

THE ASSEMBLY IN THE BIBLE (4)

—H. L. Heijkoop

We have seen that the body is never a cripple here on earth. It is complete as we also find in Ephesians 4, "Holding the truth in love, we may grow up to Him in all things, Who is the Head, the Christ: from Whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love" (vs. 15-16). The body is thus well put together and connected by all the joints that supply its needs; here on earth, it is already complete. In Colossians 2 we find the same thing, "... the Head, from Whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God" (v. 19).

I would like to now look briefly at another side of this truth found in Ephesians 1. As we learned already, the Word of God speaks in several places about the body of Christ, mainly in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 1, and a little in Colossians 2. Every one of these places relates something different about Christ and the Assembly. In Ephesians 1, we are presented with the body that belongs to the Head. There we see the body of which Christ is the Head, and our attention is drawn to the glory of that body, which receives Christ as Head for a gift. But in Colossians 1 and 2 the Head and His glory are presented to us. On the other hand, in Romans 12, our attention is drawn to the fact that every member of the body is joined to the other members. We are members of each other. My one hand is not to be separated from the other one, nor from my feet. That is why we read here that "we being many, are one body in Christ" (v. 5). In 1 Corinthians 12 we are also seen as members of the body. My hand is just as much a part of my body as my eye. We are all members of the one body; here the essence is the relationship of the individual to the whole body.

So *Romans* discusses the relationship among believers as members of each other. We have to do with each other. My hand cannot say to my foot, I don't need you. They are connected to each other. The Holy Spirit, dwelling in each one of us, has joined us together. The accent here is that we are members of the body of Christ and therefore members of each other. In *1 Corinthians 12*, the issue is that we are not merely separate hands or feet but parts of one body which consists of millions of such parts. There, it considers our relationship to the entire body, not to each member in particular. In *Colossians*, the Head is presented to us in His glory to show what a wonderful Head the Assembly possesses. Finally, *Ephesians* unfolds the glory of the body. Thereby we may learn to see the marvellous place this body occupies and the precious privileges it possesses, so as to enable us to better appreciate the glory of the Assembly's position and the infinite greatness of the grace which made us members of this body.

In connection with this, one often hears the question, "How come we receive these blessings, and the believers in the Old Testament don't? Are we better than such men as Abraham, David or Elijah, or are we more faithful than a John the Baptist?" Absolutely not! John the Baptist was, according to the Lord's own words, the greatest among those born of women. Yet, the least one in the kingdom of the heavens would be greater than he (Mt. 11:11). Why then have we received such a glorious place rather than, for instance, the believers during the Millennium? They will sin much less than we because the devil will no longer be present to deceive them. Their part here on earth and in eternity may be ever so blessed but they will not, as we, be brought into the house of the Father, nor will they be fully united with the Lord Jesus. They will not, as we, share with Him all that He possesses. But what could be the cause of this?

God's Word makes this abundantly clear. If we look back to Golgotha, we see the Lord Jesus hanging on the cross, and we hear Him, the beloved of the Father, call: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He did not get an answer and we know why. It was because He carried my sins and was made sin for me. Therefore, God could not answer Him; He had to undergo the judgment. Men mocked Him, "Let be; let us see if Elias comes to save Him (Mt. 27:49); He trusted upon God; let Him save Him now if He will have Him" (v. 43). And when God forsook Him, it seemed to be a confirmation of their thoughts: "See, we were right. God is on our side. He calls to God. Once He said, I knew that Thou always hearest Me (John 11:42); but now we see that God, does not hear Him. He is a liar. God is on our side and is opposing Him!"

We know this was not so. But it appeared that way to the world, and the enemies of the Lord appealed to this. Let us read what they said and the cry of the Lord recorded prophetically in Psalm 22 and 69. God could have given immediate proof that they were wrong, but what would have happened if God had answered the Lord at that moment? His enemies would have been destroyed and the entire world would have perished. It would have meant judgment over His enemies, but it was God's wish to save us!

God could have sent the Lord Jesus to the earth as little as a month after His death, to take possession of His kingdom, just as He once will come down to destroy the Roman Empire, the King of the North, and Russia, and to judge the nations. Yes, then every knee will bow before Him and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. Then everyone will see that God has chosen Christ's side rather than the side of the Jews or the Romans. "I have anointed My King upon Zion" (Ps. 2).

