.

COMMENTS

[1] (Portstewart). Joshua 13. 22 says that Balaam was the soothsayer or diviner, not his father. He was a soothsayer by profession, using the arts of divination, but 2 Peter 2. 16 calls him a prophet, because God spoke by him most remarkable things relative to Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are even told that the Spirit of God came upon him (Numbers 24. 2) despite the fact that he was a wicked man and perished in his wickedness, an enemy of God and His people. —J. M.
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

[2] (Middlesbrough). —Balaam did not disclaim magical power. What he did say was—"I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more" (Numbers 22. 18). God would not allow him to curse Israel, and speaking by the Spirit of God he could only speak what God put in his mouth to say. At the same time his wickedness is manifest, his lust for wealth and honour and hatred of Israel, in that he taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before Israel to commit idolatry and fornication, and because of which 24, 000 of Israel died from the plague. —J. M.

[3] (Atherton). —There should be no doubt that Balaam spoke God's words under the power of His Spirit. —J. M.

[4] (Nottingham). —The ships of Kittim are again mentioned in Daniel 11. 30 as coming against the king of the north, who is the beast of Revelation 13, etc., the antichrist or man of sin. It may be more than a coincidence that Cyprus (or Kittim) has been in the possession of Britain for quite a number of years. Both Asshur and Eber were descendants of Shem (Genesis 10. 22, 25; 11. 16, 17). Asshur is Assyria, which lies within Irak of the present day. I judge that both prophecies relative to the ships of Kittim have to do with days yet future. —J. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Edinburgh. —Balaam is spoken of as "the prophet" in 2 Peter 2. 16. Was he therefore a prophet of God?

Answer. —He was a prophet because he spoke words which God put into his mouth to speak. He was a wicked man. He was not a prophet of God in the sense that he walked in God's ways and delighted in His word. He was in practice a soothsayer or diviner, a practice which God condemned. —J. M.

Question from Edinburgh. —In the light of Numbers 22. 31, 35 can we conclude that the angel of the LORD was God the Son?

Answer. —I see no reason to think that the angel of the LORD was other than one of the angels sent to correct Balaam. —J. M.

Question from Atherton. —Were those who had followed in the way of Balaam (2 Peter 2. 15) either saved or in the assembly? Are they the same as those mentioned in verse 1?

Answer. —Note the words of 2 Peter 2. 1: "Among you also there shall be false teachers"; these were they who "forsaking the right way they went astray." They like Balaam desired present gain, so they left God's people, Demas-like. There were also certain in the church of God in Pergamum who held the teaching of Balaam, and the woman Jezebel in Thyatira taught Balaam's teaching (Revelation 2. 14, 20). —J. M.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mr. Baird has now moved to the following address: —61, Morton Street, Portobello, Midlothian. Please see that all who send papers are informed of this change.
NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

CHAPTER 4

Verses 1, 2: Finally then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as ye do walk,—that ye abound more and more. For ye know what charge we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

Here Paul reaches the closing part of his epistle, and says, "Finally, *or for the rest; he exhorts them in the Lord Jesus, with that authority derived from Him, as they had previously received in the ministry of Himself and the others, how they ought to walk and to please God. " Walk " here, as in very many other places in the Scriptures, signifies the entire conduct of a person. Paul says that they were so walking, but sought that this good beginning they had made in their behaviour should abound yet more. He refers to his former injunctions or commands that he had given to them in this matter through the Lord Jesus.

Verse 3: For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication;

Paul comes down heavily on irregular conduct which has from ancient times stained the history of mankind—the lewd intercourse of the sexes. Fornication being one of man's immoral members (Colossians 3. 5), is a form of sin against which the Scriptures wage a ceaseless warfare. Paul says, that " the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. " " Flee fornication, " he says (1 Corinthians 6. 13, 18), even as Joseph did when enticed in Egypt (Genesis 39. 12, 15). God's will is a life of sanctification from moral corruptions.

Verses 4, 5, 6: That each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles which know not God; that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter: because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we forewarned you and testified.

Whilst no doubt both sexes are included in this corrective word of the apostle, the male sex, is, I think, more in evidence. He is to possess or keep his vessel in sanctification and honour. Men should ever think of how their act may affect the following generation both mentally and physically, and not be wholly engulfed in their own passing pleasure of lust. The Gentiles in Paul's time were, and also are today, in a sordid state in this matter, but God's saints should know better, as both God's grace in their hearts, and His word, should teach them holy living. Certainly where a brother transgress and wrongs his brother in this matter, this raises a serious issue, and the Lord is an avenger in all such things, as Paul had forewarned and testified to the Thessalonians.

Verses 7, 8: For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who giveth His Holy Spirit unto you.

The object in the call of God out from among them to a path of separation is not to uncleanness, but to perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 6. 14—7. 1). Paul says that we " were called for freedom;
only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh" (Galatians 5. 13). We are called in sanctification. Sanctification means a setting apart from what is common. This is the root meaning of holiness. A saint is a holy one, set apart to a life of holiness (1 Corinthians 1. 30). Paul says that he that sets aside or rejects this teaching of sanctification, rejects not man, but God, who has given each believer the Holy Spirit who is the Sanctifier of saints.

Verses 9, 10: But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another; for indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia. But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more;

Philadephia, love of the brethren, is taught us by the grace of the new nature, the result of the new birth, by the indwelling Spirit of God, and by His word. This love the Thessalonians showed to all the brethren who were in Macedonia, and they were encouraged by the apostle to abound more and more in this grace. Love begets love.

Verses 11, 12: And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even as we charged you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing.

Some are naturally quiet, and some are talkative. The latter need more grace to give heed to the apostle's exhortation to be ambitious to be quiet. Some are lazy, and some are diligent in business, and the former need more grace, and the latter need wisdom not to let their business swallow them up. Paul had enjoined upon the Thessalonians "a quiet, industrious, holy life." Saints are to live a grateful, courteous, becoming life toward those who are without, and being diligent and honest may have need of nothing.

Verses 13, 14: But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

We come now to one of the most illuminating paragraphs in the New Testament relative to the coming of the Lord for His saints of this dispensation, who form the Church which is His Body. Old Testament saints will not share in this resurrection, but will be raised in connexion with the Lord's coming to earth (Daniel 12. 1-3; Revelation 11. 18; 20. 4-6). We are not able to shed light on which is the correct reading "them which are asleep" (A. V.) (perfect tense) or "them that fall asleep" (R. V.) (present tense), but these young believers in Thessalonica required to be instructed, as we do, as to what will happen to saints who die or fall asleep before the coming of the Lord. First of all, saints are not told not to sorrow when their loved ones fall asleep, but they are not to sorrow as the rest who have no hope. The rest, the unsaved who have no hope, have no hope of reunion nor will they wish any in eternity, as we see from the rich man's words in hell (Luke 16. 27-31). The joyous hope of reunion in resurrection is based upon the words, "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again," for "if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." (1 Corinthians 15. 17, 18). But Christ having been raised, then them also that are fallen asleep (or fallen-asleep ones) through (not in) Jesus will God bring or lead
with Him. There have been differences between Greek scholars in regard to the Greek here, as we see from the R. V. Margin. Some think it should read "fallen asleep through Jesus," and some, "will God through Jesus bring with Him." I am of the opinion that the reading should be, "fallen asleep through Jesus," that is the Jesus mentioned earlier in the verse, who died and rose again. Jesus died. He did not fall asleep, but saints fall asleep through or because of Him who died and rose again, for had He not died and risen again their death would not have been a sleep; we should have perished.

"Shall God bring with Him": this should not be read as though it means the sending by God of the souls of the saints with the Lord when He descends into the air, as we read later on, but it means the bringing from the dead the sleeping ones in that resurrection of which Christ is the Firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15. 20). "With Him" does not mean at the same time, but is the "with" of association, similar in meaning to our being quickened, raised and seated with (Sun) Him in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2. 5, 6), this being the spiritual quickening of the soul, while that of 1 Thessalonians 4. 14 is the raising and quickening of the dead in Christ in a bodily resurrection.

Verse 15: For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.

What Paul says here is backed by his claim that it is the word of the Lord. The living saints in Christ at the Lord's coming shall have no precedence over the dead in Christ; they shall not precede them that are fallen asleep in Christ.

Verses 16, 17, 18: For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Three definitions are given to what seems to me to be the same thing. The Lord descends from heaven while this sound is heard, which is described as, "in a shout" (of command), "in voice of archangel," and "in trump of God." The result of this command to assemble will be, that the dead in Christ will rise first. Though it is clear that the dead in Christ will be the first to rise of all the redeemed dead, who will rise each in his own order or rank (1 Corinthians 15. 23), yet "first," in verse 16, is in relation to the living in Christ. The first in the upward movement will be of the dead in Christ. Then they that are alive at the Lord's coming shall join them and shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Only here is it revealed where the meeting will take place between the Lord and His saints; no other portion of Scripture reveals this. Only God can speak of "first" and "then," as the upward movement of the quickened dead and the changed living will be so close to each other. The reunion of sleeping and living saints will be complete as they ascend to meet the Lord together in the rapture of that glorious day. So shall they ever be with the Lord. The sorrow of verse 13 is meanwhile largely dispelled by the comfort of verse 18. What a blessed hope as compared with the bleak outlook of the future in the case of those who do not believe in the Lord or in resurrection! How glorious that reunion of saints in the glory of God!
Verse 1: But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you.

The coming of the Lord to the air for all who are in Christ is not related to the times and the seasons. These have to do with earthly events connected with the nations and the nation of Israel. This dispensation of grace in which we are is a unique period of time in the dealings of God with men, during which the Lord is building what He calls, "My Church," which is the Church which is His Body (Matthew 16. 18; Ephesians 1. 22, 23), the Bride of the Lamb.

Verses 2, 3: For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape.

The day of the Lord begins with the descent of the Son of Man from heaven (Acts 2. 16-21, and many Old Testament Scriptures), when He comes "in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thessalonians 1. 7, 8). This day is more than a thousand years in extent, as we learn from 2 Peter 3. 10, for in it the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works therein shall be burned up. This brings us to the judgement of the Great White Throne (Revelation 20. 11), when the earth and the heaven shall flee away from the face of Him who sits upon the throne, and no place will be found for them. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, when men least expect it; when they are saying, "Peace and safety," then sudden destruction shall come upon them, and there will be no escape.

Verses 4, 5: But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: for ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness;

These verses show clearly the error of those who hold that saints of the Church which is Christ's Body shall pass through the time of the Great Tribulation. If saints of the Church shall pass through the Tribulation, then that day, the day of the Lord, shall overtake them. But the reason given that they will not do this is, that they are sons of the light and of the day. We are not of the world's dark night; but we see the shades of that night gathering around us, a sign of the coming great apostasy, when men shall acclaim a corruptible man to be god (2 Thessalonians 2. 3, 4), but that will not make him God whatever they do or whatever he claims for himself. It will be the worst form of idolatry which has ever appeared and it will overspread the earth.

Verses 6, 7, 8: So then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

We are exhorted not to sleep (as, alas, the five wise virgins did, as did also the foolish in the parable of Matthew 25. 1-13), as do the rest, such as have no hope (4. 13); but we are to watch or be awake, and to be sober,
as vigilant sentinels who are armed with breastplate and helmet, as those that await the dawn of day. It becomes sentinels to watch on behalf of the souls of men, neither to sleep nor be drunken. "Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night. " The morning will come for some, the night for others.

Verses 9, 10: For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do.

This verse should be read in the context in which it is found, in the consideration of the saints of this dispensation in regard to the day of the Lord and the wrath of that day. Also, "us" of verse 9 is dispensational in character, and does not apply merely to Paul and the Thessalonians. That hardly needs to be said. The wrath to which we are not appointed or set is quite evidently that of the day of the Lord; that wrath we shall not see, the reason being that we are set to the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, for before the day of wrath comes upon this earth we shall have been saved finally and fully by that salvation which is nearer to us than when we first believed (Romans 13. 11), with that salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1. 5). It is this hope of salvation which we have as a helmet as we watch for the dawn of day. How comforting and assuring are the words, though they give no excuse for sleeping, that the Lord died for us, that whether we wake (watch) or sleep (not live or die), we should live together with Him! Our being with the Lord and living with Him is not determined by our waking or sleeping, but by our having received Him by faith. It was even so with the five wise virgins. They entered the marriage feast because they had oil in their vessels with their lamps, not because they had kept awake. Saints would be in great peril, if their being with the Lord was dependent on their watchfulness. "Wherefore," said Paul, "exhort or comfort one another, and build each other up." This the Thessalonians also did.

Verses 12, 13: But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

Here Paul asks them to know their leaders in the Lord, men who laboured among them and admonished them. "Over them" (Proistemi) means literally, to stand before, and signifies to be set over or appointed with authority. The word is rendered "ruleth" (Romans 12. 8; 1 Timothy 3. 4); "to rule" and "ruling" (1 Timothy 3. 5, 12); "rule" (1 Timothy 5. 17); "maintain" (Titus 3. 4, 8). The men referred to were elders or overseers of the church of God in Thessalonica. They were to be highly esteemed for their work's sake. Paul called upon the saints to be at peace among themselves, for this would give the elders less work and trouble.

J. M.
EDITORIAL

We propose in this very brief Editorial to pass on to all our fellow-students a very welcome word of encouragement which we have just received. One of our correspondents writes: — "We have recently baptised a young man of 18 years of age. It was the Bible Studies that interested him..." We rejoice that the Lord has been pleased so to bless our joint studies. The word of God is precious in His own eyes and should be very precious to us. Sincere and prayerful study of the word of God cannot but meet with blessing from above, though the blessing may not always be apparent. In this case we have unmistakable evidence that the Lord has met us in blessing. To Him we return becoming thanks. We trust this news item will encourage all our fellow-students to renewed and increased effort, and to seek to gain depth of appreciation of the sublime truths that God has been pleased to reveal.

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good:
O give thanks unto the God of heaven:
For His mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 136. 1, 26).

J. B.

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

CHAPTER 10

In this chapter we are introduced to another strong angel who is arrayed with a cloud, a rainbow is upon his head, his face is as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. It is a magnificent description of a celestial being. One interpreter says that the angel of chapter 8. 3-5 is the Lord, and that here in this chapter the strong angel is the Lord again. We think that this is entirely fanciful and believe that it is an angel. He has in his hand a little book open, which is a different book from that of chapter 5. 1; that was given to the Lord. The angel set his right foot on the sea and his left on the earth (the sea and earth are literal), and he cried as it were with a lion's voice, and sworn by Him that liveth for ever, who created heaven and earth and the sea and all things therein, that there would be time (delay) no longer. This does not mean the end of time, as we know it, or of eternal times, but that in dealing with things on the earth there would be no longer any delay.

John was told to go and take the little open book out of the angel's hand. He was given the book and was told to eat it up and that it would be in his mouth as sweet as honey, though it would make his belly bitter. He ate it, and he found it sweet to his taste, but it made his belly bitter. Then he was told, "Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." The first part of his prophesying ends with the sounding of the seventh angel (11. 15) which is the third Woe. The second prophesying
begins with chapter 12. The sounding of the seventh angel, the third Woe, brings us to the Lord's coming to the earth. We must not think that chapters 6 to 11 deal with events in the first part of Daniel's prophetic seventieth week, and that in chapters 12 to 19 we have the events of the second part of that week. That is not so. As we have said already, we have an overlapping of events in the book of the Revelation. With the sounding of the seventh angel, then is finished the mystery of God (10. 7), according to the good tidings which were declared or preached (evangelized) by the prophets, for their good tidings ended with the Lord reigning. This is what we have in chapter 11. 15-18.

CHAPTER 11

As in chapter 10 we have a parenthetical portion coming in between the sounding of the sixth and the seventh angel, so also here, in verses 1 to 13. These verses deal with Jerusalem, the temple, the testimony of the two witnesses in Jerusalem, their being slain by the beast, and their resurrection and ascension to heaven. We have here, in verses 2 and 3, the same period of forty two months or one thousand two hundred and threescore days. In the understanding of the passage, it is necessary to determine whether the forty two months are the first half of Daniel's seventieth week or the second. Some interpreters, perhaps most, say it is the second half, but is this so? Some light may be cast on the problem if we consider what happens at the end of the first half of the week and what happens at the end of the second half. At the end of the first half of the week we have the rise of the beast, who comes up out of the abyss (verse 7; 17. 8), and he has authority to continue for forty two months (13. 5), which covers the second half of Daniel's week. This authority to continue for forty two months is, I believe, divinely given, for I cannot see that the dragon, from whom he received his power, throne and great authority, would limit his time of world dominion to so short a period. At the end of the second half of Daniel's week the Lord comes to earth, first to fight against the beast and his armies, and to cast him and the false prophet into the lake of fire (chapter 19. 19, 20). The testimony of the two witnesses continues for one thousand two hundred and threescore days and it is not until these days are ended that the beast who ascends from the abyss makes war with them. If this were the second one thousand two hundred and threescore days, then the beast would not be on earth to slay the two witnesses, for he would then have been cast into the lake of fire. I am convinced therefore that the testimony of the two witnesses is during the first half of Daniel's week.

Then again, as to the measuring of the temple, the altar and those who worship therein, this appears to me to be the worship that was proper to the temple. In the middle of Daniel's week there will be the doing away with the altar and its sacrifices. Daniel 9. 27 says that " for the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. " Instead of the altar with its sacrifices, there will be set up in the holy place (which does not mean inside the temple, but in the court where it can be seen) the abomination that maketh desolate (Matthew 24. 15; Daniel 9. 27; 11. 31; Revelation 13. 14-18). When the beast rises with his confederate the false prophet, then will come to an end the Jewish sacrifices, and an end of the witnesses who will be slain by the beast. Then this king of the north shall do his pleasure and corrupt every one who can be corrupted.
Who are the two witnesses? We may be sure about one of them that he is Elijah, from the prophecy of Malachi (4. 5). We can only venture an opinion as to the other. Firstly, we would emphasize that the witnesses are first of all witnesses to Israel to call God's people to repentance. Moses the greatest of all the prophets (we speak not of John the Baptist) seems to be indicated in the miracles which the witnesses do, such as turning water into blood, a miracle which Moses wrought in Egypt. In Elijah's time the heaven was shut up and there was no rain. Moses and Elijah were seen together on the mount of transfiguration with the Lord. No prophet would carry more weight with the Jewish people than Moses, if he appeared again to them calling them to repentance; so it seems to me. However, there are those who think that one of the two prophets will be Enoch, because he never died. There the matter rests, but that day will reveal who they are. They are clothed with sackcloth, that is, mourning apparel. They are both olive trees to produce the oil of testimony, and lampstands to give light in the darkness. They are said to be standing before the Lord of the earth, and are speaking on His behalf. The beast who comes up out of the abyss (we shall write more about this when we come to chapter 17) shall make war with them and kill them. Their bodies are not allowed to be buried, but will lie in the street of Jerusalem, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, an indication of the fearful state of Jerusalem at the time of the rise of the beast; and this state of utter depravity is seen in the fact that earth's inhabitants rejoice, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because they are now rid of these two prophets whose words and works were a torment to them, for they wanted to go on in their sinful course. One can see in this how they will welcome the rise of the beast, whose rise will add tremendously to the corruptions of those times.

After three days the breath of God enters into the two witnesses and they stand on their feet, and great fear falls on all who see them. They are commanded to come up to heaven, and they go up to heaven in the cloud and their enemies behold them. Though no enemy saw the Lord ascend to heaven, the ascension of the two witnesses will be a public event. At that time there is a great earthquake and the tenth part of Jerusalem falls and seven thousand persons are killed. The rest, we are told, are affrighted and give glory to God. Thus ends the testimony of the two witnesses at the end of the first three and a half years of Daniel's prophetic week.

In chapter 11. 14-19 we come to the last section of the first part of the prophecy of the Revelation. With the sounding of the seventh angel we reach the third Woe. This Woe is the most serious time in all the judgements which fall upon the earth at the end of the age, for then the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever. Upon this the twenty four elders which sit before God on their thrones fall upon their faces and worship God. Their words of thanks sum up what will take place at this time, at the coming of the Lord to earth:

"We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, which art and which wast; because Thou hast taken Thy great power, and didst reign. And the nations were wroth, and Thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear Thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth."
(1) The time has come for the Lord to reign. (2) It is the time when the nations are wroth with God and His Anointed, when the Lord will appear in His wrath to destroy them that destroy the earth. (3) It is the time for the dead to be raised, judged and rewarded (Daniel 12. 2, 3; Revelation 20. 4, 6), and to enter with the Messiah into His kingdom.

What relationship verse 19 has with the beginning of the reign of the Messiah is not clear. Here we are told that the temple of God in heaven was opened, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant. This is an ark which is proper to the temple in heaven, and not the ark that Moses made which was in the tabernacle and temple of old. It may be this is that to which the psalmist refers in Psalm 119. 89: "For ever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven."

CHAPTER 12

We come now to what the angel said, in chapter 10, "Thou must prophesy again." Most of this section (chapters 12 to 19), though not altogether, deals with what transpires in the second half of Daniel's seventieth week.

In the middle of this week of years the woman who brought forth the Man-Child flees into the wilderness from the dragon (verse 6). The dragon, that is the devil, is cast down from heaven by Michael, and when he is cast down to the earth he persecutes the woman, and when she escapes from him he persecutes her seed. At that time the beast (the man), ascends from the abyss (chapters 11. 7; 17. 8), and also the beast (the system) ascends out of the sea, from the mass of unstable and turbulent humanity. This period of the Great Tribulation is variously described as one thousand two hundred and threescore days (12. 6); time, times and half a time (12. 14), and forty and two months (13. 5).

Chapter 12 begins with a vision of a woman gloriously arrayed. She is arrayed with the sun, has the moon under her feet, and she is crowned with a crown (Stephanos) of twelve stars. She is in the pain of travail and is about to give birth to a child. Another sign is seen in heaven, that of a great red dragon, which has seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems (not crowns as in the case of the woman). His tail draws the third part of the stars of heaven, and these he casts to the earth. He stands before the woman that he might devour her child. She is delivered of a Son, a male, who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. The Child is caught up to God and to His throne.

What do these great signs mean? Bearing in mind that the book of the Revelation does not give events in serial form, the birth of the Man-Child does not take place at the middle of Daniel's seventieth week. We have here Israel, the chosen and honoured nation by whom the Messiah was to come into the world, as the apostle when writing of Israel says, "Of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Romans 9. 5). This was the greatest work ever performed in Israel, that through Mary the espoused wife of Joseph, of the house of David, of the tribe of Judah and nation of Israel, Christ was born (Matthew 1; Luke 1. 26-56; 2. 1-21). "Salvation is from the Jews," said the Lord to the Samaritan woman (John 4. 22). Though Israel had sunk in unbelief and formalism and sin at the time of the Lord's birth, yet this did not stay the fulfilment of the divine promise given in the Scriptures. The time of His appearing in the world was foretold (Daniel 9. 25, 26), where He would be born (Micah 5. 2; Matthew 2. 6), of whose seed He would be, according
to the flesh (Acts 13. 22, 23; Romans 1. 3), and how He should enter the world, through a virgin (Matthew 1. 22, 23); all was clearly foretold by God, as to this the greatest world event up to the time of the incarnation of Christ. Israel, pictured in association with the Lord's birth, is seen gloriously attired, not because of her worthiness or holiness of conduct, but solely because of divine choice, that by her the Redeemer should enter the world. The crown of twelve stars is indicative of Israel in her twelve tribes. No other person than the Lord has been caught up to God and to His throne. The devil, as the red dragon, shows him in his relationship to earth's powers, especially to military powers. He was the power behind Herod who thought to destroy the Lord after His birth, and who slew all the male children from two years and under around Bethlehem (Matthew 2. 13-18), and he was the power behind Pontius Pilate and Rome when the Lord was condemned, and slain at Calvary. But He escaped their hand, and in resurrection power He ascended to God and sat down on His right hand.