We know why God still stays this time. He still desires that many will be saved so that they may receive this wonderful position and these glorious blessings. Therefore, the world can still say, "What have we to do with Him!" They can still abuse the name of the Lord. But we know the reality of things and that the day will come in which every knee will bow before Him. Even those who murdered Him will have to bow before Him. Revelation 1:7 says, "Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they which have pierced Him."

Ultimately that will even be true for Herod and the Roman governor, Pilate, as well as for Annas and Caiaphas and the soldiers who mocked Him and hit Him, when they will stand before the Great White Throne and hear their judgment out of His mouth.

But also during this time, between the death of the Lord upon the cross and His coming to the earth, God wants to have a testimony here on earth to the fact that He has chosen the side of the Lord Jesus. And, since God has put the Lord Jesus as Head over all things and has put all things under His feet, He wants to show something of this upon the earth even today. It is His desire that every knee shall bow before Him and all tongue shall confess that He is Lord. The Assembly has to give testimony of this today.

This is God's purpose in still leaving the Assembly on earth. But why does He give those who now believe in the Lord Jesus this wonderful position? It is because they have accepted the Lord Jesus in the time of His rejection, in the time that He has no place here upon the earth. It is as the Apostle says in Romans 8:17, we will be glorified with Him if we also suffer with Him. If we share with Him in His rejection, we will also rule with Him. If we are truly baptized unto His death, having been buried with Him, that is, if we have really taken up the place of death and rejection (to say it in metaphorically: if we have made ourselves one with Him as He was hanging upon the cross rejected by the entire world), we will share with Him the place in glory. That is why we find here this wonderful truth that we will receive glorious blessings, whereas the Old-Testament saints will not receive them, neither will the believers after the rapture.

I doubt that we consider that we did a good work by accepting the Lord Jesus in faith. We all will thank God for all eternity that He gave us the opportunity to bend our knees for the Lord so as to be saved for eternity. We will thank Him eternally that *He* opened our eyes to our lost condition and that then, out of infinite grace, we were allowed to accept the Lord Jesus as our Lord and Saviour so that we might be saved.

But God says to each sinner who comes to Him and confesses his sins and guilt, "That is your first good word; now you speak the truth, now I agree with you." This saying holds true for everyone who accepts the Lord Jesus, "Now you do a good deed. You accepted Him during the time that He is rejected by the world. Your reward for this is that you will share with Him all that He has received, all His blessings." That is the reason why we have received this glorious position and these wonderful blessings, things the Old-Testament saints have not received.

But the other side is that God wants to have a testimony on earth to the fact that His Son is Lord, a testimony of *His* rights. When He was born, all that man had for Him was a manger. During His life upon earth, He had to say that He lacked a place to put down His head. On the cross He hung between heaven and earth — earth rejected Him and heaven was closed for Him. Men said, "Return to the place You came from, we don't want You here. Didn't You Yourself say that You are not of this world? We do not wish You as King over us." That is why they raised Him on the cross. Away with Him! For Him, there was no place to put His foot upon. Yet God desires Him to be acknowledged here on earth *today*. God has put all things under His feet, heaven and earth, the entire universe; but only by judgment will He take actual possession of all this. And yet, God wants to have a testimony of this on earth today. The world may have rejected Him, yet He is on earth. He is here in the Assembly. Where His body is, there is Christ too. In Ephesians 2 we find the other conclusion: Christ is in heaven and so we are there too. Perhaps we can clarify this with an example. I am where my head is. But where my body is, there I am too. If standing at the window, I stick my head outside, I am outside because my head is no longer in the house. But I may just as well say that I am in the house since my body is inside.

So Christ (the Head) is in heaven. Then, *the* Christ, that is *Christ and the Assembly*, is in heaven since the Head is there. But we also see Christ on earth. He has a place here since His body is here. That is the testimony that God wants to see and for which we have received this place of complete union with Christ. We are His body here on earth so that He is here.

But then we also realize that it is God's purpose that Christ and His rights are seen here on earth in His body. God desires that everyone here on earth sees that He has chosen Christ's side and that everyone sees what rights Christ possesses and what the glory of His Person is. All this must be seen in His body.

What a responsibility that gives us! That responsibility would be self-evident if we really considered the wonderful privileges which we have received. But we always need to be reminded that we have to behave ourselves and to live in agreement with the blessings and the position which we have received. The Lord wants us to live in such a manner. Christ is on earth in His body, isn't He? We are the body of Christ and the world ought to be able to see Christ in us. In a different context, it says in 2 Corinthians 3 that we are a letter of Christ which is read by all men. The world can see Christ in us if we truly show ourselves to be Christians. In the Assembly, in the collective life of the believers, the world ought to be able to see Him, since the Assembly is the body of Christ.