The long time of the alienation of Israel from the death and resurrection of the Lord to the middle of Daniel's seventieth week is passed over, and we are told of the flight of the woman at the beginning of the second half of Daniel's week, when she flees from the dragon, the beast, and the worship of the beast to the place which God has prepared for her. Then we are told of certain who will nourish her. Who these are we are not told. This flight of Israel, and the encouragement of each to the other, is described in Isaiah 35. 3-10, and also the sojourn in the wilderness, where the thirsty ground will become springs of water; and then in the last verse we have the return to this ransomed people to Zion when the Lord shall have come. Joshua of old led the people into the Land, but the Lord, the true Joshua, will lead up His ransomed into the Land again, and they will come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy, and the days of their sorrow and sighing will be past.

In verses 7 to 12 we are told of the casting down of the devil from heaven to earth, of certain things about his character and his works, and of his great wrath. In Daniel 12. 1 we are told that at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of Israel. This agrees with the time of the going forth of Michael and his angels to fight with the dragon and his angels. We read in Jude 9 of an earlier contention between Michael and the devil and in that contention they disputed about the body of Moses; so Michael and the devil are well enough known to each other as disputants. Here in this chapter it is not simply that they dispute, but it is war, and this war is in heaven. Here will end the devil and his angels having any place in heaven for ever. Though they warred against Michael and against being cast down from heaven, they were defeated, and the dragon was cast down. He is clearly identified. He is the old serpent, who is called the Devil (accuser or slanderer) and Satan (adversary), the deceiver of the whole world, and the accuser of the brethren. He is the cause and source whence all the mischief and the evil of the world have sprung. What a relief to heaven to be rid of these disturbers of the peace! Thus heaven proclaims its deliverance with a loud voice, "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ." There was no relief from the devil's accusation of the brethren. It says that he "accuseth them before our God day and night," But it says that "they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death." Thus these verses tell us that the devil will be defeated in two senses, by Michael and his angels in heaven, and by God's faithful saints
on earth. The heavens and those that dwell therein are told to rejoice, but woe to the earth because of the great wrath of the devil. His humiliation to the earth stirs the devil's wrath to awful intensity. From this will come the time of the Great Tribulation. The fight between the devil and God's saints will be furious, but the issue of the fight is not in doubt, as this book reveals.

In verses 13 to 17, the dragon, when he saw that he was cast down, persecuted the woman (Israel) which brought forth the Man-Child (the Male). The speed of her flight is described in pictorial language, that the woman was given the wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place. This brings us back to verse 6, where the flight of the woman is referred to. It also brings to mind the flight of Israel from Pharaoh, of which God said, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself" (Exodus 19. 4; Deuteronomy 32. 11). The place to which the woman flees has for many years been identified by students of prophecy as those lands in Daniel 11. 41, Edom, Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. These will be delivered out of the hand of the king of the north, who is the beast. The nourishing of Israel in her place is again referred to, but who will nourish Israel in the wilderness is a secret which God has not revealed. In verses 15 and 16 we are told how God will help the woman in her flight from the serpent, the devil. He will cast out of his mouth water as a river, so that she might be carried away by the stream. But there will be an earthquake and the earth will open her mouth and swallow up the river that the dragon cast out of his mouth. I am disposed to the view that we have not a river of ordinary water here, but an army of men who will be sent after Israel in hot pursuit to bring them back. It seems to me that we have a somewhat parallel event here to what happened in Israel's case when they left Egypt in haste in the time of Pharaoh. Pharaoh led his chariots and horsemen in hot pursuit of Israel to bring them back, and in their case the sea helped them, for Pharaoh and his host went into the Red Sea through which Israel had gone, and they were overwhelmed and perished in the sea. Here it is not the sea, but the earth which swallows up the army of the dragon, which I take to mean the army of the beast. See Daniel 11. 10, 22, 26, 40, regarding a flood of soldiery. It may well be that after the destruction of this army the beast and the devil will make no further attempt against Israel in the wilderness, and this may account for the lands of Edom, Moab and Ammon, where Israel will be, being delivered out of his hand. When the devil was frustrated in his purpose to destroy the woman, he went away to make war with the rest of her seed. Not with all the Jews elsewhere, but with the rest of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus. These are Jewish believers in Christ who faithfully carry out His word. Thus the battle between these saints and the devil will be carried on vigorously, and, as verse 11 says, they will overcome him, though in the battle many, many will lay down their lives for the Lord.

J. M.
THE LORD SHALL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE

In Israel's wilderness journey divine judgement fell on them on many occasions. As we consider briefly some of the weightier judgements which fell upon individuals and upon the nation, let us remember that the penalty was ever exactly in keeping with the magnitude of the sin, for "a false balance is an abomination to the LORD" (Proverbs 11. 1).

The case of the man found gathering sticks on the sabbath and who, as a result, met death by stoning (Numbers 15. 32-36) has, no doubt, found an echo of sympathy in our hearts. The judgement may seem to outweigh the offence, but God had given commandment forbidding such practice on the sabbath (Exodus 31. 14, 15); and just previous to the incident cited Israel had been warned of God concerning sinning with a high hand (Numbers 15. 30, 31). Quickly following we have the judgement upon Korah and his confederates, which resulted in the staggering loss of approximately fifteen thousand souls. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and was punishable by death (Exodus 22. 18).

The apostle Paul gives us an added detail in relation to Jehovah's hot displeasure when His holy nation joined affinity with Moab; so devouring was the plague that twenty-three thousand died in one day. The catalogue of disasters could be extended. Without doubt our minds would be staggered if the full numbers were known of all those who died under divine judgement, which no doubt included the hundreds of thousands from twenty years old and upward whose carcases fell in the wilderness.

Sin is abhorrent to Him that is of purer eyes than to behold evil and who cannot look on perverseness (Habakkuk 1. 13). The foundation of God's throne is righteousness and judgement, these two form one foundation; they are indissolubly linked. So that we might apprehend more fully the blessed fact that mercy and truth go before His face (Psalm 89. 14, 15). The agnostic cannot understand (1 Corinthians 2. 14) why the Scriptures on the one hand tell of devastating judgement, and on the other speak of a God infinitely rich in grace, compassion, lovingkindness and tender mercies (Numbers 14. 18), and desirous of forgiving iniquity. Wrong thoughts concerning the acts of God reflect upon His character.

The Lord Jesus, who guarded God's righteousness and honour as no cherubim have ever done, made this clear (John 2. 13-17, 10. 37, 38; Matthew 5. 45, 7. 11). God is equal in all attributes (James 1. 17); God is light and God is love (1 John 1. 5, 4. 8). His workings on our behalf are always for our good (Romans 8. 28 R. V. M.), "for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" (Hebrews 12. 6).

Although on so many occasions Israel's brow had been as brass and their neck as an iron sinew, yet listen to the LORD'S words to the people whom He loved so dearly, as they neared the end of such an eventful journey, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God hath led thee... to prove thee... He... suffered thee to hunger... who led thee through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions,... that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end" (Deuteronomy 8). We are privileged to live in a day associated with a better deliverance, a better covenant and a better inheritance. In the light of the solemn warning concerning the wilful setting aside of the law of Moses (Hebrews 10. 28) may a consideration of these things cause us to confess with David "the judgements of the LORD are true and righteous altogether (Psalm 19. 9).

H. Caldwell.
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

FROM SINAI TO MOAB (7); AFFINITY WITH MOAB

(Numbers 25. 1-18)

From Cowdenbeath. —Balaam, having been prevented from cursing Israel, counselled Balak to put a stumbling-block before them, that they might sin and so bring God's displeasure upon them. Being enticed by the women of Moab and Midian, the men of Israel were led away as captives to join in the worship of Baal. The judgement of God was initially directed against all the chiefs of the people, who were accounted firstly responsible for this dreadful sin. Probably those men were the heads of their tribes. The responsibility of executing the second part of the judgement was given to the judges who were instructed to slay each his men who had sinned. If this had been rigidly carried out, then all the offenders would have died, because the judges were appointed as rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens (Exodus 18. 25).

It would seem that in addition to the charge given to the judges there was also the outbreak of the plague. Perhaps it was because of the failure of those men that it was necessary for God to punish in this way. This teaches the solemn lesson that sometimes when responsible men fail in judgement God will Himself come in to judge.

All the men who followed Baal-Peor died, but there were many who did cleave unto the LORD in that day of temptation (Deuteronomy 4. 3, 4). Those faithful ones were found among the congregation to weep before the LORD as the plague raged through the camp. Whilst regret and abhorrence for the sins of others are very desirable, yet there is the need for the more important matter of judgement. From the midst of his fellows Phinehas arose to do this very thing. It was bad enough that many should have gone to Baal, but for an Israelite to bring into the camp one of those sinful women was an affront to the God of Israel. Such behaviour aroused the indignation of Phinehas to act in defence of the LORD'S honour.

We would judge that Phinehas was quite a young man at this time. Mention is made of his birth before the exodus (Exodus 6. 25). He was probably around forty years of age. What an example he is to young men today to have God's honour before them, being jealous with God's jealousy!

The action of Phinehas secured for him and his seed after him the right of perpetual succession in the high priesthood of Israel. This promise was fulfilled except for a time when, for some reason not given, the priesthood continued in the line of Ithamar from Eli to Zadok.

Immediately following the plague the people were numbered (Numbers 26. 1, 2), and this revealed that there was not a man left of those who had come out of Egypt save Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 26. 65). How near those 24,000 men were to entering the land! But God's word must be fulfilled although the immediate cause for their deaths was their own sin.

J. Bowman.

From Belfast. —There is great danger when the people of God join with others, for this may draw them away from the path in which God wants them to walk. Israel's affinity with Moab displeased the LORD and brought down God's righteous anger on His people. We have the very emphatic statement: "And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel."

From verse 7 we see how Phinehas carried out the judgement for God; thus God was appeased in His anger and the plague was checked. God
did not punish in full measure because of the faithfulness of Phinehas. God's mercy was mixed with His wrath and the judgement was stayed. We were impressed by the courage shown by Phinehas in meting out the required punishment from the LORD, and were reminded of the occasion when the words were written concerning the Master Himself. "The zeal of Thine house shall eat Me up." The Lord Jesus, seated in glory on His Father's throne, stays the wrath of God which will one day burst on this godless world.

How sad for Zimri that such a story has been left on record on the sacred page! Zimri was by no means a novice but one whose father was prince of a fathers' house among the Simeonites. In the New Testament we also have sad records, such as that of Demas, of whom Paul writes briefly but sorrowfully that he loved this present world (2 Timothy 4. 10). We do well to consider what our own record will be in that coming day when we shall again meet our works at the solemn judgement-seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5. 10).

From this chapter we learn that God did not want His chosen people to join with others. Separation was the only successful life to live to God's glory. This was seen in God's calling Abram from Ur of the Chaldees, and in His bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt. It is the same today. We can never have power from God, or have peace in our own hearts without a separated life. But though a separated people we must realize that God has a purpose for each one of us in our lives; that He wants us, as we move among men, to live for Him, to bear fruit to His glory and to be seen as lights "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation."

D. Mawkinney.

From Brantford, Ont.—We have come to a sad period in the history of Israel which is referred to in 1 Corinthians 10. 8 and Revelation 2. 4.

Though Balaam was caused by God to bless instead of curse Israel, he decided in his wicked heart by subtle means to bring disaster upon them (31. 6). He was therefore responsible for the people leaving the place of separation and sharing in idolatrous worship. This should be a solemn warning: children of God cannot compromise with the enemies of God or disregard His word, for God's word is truth, and to depart from it brings destruction.

Social and religious unions are numerous in the world today. The approach of such to the child of God is to "come and join us for a social time; you can't live to yourself." We must beware. "He that is careless of his ways shall die" (Proverbs 19. 16).

God commanded Moses to execute the chiefs of the people for their disobedience. We have no record of the number slain or of the execution, but they are spoken of as offenders.

The whole-hearted devotion and godly jealousy of Phinehas not only stayed the plague, but won for himself honours from God. "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Samuel 2. 30).

In Psalm 106. 30, 31 we see that God is keeping alive the name of Phinehas and his courageous act, while 1 Chronicles 6. 4 and Ezra 7. 5 show the priesthood of Phinehas being perpetuated according to the promise of God (25. 13). Frank Lorenz, N. Sproul.
From Portstewart. —Israel had been clearly warned in the ten commandments not to commit idolatry or adultery. Here we see how unreliable they were. Balaam was mainly responsible for this terrible downfall of the Israelites (31. 16). Here is a lesson for all Christians: we must beware lest we are led astray and into sin by the treachery of others. Sin first entered into the world through the serpent beguiling Eve, and she in turn leading Adam astray.

Has the covenant of peace, which God mentions in commending the action of Phinehas (25. 12, 13), anything to do with the exclusive claim to the priesthood of the descendants of Zadok, who traced their descent from Phinehas (1 Chronicles 6. 1-15; Ezekiel 44. 15) ? In Psalm 106. 30, 31 mention is again made of Phinehas' action and of how God counted it to him for righteousness.

Twenty-four thousand Israelites died in the plague (25. 9); thus we see the terrible wages sin brings. Sin will always bring sorrow, and even death, in its train, so every Christian should pray more and more that God would keep them from the snare of sin. One of Satan's main objects is to destroy the testimony of the Fellowship through sin.

In Numbers 25. 16-18 Moses is told by God to destroy the Midianites because of the ways they vexed and deceived the Israelites in the matter of Baal-Peor. These Midianites and Moabites* had been hindrances and snares to Israel, therefore judgement must be meted out to them. The same principle applies to the Christian. Not only must the sin be destroyed, but also the cause and source of the sin.

From Toronto, Ont. —It was suggested, but not entirely accepted, that the word "abode" (25. 1) would indicate a settled-down attitude on the part of the people, and for that reason they became exposed to the idolatry in which they are found in this narrative. We did, however, agree that not only in their time, but also in ours, a distinct separation is necessary.

Notice was taken of the honour to Phinehas for his zeal for God in the face of all that was dishonouring God. His one act of godly zeal stayed the plague. God was satisfied to find even one with a godly jealousy. We wondered if Phinehas made atonement for the children of Israel by slaying Zimri and Cozbi; or if in his priestly office he presented an offering for their sin. It was felt that judgement was inflicted upon the woman Cozbi because, being a foreigner, she had no right to be in the courts of Jehovah [1].

From Edinburgh. —The LORD had declared Himself to be a jealous God, "thou shalt have none other gods before Me." The LORD could not stand aside and see Israel's idolatry. He loved His people with a strong eternal love and demanded their complete heart and love in return. The LORD would not take second place in the affections of His people.

What was true of Israel is true of His people today. We should not be joined with unbelievers. Let us learn the lesson that the LORD will not take second place in our affections. In 2 Corinthians 11 the apostle Paul said he was jealous of the church of God in Corinth with the jealousy of God. He saw Himself as one who had espoused them to Christ, and he longed to present them in a coming day in perfect purity, but he had fears for them lest they be beguiled as Eve was in the garden of Eden and as Israel was
in the plains of Moab. We should be constantly on our guard lest our minds be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is towards Christ (2 Corinthians 11. 3).

Martin Dyer,

From Birkenhead. —We may ask why God caused the dark and black periods in the history of His people to be recorded. The answer is given in 1 Corinthians 10. 11. We should seek to learn from their error and to remember the words of 1 Corinthians 10. 12.

The evil had gone deep and many people died. There might have been more, but God gave instruction that certain action should be taken that the fierce anger of the LORD might turn away from Israel (25. 4). It is evident that the chiefs or leaders of the people were gravely at fault in allowing the sin to continue without putting a check on the peoples. They failed themselves and caused the people to follow their actions—a striking lesson for those who are leaders in God's house today to be an example for God.

In Numbers 25 we are told that twenty-four thousand people died, but in 1 Corinthians 10. 8 it is recorded that twenty-three thousand died. We suggest that the answer to this difficulty is found in the words in 1 Corinthians 10. 8, "in one day", the judgement not being completed in a single day. God dealt with His people in judgement, but He also dealt with those who enticed them to sin, and the end of the chapter reveals that He dealt in judgement on Midian.

R. Hyland, P. K.

From Nottingham. —The word "yoked" (25. 3, R. V. M.) is a strong word and calls to mind 1 Corinthians 6. 14-18. The unequal yoke, such as these people entered into, is viewed seriously by God. The expression "only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7. 39) should be noted in its application to marriage.

Verse 13 declares that Phinehas by his action made atonement for the children of Israel for sin. Phinehas appreciated something of the mind of God, and went forth against sin. Phinehas was so moved by the open sin of the two concerned that he took a spear and executed immediate judgement.

R. Hickling.

From Lerwick. —Israel, in journeying to the place of which the LORD had said, "I will give it you" (10. 29), made the vexing mistake of settling down in Shittim. It is dangerous indeed for God's people if they should settle down where He means them to be strangers and sojourners. For soon the holy nation (Exodus 19. 6) separated "from all the people that are upon the earth" (Exodus 33. 16) was deceived and defiled through the hospitality of this alien people who invited Israel to the sacrifices of their gods. Sad to say, the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods (25. 2).

What a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus is brought before us in Phinehas, who rose up from the midst of the congregation and taking a spear went forth to strike at the very root of the plague—the man of Israel and the Midianitish woman whom he thrust to death, being jealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel (verse 13). God honoured him with the covenant of His peace, of an everlasting priesthood. He will never forget those who are jealous for Him. "Tham that honour Me I will honour" (1 Samuel 8. 30).

D. S.
From Wigan. —Israel became partakers in the immoral ways of Moab; they became abominable like that which they loved (Hosea 9. 10). The history of Moab was never good. Their beginning was from an unholy union (Genesis 19. 37). Yet God showed them kindness because they were children of Lot, and commanded Israel not to vex them or take their land (Deuteronomy 2. 18, 19).

The sin at Peor was not a case of the uninstructed erring, but of the leaders, the chiefs of the people (Numbers 25. 4); Zimri, the son of Salu, was a prince of a fathers’ house among the Simeonites (25. 14). Because they were men of responsibility their sin was the more grievous, and they were worthy of more severe judgement (James 3. 1).

Paul reminded the church in Corinth of the sin of Israel in Numbers 25: "neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand " (1 Corinthians 10. 8). Fornicators and adulterers God will judge (Hebrews 13. 4). Paul was jealous over the church in Corinth; he feared lest they should be beguiled, as was Eve, and as also was Israel by the Midianites (25. 18), and their mind should be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ (2 Corinthians 11. 2, 3).

J. H.

From Atherton. —Balaam said, "Come, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do unto thy people in the latter days " (Numbers 24. 14). The word "advertise" here means "counsel, warn, or inform." Perhaps Balaam intended to incite Balak to a greater fear and hatred.

The man of Israel, named and made an example of, belonged to the tribe of Simeon. We suggest that this tribe was largely affected in this whoredom, and in consequence the personnel of the tribe was seriously reduced from 59, 300 (2. 12, 13) to 22, 200 (26. 14). Further, Simeon is not mentioned in the blessings of Moses (Deuteronomy 33), though his name is taken up again in Revelation 7. 7, and this time Dan is omitted. These omissions have a solemn voice. Sin brings sure retribution.

Phinehas stepped into the breach. Why Phinehas and not some other? The answer, in part at least, lies here. He was doing his allotted task. 1 Chronicles 9. 19, 20 is enlightening. There were of Levi those who kept the gate, keepers of the entry. Phinehas was their ruler, and so on this sad occasion of sin in the camp he faithfully arose to mete out the judgement of the LORD. Can we glean a lesson here? To do the task of the LORD’S appointment is all that matters. It is a question of personal responsibility to the LORD in relation to the honour of His House and the law of the LORD proceeding therefrom.

We note that Israel abode in Shittim (25. 1). The dangers of abiding when in pilgrimage provide salutary lessons. "We have not here an abiding city" (Hebrews 13. 14).

D. S. Jones, G. A. J.

From Middlesbrough. —It would appear that when Balaam "returned to his place " (24. 25) he did not return to Mesopotamia but dwelt amongst the kings of Midian. There he continued to bring about the seduction of Israel to idolatry. His efforts were most successful. Idolatry and immorality would seem to go together.
Phinehas realized that swift action was necessary to maintain the honour of the LORD. He realized that Zimri, being a prince of a fathers' house, was in a position of prominence. The sin of the leaders, if not checked, would have had a disastrous effect on the nation. The man did not sin in secret but in the presence of the people. In slaying both, Phinehas turned away God’s wrath from His people.

God’s command was that Israel should go and smite the Midianites. The account of this is given in chapter 31. We notice that it was Phinehas the priest and not Joshua or Moses who led this offensive. After the list of slain kings of Midian, Balaam is mentioned. His desire to die the death of the righteous was not fulfilled. If he ever obtained the rewards which Balak offered him, he did not live to enjoy them.

_Derek Goodwin, D. H._

FROM SINAI TO MOAB (6): IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB, BALAK AND BALAAM (Numbers 22. 1—24. 25)

From Melbourne. —The key words to Balaam’s first parable would appear to be " God hath not cursed "; to the second, " God hath blessed. " In the third it is the order of the people that is prominent; the fourth has the Messiah in view. In Israel Balaam saw a separated people, a holy nation, distinct from the other nations. They were separated from the idolatry of the nations around. In chapter 23. 21 we seem to have the truth of justification brought out. Jacob (Israel) is seen by God cleansed of all charge of guilt, clean every whit. Balaam failed to curse Israel. " If God is for us, who is against us ? " (Romans 8. 31).

There are several divine Titles in these chapters (Newberry margin): Jehovah (23. 3), Elohim (23. 4), El, God (23. 8), Jehovah his Elohim (23. 21) and The Almighty. El Shaddai (24. 4). Perhaps the thought conveyed by the use of so many divine Titles is that God is seen in several aspects, for His people needed protection, care and help in all their circumstances. His strength is made perfect in weakness. _P. W. Atkinson._

**COMMENT**

[1] (Portstewart). There is no indication in the narrative that Cozbi was brought into the courts of the LORD. Phinehas who saw this man and woman intent on sin rose from the midst of the congregation and went after them into the pavilion (not the tabernacle of the LORD) and slew them in their sin. —J. M.

**QUESTION AND ANSWER**

Question from Brantford. —Numbers 25. 9 records that 24,000 died by the plague, but 1 Corinthians 10. 8 records 23,000. Can the difference be accounted for from the previous judgement of Numbers 25. 4, where no number is recorded?

Answer. —The answer to the question is given in Birkenhead’s paper. The number which died from the plague was 24,000, and of these 23,000 fell " in one day, " according to 1 Corinthians 10. —J. M.

**REQUEST FOR PRAYER**

Our co-workers Dr. Doodson and Mr. Jas. Martin are in need of our prayers. Dr. Doodson is very ill and Mr. Martin is not fully recovered. Eds.
Notes on the First Epistle to the Thessalonians

Chapter 5

Verses 14, 15: And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but alway follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all.