When believers come together as the body of Christ, it is obvious that the Lord Jesus is the only One Who has authority. He is not the *Lord* but the *Head* of the body. He is Lord of every individual, but He is the Head of the Assembly. The natural body is obviously directed by the head. The brains in my head direct, by means of the nervous system, every thing in my body, and others can notice this. Similarly, it should be evident in the way that believers live together, in the way they come together, that they are all being led by their glorified Lord in heaven, that He is the Head from Whom they expect everything and with Whom they are connected. He is the One "from Whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love" (Eph. 4:16). This is what God wants to see in the Assembly here on earth.

Doesn't it strike you as strange that so frequently there is spiritual poverty and hunger among believers? Isn't it alarming that one often sees underfed children of God, who are not receiving much food from the Word of God even though everything has been so wonderfully prepared by God and even though we can receive everything we need through the Head. Doesn't our poverty result from the fact that we do not *practice* the reality that the Lord Jesus is our Head?

Let us reread these words in Ephesians 4: "... from Whom the whole body, fitted together." Is the body of Christ here on earth fitted together? Yes, in Christ it is; we are joined together by the Holy Spirit. But is this really practiced? "Connected by every joint of supply." Do I as a member of the body behave myself and occupy the place that the Lord has appointed for me? Do all believers really occupy the places given them by the Lord? Alas, we know it is not so. But that is how the Assembly ought to live, so that she "according to the working in its measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love."

What a pity that in actual practice, we realize so little of what we have received in Christ: that we have been so united to Him and, by the Holy Spirit, have been so joined to each other. Would that we thought more of the wonderful results of this, not just for eternity but also for this time. Would that we really took possession of the things we have received! If we did, wouldn't we grow up in all things to Him Who is the Head, as we see it in Ephesians 4 and as we read in Colossians 2, "from Whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God"? What a testimony to the Lord Jesus that would be! How it would satisfy the heart of God if this unity of the body were practically seen on earth because we all behaved as members of this one body! If we only were constantly aware that we, true believers, are members of this one body, that we are connected by the Holy Spirit with each other and with Christ so that we together constitute His body and that we ought to expect everything from Him! If we only would give Him the liberty to work as He desires, and subject ourselves as body of Christ to His directing, wouldn't then all that we receive be perfect? Wouldn't we receive all that He, according to the riches of His grace wants to give?

Here we see our responsibility. I would like to say both to myself and to all of us, Let us take a serious look at ourselves in the light of our wonderful blessings which we have seen here. While thinking of the way in which God gave them to us, making us members of the one body of Christ, let us search our true condition. He gave all these glorious blessings to this body; they will be ours for all eternity. Let us delight in these precious truths so that our hearts may be strengthened and we may understand more of it. Let us, in dependence upon the Lord, try to turn the place and the privileges He has given us, into a practical reality. May the Lord grant us this.

QUOTE

Men easily make religious societies, and call them churches. But I do not hesitate to say that it were easier to make heaven and earth than to make the church of God. But man's presumption has risen to such a height that the highest and holiest things of God are made the work (not to say the sport) of human hands, because they have practically divorced the church from Christ. They treat the subject as optional and external, instead of owning that it is the especial field of the

deepest and purest operations of the Spirit, the dearest object of the affections and the witness of the chief glories of Christ. The ordering of the church and the ways of God therein bring out the very depths and heights of divine wisdom and grace.

W. K.

THE OFFERINGS

—Lectures by H. L. Heijkoop

Genesis 3 and 5:1-3

It is in my heart to express a few thoughts on the offerings. The offerings speak to us of the Lord Jesus. The meat-offering (or the oblation, as-it is also called) speaks of His life on earth, that is to say: of His Person. The bloody sacrifices on the other hand speak of His work upon the cross. Most of the offerings are bloody sacrifices and it is clear that they present His work in the first place. Yet, it is evident from God's giving the oblation to us that the work of Christ derives its great value from the Person of the Lord, Who has finished the work.

In 1 Peter 1:20 the Lord Jesus is revealed to us as a Lamb known before the foundation of the world. This means: from before man's creation, God thought of the death of the Lord Jesus. Then in reading Revelation 5, we see that the work of the Lord Jesus also fills the thoughts of them who will in future be in heaven. Thus, even before time began, God's eye was fixed on the cross of Golgotha and in all eternity to be, the gaze of all will return to the cross. The cross of the Lord Jesus is therefore the center of the entire human history. This is clear from the Word of God. From the beginning the cross is presented to us, although at first not in all clarity, for that could not be as long as the Lord Jesus had not come to earth. It was, however, presented in types which are now clear to us, since we have the entire Word of God.