Here Paul addresses the overseers in their responsibility in caring for the saints. The disorderly, the fainthearted, the weak, come in for special mention and how they were to be treated, and the overseers were to be longsuffering toward all. Saints rendering evil for evil were not to be tolerated, but they were to follow after good, one saint toward another, and toward all. This is love in practice.

Verses 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22: Rejoice alway; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward. Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.

Whilst these words may have a special application to overseers who stand before the saints and should be pattern men, they are of general application to all saints. One is reminded of the similarity of these exhortations to those of Romans 12, and also of the manner in which they are given. These exhortations are so simple and their meaning so self-evident that they call for no comment.

Verses 23, 24: And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it.

Here the Sanctifier is called the God of peace. See other references to the God of peace (Romans 15. 33; 16. 20; 2 Corinthians 13. 11; Philippians 4. 9; Hebrews 13. 20). This entire sanctification is a setting apart of the whole person from sin in every form. It is explained further in what follows. I am of the opinion that the A. V. rendering here is better than the R. V., except that "may" should take the place of the words, "I pray God, " in the A. V. which being in italics are shown not to be in the Greek. Thus it would read, "May your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless. " Thus the sanctification is of the whole person, of spirit and soul and body subsisting, and is to be preserved blameless at or in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The spirit of the redeemed person is that part of man on which the Spirit of God works, and the spirit of man should control the soul, the reasonable soul, the person. The soul should control the body in its appetites and desires. Alas, if the body gains control, then indwelling sin will enslave the soul, and the spirit will be cast as it were into prison and darkness, and as a consequence, the Holy Spirit will be grieved and quenched. The God of peace will sanctify us wholly, if we allow Him, and our whole being of spirit and soul and body will act in harmony, which is the root idea in peace. If the body with its appetites is allowed control, then sin will enter, the harmony will be broken, bringing grievous disturbance to the whole system within, and this will result in blameworthiness at the coming of the Lord.

Verses 25, 26, 27, 28: Brethren, pray for us. Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss. I adjure you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
NOTES ON EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THESSALONIANS

Paul frequently besought the prayers of the saints, as here. A holy kiss was the mode of salutation in those past times; in this country a warm shake of the hand is the mode of salutation. Paul adjures them that they read this epistle publicly to all the brethren. He closes his epistle, as in every epistle of his, with, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESALONIANS

CHAPTER 1

Verses 1, 2: Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians followed closely on the writing of the first. The second forms the complement of the first; for whereas the first deals in the main with the Lord's coming to the air for His saints who comprise the Church which is His (Christ's) Body, commonly called the coming of the Son of God (1 Thessalonians 1. 10), the second deals principally with the coming of the Son of Man to earth in judgement, and with events which will immediately precede that coming, especially with the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin. In addition, the last chapter gives warning against unreasonable and evil men, and deals with disorderly conduct in the church in Thessalonica, and the course of admonition by the church is in addition to that indicated in 1 Thessalonians 5. 14, where the overseers are exhorted to admonish the disorderly.

It will be noted that the manner of address of the epistle is similar to the first.

Verses 3, 4: We are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure;

These servants of God gave thanks to God continually for the Thessalonians, for that their faith grew exceedingly, and their love toward each other abounded. Their glorying or boasting in them in other churches of God must have been by letters which were sent to the different churches, for we know of no journey by the apostle from Athens (Acts 17) until he departed from Athens and came to Corinth (Acts 18. 1). The Thessalonians were a suffering people, as we see from the first epistle, and also here we read of their patience and faith in the persecutions and afflictions which they endured.

Verses 5, 6: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgement of God; to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you,

Such as have caused God's saints to suffer will themselves suffer divine displeasure for their acts of persecution. We do not speak of those who have repented of their acts, as the apostle Paul did. This is a righteous thing with God, and the suffering of saints at the hand of the wicked is a manifest token of God's righteous judgement which will come upon the wicked for their wickedness. At the same time, and in God's manifold wisdom in dealing with His own, those who stand the test of suffering, whose faith does not give way, are thus counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which
they suffer; that **is, such saints as are** in the kingdom of God. The kingdom **is** not something that **is** entered once for all, nor **is** it entered by the new birth, though all must be born again before they can either see **it** or enter it. The words of Acts 14. 22 are helpful, where Paul **is seen** confirming the souls of the disciples in the churches of God in Galatia, as it says, " Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the Faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. " The words of Hebrews 12. 28, 29, show also continuity in the reception of the kingdom of God: " Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God **is** a consuming fire. " Believers who are in the kingdom of God and are guilty of any of the sins of 1 Corinthians 5. 11, 6. 9, 10, Ephesians 5. 5 cannot inherit or have any inheritance in the kingdom of God. Hence they must be put away by the church of God, which **is** the local expression of the kingdom of God. See Revelation 1. 6, where the seven churches of God in Asia are described as having been made a kingdom and priests by the Lord Jesus unto His God and Father. This was God's kingdom then. The kingdom of God **is** not entered by being in a spiritual frame of mind, nor are persons out of it **if** their spiritual condition of happiness is not on a high plane. The kingdom of God is righteousness, the right acting of those who are together in obedience to the call of God, righteousness which is according to the teaching of the Faith (Jude 3; Acts 14, 22, 23; Matthew 6. 10, 33; Romans 14. 17, 18). The kingdom of God was taken from Israel, and given to the little Flock of the Lord's disciples in the beginning of this dispensation (Matthew 21. 43, 31, 32; Luke 12. 31, 32; Acts 1. 3).

Verses 7, 8; And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus:

The words of the Lord Jesus, in Luke 18. 7, 8, speak of the same time as that of the verses above: " Shall not God avenge His elect, which cry to Him day and night, and He **is** longsuffering over them ? I say unto you, that He will avenge them speedily. Howbeit when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find (the) faith on the earth ? " God has betimes visited men in judgement for their wicked persecution of His saints, as witness the parable of the kingdom of heaven, in Matthew 22. 1-14, in which the Lord showed God's punishment of the Jews by the Romans for their shameful treatment and killing of His servants. But the full recompense of the wicked upon the earth will be when the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, is revealed from heaven with His angels in flaming fire, when vengeance will be taken on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus. This gospel **is**, I judge, the gospel of the kingdom, which will be preached unto all the nations (Matthew 24. 14). The subject of the gospel of the grace of God, which is preached in this dispensation (Acts 20. 24), and the gospel of the kingdom, is the same in both cases, even " the Lord Jesus "; the former case tells of Him who died, was buried and raised again, and went back to heaven; the latter case of His imminent return to earth in judgement. " Obey not " (**Me hupakouo**) means to refuse to listen, hence to refuse to submit and obey. The attitude shows intentional neglect or sheer rebellion.

J. M.
"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).

EDITORIAL

Teaching by type calls for careful interpretation of the type and this needs clear thought, for a type may sometimes be applicable in more ways than one. Much of the difficulty some have experienced may arise either from holding one view to the exclusion of the other, or from fusing (and therefore confusing) two views. We are inclined to agree with the suggestion of those who say that we should keep the different aspects separate.

For a long time now it has been taught that the crossing of Jordan represents the passing of the saint to his heavenly rest. This interpretation is valid, if we take the crossing of Jordan as a type of the end of our pilgrim journey and Canaan as our place of final rest, where we shall enjoy to the full the goodness of our God and be able to serve and praise Him worthily. As long as this dispensation lasts we shall experience the things foreshadowed in the strife with Amalek (Exodus 17. 8-16), in the internal strifes (alas) in Israel, in the unfriendliness of Edom (Numbers 20. 14-21), and in the wiles of Moab (Numbers 25). We should seek grace from God in order to learn from the triumphs and from the errors of Israel.

When we reach heaven the days of our striving will have ended and we shall dwell in perfect peace, hence the above view can take no account of the fightings in the land. To include these we must regard the crossing of the Jordan as a beginning, not as an end. The wars under Joshua were wars for taking possession, and in these and in the crossing of Jordan the nation of Israel is seen as one, not as a number of individuals. Even the two and a half tribes are included in this opening of a new phase in the history of Israel. In the days of the apostles there must have been experiences akin to this. The saints of these early days would have to contend earnestly for the new heritage; they had to enter the new spiritual thing through spiritual conflict. (Compare Joshua 11. 19, "they took all in battle.") At the time of the emergence of the present testimony, there would again be similar experiences, conflicts for taking possession.

In Israel's later history there were wars arising from other causes. Some were for the purpose of holding what God had given. God-pleasing men in Israel prized their inheritance and sought to remain there, some even suffered for this very purpose, like Naboth (1 Kings 21). God will honour such men. It is ours to contend earnestly for the Faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Our warfare is to some extent concerned with holding the lot of our inheritance. We can say, in the words of the Psalm, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage " (Psalm 16. 6).

J. B.
NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

CHAPTER 13

The picture drawn by the Spirit in chapter 13 is that of the beast and the false prophet during the second three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week. We read in verse 5 that the beast had authority to continue for forty and two months, the divine limit set to this bestial kingdom. There are certain things stated about the beast in chapter 17 that it will be well to consider along with what is given in this chapter, so that we may have as full a picture as possible of this dread system and man. The beast is first of all a system of Gentile government, and this government is set forth as a beast with seven heads and ten horns. Both the heads of the beast and the horns are kings. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: and they are seven kings" (17. 9, 10). "The ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour" (17. 12). The beast is also a man, the confederate of the second beast, the false prophet; these two men are destined to be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19. 20). Thus care must be taken when thinking and speaking of the beast that we distinguish which we have before our mind, the beast as a system of world government or the man. It will be noticed that in chapter 12. 3 the diadems are on the heads of the dragon, which shows world government before the beginning of the second half of Daniel's seventieth week, but when we come to chapter 13. 1, the diadems are on the horns, which shows that the ten kings (horns) have received authority as kings with the beast. The beast here is the man. (See 17. 12).

Prior to the time of Revelation 13, seven kings, of whom the beast is one, have reigned, supporting Babylon, the mother of harlots. This woman is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth (17. 18). When John saw these kings in prophetic vision, five of the seven had fallen, one was reigning, and one was yet to reign, and the beast who was one of the first five kings, who had gone down to the abyss, was an eighth, in his second term of office, but he was out of the seven (17. 10, 11). The beast who comes up out of the abyss, and who is destined to go into perdition (the lake of fire) (17. 8), is the man, but the beast that comes up out of the sea, in 13. 1, is the revived Roman empire. It may be well for us to state here what we mean by the words "the revived Roman empire." It will be remembered that in the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, in Daniel 2, there were four metals indicated, gold, silver, brass and iron, and the feet and toes part iron and part clay (verses 32, 33, 41, 42, 43). There are but four kingdoms envisaged (verses 38, 39, 40), and the last phase of the fourth kingdom, was by the admixture of clay with iron to be partly strong and partly broken. The chief thing to note is, that there are but four kingdoms. There has for many years now been no doubt that these four kingdoms are the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman, so that the Roman is seen to continue until the Stone (the Lord) destroys this colossus of Gentile power. The same facts emerge in the four beasts of Daniel's dream, in Daniel 7, and here again we have the four empires already alluded to, and the fourth beast is that which has ten horns, which agrees with the beast as a system, of Revelation 13 and 17, one of whose heads, the one smitten to death is the person of the beast, in whom and in the confederate ten kings the Roman empire will be revived. In his first appearance before his death he is one of the seven kings who will support Babylon, but when he ascends from the abyss, Jerusalem, quite evidently, will be his seat,
for there he sits in the temple of God, claiming the worship which is due to
God alone (2 Thessalonians 2, 3, 4). The beast of Revelation 13. 1 bears
resemblance to the three world empires seen in vision by Daniel, and found
in Daniel 7. 3-6. It is like a leopard (the Grecian empire), has feet as of a
bear (the Medo-Persian), and has a mouth as of a lion (the Babylonian).
It is described by Daniel as great and terrible, without giving any similitude
as to what it is like. The head of the revived Roman empire is the man who
comes up out of the abyss. He is seen as one of the heads of the beast, one
of the seven kings. He is seen as though he had been smitten unto death,
with the stroke of a sword (verses 3, 12, 14). The words death-stroke do not
mean; that he received a death-stroke, but did not die. This head or king was
slaughtered unto death "; the wound he received was " the wound of death. "
When he was so wounded and died, he went down into the abyss. In order to
live again his wound had to be healed, so we read of the death wound
healing him. Here is a great wonder, the return of the beast to the earth.
It will become a world wonder. It says that the whole earth wondered after
the beast (13. 3). This wonderment is repeated in 17. 8: " The beast that
thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss,
and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder,
they whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the founda-
tion of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is
not, and shall be present " (17. 8). " Shall be present " is the correct
rendering here.

The rise of the beast from the abyss is no ordinary happening. The
beast, who is also the antichrist, after dying will rise from the dead, and in
him there will be an imitation of the real Christ. Some have thought and
taught that the antichrist is the second beast of Revelation 13. "This is
quite incorrect. The second beast is not slain; he has no death-stroke.
He is not worshipped, but encourages with all the powers at his disposal
the worship of the first beast. Some have claimed as proof of their views
that the Jews would not accept a Gentile king as their Messiah, and there-
fore the first beast, being a Gentile king, would be unacceptable. But there is
nothing in this chapter or any other in Scripture to prove that the first beast is a Gentile and the second, the false prophet, is a Jew. What is
there to hinder the first beast being a Jew by race? Indeed we do not know that the seven kings follow each other by heredity. They may be
elected to the office of kings of Babylon. Ezekiel 21. 25 gives help in this
matter of the beast, who is the antichrist: "And thou, O deadly wounded
wicked one, the prince of Israel, whose day is come, in the time of the iniquity
of the end. " The prince of Israel is the deadly wounded one, which I take
to mean, the beast with the death-stroke.

The first beast is also " the man of sin... the son of perdition, he that
opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is
worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth
as God " (2 Thessalonians 2. 3, 4). The devil's triumph will seem to be
complete with the rise of the beast, but it will be short-lived. He has long
hankered after the worship of humanity. Thus we are told in Revelation 13. 3, 4, " The whole earth... worshipped the dragon, because he gave
his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him?" Devil-worship will be joined with the worship of the beast. The beast is also the king of
the north, which is the king of Babylon, and of the king of the north it says,
" Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers... for he shall magnify
himself above all. But in his place (or office) shall he honour the god of
fortresses: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. And he shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a strange god " (Daniel 11. 87, 38).

Can we doubt at all, in the light of the fact mat the dragon gave to the beast " his power, and his throne, and great authority, " that the strange god he honoured, and by whose power he dealt with the strongest fortresses, is the dragon, the devil? His prowess will be such in dealing with the strongest fortresses that men will say, " Who is able to make war with him?"

Besides his warlike ability there is given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. He opens his mouth and blasphemes God, His name, and them that dwell in heaven, who form God's tabernacle. What a mouth! He will be a spellbinder who will carry away earth's masses by the enormity of his words and blasphemies. It was also given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. It will be a sad day for the Lord's followers. The words of the Lord to His disciples not to fear them who kill the body will have a potency for the saints of those days, and many will endure the killing of the body rather than have the mark of the beast and be cast into Gehenna.

The beast is given authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. All shall worship him, save those whose name has been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. From the text and the marginal reading of the R. V., this verse 8 may be read as in the text that it was the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world (slain in divine purpose and foreordination), and also the writing of the names of the redeemed was from the foundation of the world. Comparing this verse with 17. 8, where the same people are in view, one would be inclined to lean to the thought that the writing was from the foundation of the world. These also include those who are the blessed of Matthew 25 of the living nations who will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (25. 34).

Resistance of evil, but non-resistance of evil-doers, will be the course for saints to pursue. Those who are for captivity or encourage captivity, theirs will be captivity, and those who kill with the sword, they will be killed with the sword. In non-resistance of evil-doers will be seen the patience, that is, the endurance, of the saints.

It may be well that we should tabulate for the quick assimilation of the reader, what we have just outlined as to the first beast of Revelation 13.

I. The term beast (wild beast) is applied to a system of world government. This system bears resemblance to the three world empires which went before, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Grecian. The beast has seven heads and ten horns; these are seven kings and ten kings respectively. The seven kings reign consecutively (in unbroken succession), but the ten kings reign concurrently (all at the same time).

II. The term beast is applied to a man, who is seen as one of the heads (kings) of the system of world government, also called the beast. This king receives a death-wound by a sword, dies, and goes down to the abyss. This king is one of the seven kings who uphold the city of Babylon, one of the first five who had fallen before John saw the vision of Babylon and the beast (Revelation 17).

III. In Revelation 13, the beast, the system of world government, rises from the sea, the sea being indicative of the unstable and turbulent state of humanity. This is also the figure used of the rise of the four
NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

beasts, in Daniel 7. 2-6, which arose from the sea. At the same time the beast, the man, comes up out of the abyss, and becomes the head of the system of world government, which is the revived Roman empire. This revived Roman empire is ruled by the beast and his ten confederate kings, who come to power with him for one hour—three and a half years—(17. 12).

IV. These kings with the beast destroy the great city Babylon, the mother of harlots, which is also rent into three parts by a great earthquake (Revelation 16. 17-19). An end is put to this centre of world-commercio, of political power, and of world idolatry (fornication) and all manner of wickedness. Following this, Jerusalem becomes the centre of world power and idolatry; the most fearful form of idolatry the world has ever known is the worship of the beast and his image. There the beast will enter into the temple and sit there as God claiming the worship of mankind. They will make an image of the beast and set it up as an object of worship in a holy place, which I would understand to be the temple court, where it can be seen.

V. The beast, the man, is the antichrist, the deadly wounded wicked prince of Israel (Ezekiel 21. 25). (There is no reference at all in Scripture to the second beast, of Revelation 13, being wounded. He is the false prophet, not the antichrist). The antichrist is the one who would come in his own name, whom apostate Jewry will receive (John 5. 43). The false prophet speaks in the name of the first beast. The first beast is also the man of sin, the son of perdition, the lawless one, who claims the worship of mankind, as in 2 Thessalonians 2. 3, 4. A few people have thought that the first beast is Judas, the betrayer, because both are called the son of perdition, but we might as well say that Judas is the devil, because the Lord called him Diábolos (devil) in John 6. 70.

The first beast, at his second appearance on earth, is the political head of the revived Roman empire, but he is also the religious head, and, as Roman emperors claimed of old to be Augustus, that is, they were to be venerated with the veneration which is due to God only, even so will the first beast claim the worship of humanity.

Revelation 13. 11-18 gives us a description of the person and work of the second beast. He is not a system; he is a man only. He rises out of the earth. He is of the earth and of the earth he speaks. He has two horns like a lamb, innocent enough in appearance, but he betrays his character when he speaks. He speaks as a dragon. It is said that he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. We are told that the first beast got his authority from the dragon (verse 2), so that the second beast got his authority from the dragon also, and this he exercises before the first beast. He makes the earth-dwellers to worship the first beast, the beast whose death-stroke was healed. The second beast does not claim worship for himself. He is a prophet, though a false one, who represents a god, the first beast, and speaks on his behalf. He seeks to prove the Tightness of his words by his works, for he does great signs, even to bringing down fire out of heaven in the sight of men. In this way he deceives those that dwell on the earth. He also commands that they make an image of the first beast that was killed by the sword and lived. We are not told specifically who the earth dwellers are who make this image, but it must be men of knowledge, the men of science, for what they make will be a very close imitation of a man; so much is this the case, that the second beast will give breath to it, so that the image will both speak and cause all who will not worship the image of the beast to be killed. This second beast causes all the worshippers
of the beast and his image to receive a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead. Those who receive the mark of the beast or the number of his name are marked for divine judgement, to be tormented with fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever (14. 9-11). But those who have not the mark or number of the beast will not be able to buy or to sell. Their suffering may be great, but it will be brief, but that of the beast's worshippers will be for ever. Many may barter present ease for future pain. The Greek word for mark (Charagma) means a mark cut in or impressed, something that is engraved. There will be no washing away the mark. Many ingenious attempts have been made to make the names of various world rulers fit in with the number 666, but there will be no doubt of its true application when the beast is revealed. We are told that this number is the number of man. Man was created on the sixth day of Genesis 1, and there are other sixes in Scripture that are significant.

J. M.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

THE TWO SPIES: THE CROSSING OF JORDAN

(Joshua 2. 1—4. 24).

From Birkenhead. —The company of people that were about to enter the promised land were not the same as those that had passed through the Red Sea: "for ye have not passed this way heretofore" (3. 4). They were instructed to keep a distance from the ark of 2, 000 cubits. This would enable all the people clearly to see the way the LORD wished them to go. We as God's people today have a clear path marked out for us in God's word, which we should keep always before us.

The lesson of the placing of the twelve stones in Gilgal may be arranged in three phases. The stones would always be a memorial of the past, to remind the children of Israel of their failings and of God's faithfulness at all times. It is important to note that they were told to instruct their children in these things, a lesson for parents and workers among the young, constantly to bring spiritual things to the remembrance of children.

The stones would indicate that God was always with Israel and provide definite proof of God's faithfulness in giving them the inheritance which He had promised.

There was one stone for each tribe. This points out that Israel was a united people. So today, separated from all the systems of men God has on the earth a people together for Himself (1 Corinthians 1. 9, 1 Peter 2. 9).

The children of Israel were instructed to sanctify themselves, for the LORD was to do wonders among them. Prior to leaving this scene, the Lord Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth."

K. Home, R. B. Williams.

From Nottingham. —The report of the two spies (2. 24) differs greatly from the earlier report of the ten, whose faith failed. In Joshua 2 we have different men, men of vision and faith. They acknowledged the work to be of the LORD and the victory to be His (2. 24).

We noted that Jericho is mentioned specifically in Joshua 2. 1. The city was the dwelling place of men together; and we thought that God was impressing on the people, by the specific mention of Jericho, that He would overthrow the city as well as take the land. No man-made thing could withstand the works of God. Jericho was an important place (2. 15, 7. 21).
To protect the spies Rahab told a lie (2. 4) which was quite unnecessary, for the God, who was to take the city, was able to preserve His own. We thought that Rahab was wrong to lie (Proverbs 19. 22, Acts 5, Colossians 3. 9), but we should not judge Rahab in the same light as we ought to judge ourselves in this matter. No doubt what little Rahab knew of God she had gleaned from creation and from the news of Israel's experiences (2. 9, 10), and she may not have held a serious view as to lying, which she used in order to save the men of Israel. This, with her general character, makes all the more impressive her inclusion in the line to Messiah. We thought that Rahab was wrong to lie (Proverbs 19. 22, Acts 5, Colossians 3. 9), but we should not judge Rahab in the same light as we ought to judge ourselves in this matter. No doubt what little Rahab knew of God she had gleaned from creation and from the news of Israel's experiences (2. 9, 10), and she may not have held a serious view as to lying, which she used in order to save the men of Israel. This, with her general character, makes all the more impressive her inclusion in the line to Messiah.

The people were instructed to keep two thousand cubits from the ark. Is there any significance in this number? [1].

The waters of Jordan, which speak of death, were held back by divine power. This reminds us that it is a divine work which has destroyed for us the power of death.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —Although Joshua told the spies to view the land as well as Jericho, what befell them in viewing the land is not recorded. For this reason some thought that their journey was restricted to the spying out of Jericho, and that Joshua was wrong in sending them out, because God's instructions for the taking of the city made any information obtained by them unnecessary [2].

Whether or not this was the case, God over-ruled for good, and in that sinful city a Gentile woman put faith in the LORD, and was saved from the judgement of God. In God's grace she was later numbered with the people of God, and her name appears in the genealogy of the Messiah.

The crossing of Jordan is often used as a type of the death of the believer and his entrance into heaven. The objection to this view is that there are no walled cities or giants to be overcome in heaven. Our warfare takes place on earth where we contend earnestly for the Faith, once for all delivered to the saints, and wrestle against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. There is an inheritance that we may enter into here and now, if we are strong and of good courage.

The carrying of the ark of the covenant into the midst of Jordan and out again on the shoulders of the priests speaks of the death and resurrection of Christ. As the Israelites followed the ark and availed themselves of the dry passage thus provided, so the baptized believer is united with Christ by the likeness of His death and resurrection, and is raised to walk in newness of life. We reckon ourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God [3].

The twelve stones placed in the Jordan and the twelve stones set up at Gilgal speak of this two-fold experience of the believer and his testimony to those around.

From Glasgow. —The outstanding ability of Joshua as a military leader catches our imagination at the outset of our study in this portion. He would be greatly encouraged by the exhortation of Moses, "Only be strong and very courageous." The men sent out from Shittim were men...
of the best calibre. To cross Jordan, which was in flood, to reach Jericho secretly, was no mean feat, and one that should encourage us today.

The faith and courage of Rahab triumphed in spite of the king's message to her. The writer to the Hebrews says, "By faith Rahab... received the spies with peace" (Hebrews 11. 31). The fear of the LORD the God of Israel had wrought in her heart and she said, "I know that the LORD hath given you the land. We have heard how the LORD dried up the waters of the Red Sea... For the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above." The whole objective of the spies was obtained in Rahab's home. They had a message now for their leader, Joshua, which would greatly confirm him to advance. We noted with joy Rahab's interest for the salvation of her kinsfolk. They too rested on the promise of deliverance in the house that was marked by the scarlet cord, which cord was also used to the deliverance of the spies. Chapter 3 seems to show that Joshua lost no time in the next move from Shittim to the banks of Jordan. The LORD encouraged Joshua at this important stage in the conquest of the land. We note the words "This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel" (3. 7).

The passage of the people through the Jordan would seem to have a significance for us just as has their passage, as a people, through the Red Sea. The twelve stones in the bed of the river, erected for a testimony, and the twelve stones on the resurrection side of Jordan caused us to think of how we are united with the Lord Jesus Christ in death and resurrection, the power of which worketh in us mightily as we go in to possess our inheritance (Ephesians 1. 19, 20).

R. Shaw.

EXTRACTS

From Belfast. —Jordan marked the end of Israel's wilderness journey, but ours can only be ended by death, or the Rapture. Just as the dividing of the Jordan was God's guarantee that He would drive out the seven peoples (4. 10), we also have an assurance in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8. 32) that blessing will not be withheld. The river Jordan speaks of separation and sanctification. If we are to know the power of God in our lives, eliminating the seven things which God hates (Proverbs 6. 16-19), we must be separated from the world unto God.

W. Dyer.

From Cowdenbeath. —The spies were sent out by Joshua secretly (1. 1). Was Joshua requiring assurance when he did this? If this was so, their report must have cheered him greatly (1. 24).

Joshua spoke of "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth." God was going to dispossess the people of the land and give the land to Israel. It was His to give; it belonged to Him, as did all the earth. The land of Canaan was to be Israel's inheritance. There would have been no way for Israel into the inheritance, if the ark had not gone down into the waters of Jordan. The Jordan speaks of death. The ark went down; the people followed. The death of Christ has brought many blessings within our reach. Some of these are unconditional, some conditional. There is a present inheritance, and we may or may not enter into it (Acts 20. 32).

Twelve stones were taken from the bed of the river by twelve men, and carried over to the other side. Twelve stones were set up by Joshua on the river's bed. The stones taken to the other side would display unmistakable evidence of having been in the water, they were for Israel to see and remember. The twelve stones in the river would be seen by God.

James K. D. Johnston.
From Middlesbrough. —Joshua sent out the two spies to view the land and to report specifically on Jericho, which occupied a place of strategic importance. Israel had been repulsed in their attack from the south when they attempted to take the land in their own strength. This attack was to be from the east.

The Scriptures record Rahab's deception, but she is not commended for it. It is her faith that is commended. She was justified both by faith and by works.

In crossing the Jordan the nation moved in relation to the ark of God. They were not crossing in their own strength.

The twelve stones were set up for a memorial at Gilgal. This place seems to have become an important place from which Joshua and Israel operated in the conquest of the land.

D. T. H.

From Southport. —The sending out of the spies would seem a prudent move, although the same thing failed in the days of Moses. Two good men are better than ten poor ones.

The judgements of God may seem heavy to men in later days, but it is evident that these nations were fearfully wicked (Leviticus 18. 24-30), even though they must have known of the deluge of the world. Rahab and the inhabitants of Jericho knew of the Red Sea crossing, and the destruction of the Amorite kings, and the terror of Jehovah and His people had fallen upon them.

The people were to go after the ark, which was symbolic of the presence of God among Israel. It was also a type of Christ. We as the people of God today seek to follow Him. All authority is His. Ignoring Him and His commandments, men cannot possibly be in the kingdom of God in this dispensation. The repeated statement that the people passed clean over Jordan may remind us that, as to our wilderness journey, all will safely pass over into Immanuel's land (1 Corinthians 15. 57; 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17).

T. R.

From Hamilton, Ont. It is significant that whereas the twelve spies were sent to view the goodness of the land, these two men were sent to ascertain the defences. We as the people of God do well to consider these two important factors, especially since we have been called God's husbandry (tilled land). His husbandry today, as it was in a past day, is worked personally by Himself, and fruit can only be forthcoming as we realize the goodness of the land, and take heed to its defences.

The waters of the Jordan were turned back because of the presence of the God of Jacob (Psalm 114. 3). The presence of God (of which the ark spoke) and the word of God (within the ark) speak preciously of the protection and power afforded the people of God by the Divine Presence and Word (Exodus 33. 14).

C. Meikle, W. Thompson.

From Crowborough. —Rahab believed the word of the God of Israel. God is no respecter of persons, and whosoever takes God at His word will know His blessing.

The crossing of Jordan marks the end of one phase of God's dealings with His people and the beginning of another. Except for two, all the people that passed through the Red Sea had died, and now another generation were to witness God's mighty power to deliver. This mighty act gave to Joshua prestige as a leader, and encouraged the people to respect and follow him. The ark of the covenant, which was a symbol of God's presence,
was to lead the way, but having entered the Jordan was to stand in the midst until all the people had passed over. God's presence was there to ensure a safe crossing. This reminds us of God's promise that His presence shall go with us in every varied circumstance of life.  

*S. Swift.*

From Edinburgh. —Israel crossed the Jordan. Does this speak of death and entrance into the promised land? Does it speak of baptism and entrance into the kingdom? Opinion was divided on this matter, and much was said for both viewpoints. One strong point in favour of baptism lies in the facts that they left stones behind for a memorial, and took stones out and erected them for a memorial. The old life was gone; the new life was before them. They had to go in and possess the land. The dividing of the waters was not like the Red Sea crossing, but was "a great way off." The ark of the Lord went first, but the people reached the other side first. This was done that all the peoples of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty; that they might fear the Lord for ever.  

*John Anderson, Jr.*

From Liverpool. —The spies, it was thought, would go to a place where they would not raise any suspicion. But it is clear that the security measures in operation were very good, for though they went secretly, the king of Jericho was informed very quickly. This would indicate a state of emergency showing that the fear of Israel had gone before them (2. 9-11). We considered the question of Rahab's resorting to lies to shield these men. While we recognize divine over-ruling, we can well understand her action as self-preservation. Again we thought that, in contrast to our own day and position, she would perhaps not have the qualms we would have in such circumstances, for her manner of life would have rendered negative, at least to some extent, the workings of conscience. She lived among a people whose moral standards were low, a nation soon to be dispossessed of their land, as promised by God.

Rahab's faith, manifested in her actions, saved her and her family from judgement that fell upon her city (2. 12-14; 6. 21-25, James 2. 25). She is found in the list of faithful ones (Hebrews 11. 31), and in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1. 5).  

*James Sheldon, AM.*

From Portstewart. —Rahab was told by the spies to bind the scarlet cord in the window, so that her household would be safe when the Israelites attacked the city. This is very similar to the Israelites' deliverance from the angel of death, when they put the blood on the lintel and door posts (Exodus 12. 7). It reminds all saved people of their great deliverance from eternal death through the shedding of the precious blood of Christ at Calvary (Hebrews 9. 22).

It was thought by most of us that in this narrative we have a type of the Christian removing from the life of wandering and disobedience into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Corinthians 1. 9). When we look closely at the wanderings and disobedience of the Israelites, we see in type the experience of many a present-day believer. Many had been living with a mind darkened to the truths of God concerning His will for His together-people. Others were quite aware of the way in which God desired them to go, but were rebellious. In the grace of God there came a time of crisis in their spiritual life, when they left the old wilderness experience and entered into the life of submission and whole-hearted obedience to the commands of God.  

*W. G., T. M.*
From Wigan. —The date of the crossing of Jordan is significant, the tenth day of the first month, the date set for the taking of the passover lamb (Exodus 12. 3). It was exactly forty years from the passover eaten in Egypt to the first passover eaten in the land in the plains of Jericho (Joshua 6. 10). Ere the people crossed, the ark shifted position from before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh (Psalm 80) to a position nearly one thousand yards in the forefront, clearly to be seen by all Israel. Jehovah was in covenant with them as their God, the token of it going before them for their encouragement. The miracle of the cleaving of Jordan, which had no precedent except in the case of the Red Sea crossing (Joshua 4. 23), was proof that God possessed the power to finish that which He had begun (Deuteronomy 6. 23). The constancy of the priests on this occasion bears honourable testimony to their faith and patience, for a considerable time must have elapsed in the passing of the multitude, including thousands of fighting men, and the carrying out of the command concerning the stones. The waters stood in a heap, miraculously fettered by the power of God. The twelve men representing the twelve tribes would be a living testimony to this mighty act.

H. Caldwell.

From Atherton. —As to teaching we may derive from the crossing of Jordan, it was pointed out that while following the Red Sea crossing Israel had a wilderness experience, after the Jordan crossing they had a land experience; and it was suggested that in order to obtain the full teaching behind these two aspects we must keep them strictly separate in our minds.

Some thought that the Jordan crossing was more to be associated with the end of the wilderness journey rather than as an entrance into the land; for it is doubtful whether it would have been necessary for the people to go through Jordan had they not disobeyed God some forty years previously at Kadesh-barnea.

There are at least two aspects to this subject, according as to whether Canaan has to do typically with heaven or the Fellowship. In the former of these the ark of the covenant in the midst of Jordan would remind us of the death of the Lord Jesus, by which He conquered death, enabling, in particular, His people also to be freed from death's power. Following this typology, it was thought that the numbers of the stones, twelve in each case, speak in a definite way of the people of Israel. It was suggested that the stones left in Jordan speak of that which we necessarily leave behind us at death, while the twelve stones taken up out of Jordan speak of that which we take up after death, that is, at our resurrection. Just as the stones were brought up out from Jordan on account of the victory of the ark, so as a result of Christ's victory in His death, what was sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body. Just as Jordan was overflowing at this time (3. 15), so did the billows of God's fiercest wrath overflow the Lord Jesus at Calvary. It was further pointed out that we have perhaps specially brought before us here the burial of the Lord Jesus, a truth which finds an essential place in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 15. 4).

The thoughts expressed above relating to the stones presented a difficulty to some, for it would appear from the text that twelve stones were taken up from Jordan before the others were put in (4. 3, 8, 9).

The primary typical teaching of the stones, according to the other view, was thought to be more of a present nature. They remind of testimony in connexion with the people of God today, and represent experiences of divine grace, to which we can look back for example. It was not thought that the crossing of the Jordan into the land has any clear analogy to our entrance into the Fellowship after baptism.

J. Bullock, D. S. Jones.
I (Nottingham). —I know of no spiritual meaning or typical teaching in the 2,000 cubits. This distance might be about two thirds of a mile, and the space between the ark and the people was to show the people the way they were to take in crossing the Jordan. Jordan typically is the river of death which flows into the Dead Sea; and thus in order to escape death by drowning they had to go the way of the ark. This is the typical teaching, in part, of the crossing of the Jordan. The ark speaks of Christ who has gone before us and He is the way to life and all spiritual and eternal blessings, and apart from Him the way is blocked by death, as the Jordan's flood-waters barred Israel's way to Canaan. An obedient Israel might have entered Canaan without passing through death (in a figure, but remember Jordan does not typify baptism), but disobedient Israel had to end their career in death (figuratively) and rise from Jordan a resurrected people to enter upon a life of victory under Joshua. There can only be victory through death and resurrection in any sense. The LORD through Micah calls upon His people to "remember from Shittim (on the east of Jordan) to Gilgal" (on the west), where the people were circumcised, the flesh destroyed—figuratively—and the reproach of (carnal) Egypt was rolled away (Gilgal, rolling). There they first ate the old corn of the land (which answers to the spiritual blessings of Ephesians 1. 3) by which the warriors were strengthened for coming conquest (Ephesians 6), and there and then the daily manna for pilgrims ceased. These events are replete with typical and profound spiritual lessons. Ever let us also remember from Shittim to Gilgal, that we may know the righteous acts of the LORD (Micah 6. 5). There was no damming of the Jordan for the Lord (our Ark), and thus we sing:—

"See the waves and billows roll,
O'er His sinless spotless soul.
Oh! my soul it was for thee:
Praise Him, praise Him cheerfully."

J. M.

[2] (Kingston). —We should not quickly run to the conclusion that Joshua was wrong in sending the two spies. How would Rahab have been saved had these two messengers of mercy not reached her? I'm sure I do not know, nor do I think any other person does. She was one of God's elect, was she not?—J. M.

[8] (Kingston). —No, the crossing of the Jordan does not speak typically of baptism. —J. M.

[4] (Edinburgh). —No, the crossing of the Jordan speaks of our entering upon our spiritual blessings through the Lord who entered into death (of which Jordan is a type) for us. Jordan does not speak of baptism. Israel were sentenced to death, that is the numbered men of the twelve tribes, and their children who bore their fathers' whoredoms ended their life in the wilderness in death (of which Jordan's flood-waters speak). They rose from the Jordan to enter upon a life of victory. Their previous life had been one of frustration through the disobedience of their fathers. Such was our life prior to being saved. It was, as Peter puts it, a vain manner of life handed down from our fathers. But now through Christ (our Ark) we enter our inheritance to go from victory to victory against our foes who are as yet entrenched in heavenly places. —J. M.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Kingston-on-Thames. —Rahab's lies concerning the whereabouts of the spies seem to have been necessary for their safety. Does James 2. 25 indicate that God overlooks such actions?

Answer. —We cannot offer any opinion as to how Rahab could have acted otherwise. We may be certain, nevertheless, that God is not the Author of the lying of any one. But neither Rahab's lying nor Sarah's lying (Genesis 18. 12-15) shut the door of mercy. Were such sins to shut out mercy from women and men, then our own case would be desperate. Saved people are to speak truth with their neighbours, seeing they are members of each other (Ephesians 4. 25). —J. M.

Question from Glasgow. —If passing through Jordan was God's purpose for all the people, what was lost by the two and a half tribes who settled on the other side and were only represented by their armed men?

Answer. —The numbered men of the two and a half tribes crossed the Jordan with the rest. Their wives and children were left behind. The choice of the two and a half tribes to live on the east of Jordan put themselves and their heirs under tremendous disadvantage as to reaching the place of the Name to keep the feasts of Jehovah, for then the Jordan was in flood. Saints now need to consider the serious matter of where they should live, lest they by distance and other inconveniences put themselves in positions where attendance at the gatherings of God's people is difficult or impossible.

—J. M.

REQUEST

Our co-workers, Dr. A. T. Doodson and Mr. James Martin are, according to our latest information, making progress, but they still need our prayers. Please continue in prayer, with thanksgivings. Elds.

NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

CHAPTER 1

Verses 9, 10: Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day.

Those who refuse to listen to the gospel shall suffer punishment or pay the penalty (Dike, judicial punishment), and this penalty is eternal destruction (Olethros, vengeance, perdition, destruction). This is not annihilation, an end of being, but an eternal or continuous state of punishment. Vain are the hopes of those who persist in refusing to hear and obey the gospel, that sometime in eternal fire of eternal punishment (see Matthew 25. 41, 46) they will cease to be. It is said of the Devil, that he, with the beast and the false prophet, will be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20. 10). Even so will it be with the wicked of the human race (Revelation 20. 14, 15). The punishment of the wicked envisaged in the verses above will begin when the Lord comes back to earth with His angels and His saints, when He will come to be glorified in His saints, and to be
marvelled at in all them that have believed. All who have believed will be with the Lord in that day of judgement and victory. The condition of being with Him is not obedience and faithfulness, but simply one of believing, though those who are with Him in His war against the beast and his ten confederate kings will be such as are "called and chosen and faithful" (Revelation 17. 12-14).

Verses 11, 12: To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfil every desire of goodness and every work of faith, with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The object or end of the prayers of God's servants was that God might count them worthy of their calling. They had been called out to a path of separation, as in 2 Corinthians 6. 14—7. 1, and called into the Fellowship, as in 1 Corinthians 1. 9, which is similar to the call, in 1 Thessalonians 2. 12, "God, who calleth you into His own kingdom and glory." The purpose in their being counted worthy was that there might be fulfilled in them, or brought to completeness, every desire or good pleasure of goodness, toward God (see Hosea 6. 4; Jeremiah 2. 2), and work of faith (1 Thessalonians 1. 3), toward men, with power, that the name of the Lord Jesus might be glorified in them, and they in Him, and this could only be through the grace of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 2

Verses 1, 2: Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present;

The coming of the Lord and our gathering unto Him is what is referred to in 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17. They were not to be quickly shaken in their mind, as to what the apostle taught them, from whatever cause, by spirit, by word, nor by epistle purporting to have been written by the apostle, as that the day of the Lord was then present. Certain things, "which are afterwards stated, must transpire ere that day is present.

Verses 3, 4: Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting Himself forth as God.

The day of the Lord cannot come or be present until two things take place, (1) the falling away or the apostasy, and (2) the revelation of the man of sin, the son of perdition, who is also called the antichrist, and the (wild) beast (1 John 2. 18-22; Revelation 13. 3-8, 12-15, etc.). Mankind, with the exception of the faithful remnant of Israel, and the multitude of faithful witnesses scattered over the earth, and others who will succour them, will apostatize completely from God and will worship the beast and his image when the beast is revealed. The man of sin and the (wild) beast describe the same person who is the object of worship. The second beast of Revelation 13. 11-18 is the false prophet, not the antichrist. As to what some have alleged, that the Jews, the apostate Jews, would not acknowledge a
Gentile to be a messiah, I think it will be found, from Ezekiel 21. 25, that the deadly wounded one (the beast with the death-stroke or deadly wound, of Revelation 13. 3, 12) is the prince of Israel, whose day is come, in the tune of the iniquity of the end. So that all that has been said about the apostate Jews not receiving a Gentile king (indeed we do not know whether the antichrist will be a Jew or a Gentile by race, though he sits on a Gentile throne), and that the second beast who is a Jew is the antichrist (Revelation 13. 11-18), is just so much unsupportable exposition. (On this subject, see my notes on the book of the Revelation.)

The man of sin exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped. This agrees with what is said in Daniel 11. 36-39: "The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods... Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his place (office) shall he honour the god of fortresses: and a god whom his fathers knew not (the Dragon, or Devil—Revelation 13. 4) shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. And he shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a strange god (the Devil). " These words show clearly that the man of sin is the king that shall come, the last of the kings of the north, the antichrist and the (wild) beast.

Some few have taught that the man of sin is Judas Iscariot, because both are called "the son of perdition" (2. 3; John 17. 12). There is as much sense in this, as if we were to say, that because Judas (John 6. 70) and Satan are called diabolos (Devil), therefore Judas and Satan are the same person.

The temple (Naos) of God is that which will yet be built in Jerusalem, probably by the Jews. Though God shall not dwell therein, yet that place is His by right, hence it is called "the temple of God."

Verses 5, 6, 7: Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way.

"Your mind," of verse 2, about these coming events was formed by the teaching of the apostle, as he shows in the above verses: "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? " We have in verses 6 and 7, "that which restraineth," and "one that restraineth," or "the restraining thing," and "the restraining one." Restraineth, Katecho, means here, to hinder or impede. The "restraining thing," is the coming apostasy which must come first. "The restraining one" is the Devil, who will hold back until the season (the condition of time appropriate to the revelation of the man of sin, "when the transgressors are come to the full”—Daniel 8. 23) arrives, which is in the time of the great apostasy.

The old interpretation of verse 8 is quite incorrect, that the one that restrains is the Holy Spirit, whose restraint will be removed when He is taken out of the way at the coming of the Lord for the Church. This interpretation implies that the Holy Spirit will not be in the earth to restrain the uprising tide of lawlessness. Far from the Holy Spirit being taken from the earth, there will be a world-wide out-pouring of the Spirit upon all flesh before the day of the Lord comes, as is shown from Joel 2. 28-32; Acts 2. 16-21. The battle between the Spirit-filled saints of that period and the antichrist or (wild) beast will be vigorous and fierce, as the book
of Revelation shows. The quotation from Joel 2 by Peter in Acts 2 was an application of what that prophet said as to what was transpiring in Jerusalem at Pentecost, but it was by no means the fulfilment of the Joel prophecy. The words of verse 7 above are, in my opinion, better rendered as follows: "Only he who restrains at present, until out of the midst he become. " He who restrains is the Devil, and he who shall become out of the midst is the antichrist or (wild) beast. When he rises out of the midst, then shall be revealed the lawless one. If the one who restrains and is taken out of the way were the Holy Spirit, then the revelation of the beast would take place consequent upon the Lord's coming for the Church, which cannot be supported from Daniel and Revelation.

Verses 8, 9, 10: And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming; even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

When the man of sin or (wild) beast rises from the midst, "out of the sea" (Revelation 13. 1)—"the waters which thou sawest... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17. 15)—"then shall be revealed the lawless one. " Him " the Lord Jesus shall slay " (Analisko, take away or destroy, not slay, as we learn from Revelation 19. 20, where we are told that the beast and the false prophet "were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone") with the breath (Pneuma, spirit or breath) of His mouth. He shall also bring him to nought (Katargeo, to render inactive, make useless: see of death, 2 Timothy 1. 10; of the Devil, Hebrews 2. 14; etc.), not annihilate, by the appearing (Epiphaneia), or brightness, of His coming (Parousia). The coming (Parousia) of the lawless one, the beast or antichrist, is according to the working of Satan, "in every power and signs and wonders of falsehood " (translated literally), all of which will be aided and abetted by the false prophet, who shall work great signs in the sight of the beast, and shall deceive them that dwell on the earth (Revelation 13. 13, 14). Such wonders of falsehood shall be connected with the deceit of unrighteousness, for sin is ever a deceitful thing (Hebrews 3. 13). This deceit shall be to the perishing ones, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. They loved falsehood rather than truth, hence they were deceived, and they loved to be deceived. What a sad story! But is it different in kind from what exists today? Nay verily: the deceit may be different in measure, for deceit will then have reached its high water-mark, but it is not different in kind from the many forms of deceit practised now.

J. M.