If we want to study a particular truth from the Word of God, it is always good to start at the very beginning, for God has a special method of instruction. In the Word, we never find systematic doctrinal instructions; we do not find one sentence, one passage, which presents a truth in its entirety. That would simply be beyond our grasp, all the more so when the subject is the cross. The simple fact itself that the cross is the center of human history shows that its significance is of such proportion that it could not possibly be described in a few words or presented in a single type. That is why God gives every time again a different view, each one introducing some new aspect. Often these views repeat what we know already, so that we may understand things well, but every time something new is added. Even believers of the old dispensation were able to see a little of it, perhaps even more than we think. Four thousand years before the work on the cross, their faith was able to see something of it. If God follows this order in presenting His thoughts, it is necessary that we do the same if we are to understand His thoughts well.

Immediately the question arises: Why was the work of the Lord Jesus necessary and what was God's purpose with it? I suppose that we all know Romans 5:12 and what follows there, as well as 1 Corinthians 15:45 and the following verses. There the Lord Jesus is called the second man, the last Adam. Does that mean that there were only two men? Millions of people lived between the first man and the Lord Jesus when He appeared on earth. Yet God calls Him the second man. Genesis 5 explains that name. In verse 3 we read that Adam "begot a son in his likeness, after his image," which means that all descendants of Adam are in his likeness and after his image. And what was Adam when that son was born? That we saw in chapter 3 (I want to return to that a little later), he begot his first son after he had committed that deed of disobedience, after he had become a *sinner*.

At the coming of the Lord Jesus, a new man appeared on earth. True, He was born of a woman, completely man, a son of a human being, which is more than could be said of Adam; but He did not have Adam's sinful nature. He was the seed of the woman but not the seed of the man. This made Him to be truly man, and yet He did not belong to the generation of the first Adam. He was the second man, come from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47).

The Lord Jesus has finished the work on the cross. Just as Adam committed one deed of disobedience of which the results extend themselves to all his descendants, so the Lord Jesus has accomplished one great deed of obedience. He "became obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross." After this He became the Head of a new generation: of those who are connected with Him, in *His* image and after *His* likeness. The Word of God says that every one who belongs to the Lord is created in Him. He has *His* life as life, His life as the risen One from among the dead. Thus all (that is to say, all who belong to Him) are after His likeness.

God only sees two men: the first Adam with all his descendants, and the second Man with all who belong to *His* generation. There is no third generation. Therefore, He is called the last Adam. We could perhaps call Him the second Adam, but the Word calls Him the *second Man* and the *last Adam*, for there cannot be a third Adam.

But why this new generation? Had not God created man good? We know that Adam did not know evil, that he lived in the garden of Eden which was created for him, everything there was perfect. But we read that the serpent deceived Eve. She ate from the only tree from which she was not allowed to eat. So did Adam. When we think of this, we say: He has sinned. And that is true. Adam has transgressed God's commandment. But there was something much more serious than that. God had made man, as head of the creation, in His image and after His likeness. Certainly, animals were living souls, but Adam had been created in a different way. God had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and "man became a living soul." Thus man was set above the animals. But beside this God had given him a spirit which enabled him to have a relationship with God. God is a Spirit and only he who has a spirit can enter into a relationship with Him. God had blessed man above the entire creation and had given him a position as His representative on earth, a position no angel held. What a reason for man to be thankful to his Creator!

Adam was allowed to do anything except for one thing. Of all trees he was allowed to eat except from one. It was necessary that he would show his subjection to God. We have read what happened. The serpent approached Eve and tried to whisper suspicion against God into her ear. She began to speak to the serpent, and as soon as man does this, he is lost. We should never listen to Satan. Eve listened and we see the result. First she says something that is not true. She quotes God as having said: "ye shall not touch it," but God had never said this. The name of God she uses shows us that Satan had found an entrance with her.

In the first chapter it is God, Elohim, which means God in His absolute divinity. There He is seen as the Great Creator. In the second chapter it is Jehovah Elohim, the Lord God. Jehovah, the Lord, is the name of God in His relationship to man; thus in chapter 2, in which God enters into this relationship with man, we find the name Jehovah Elohim. And so it is in chapter 3. But the serpent speaks only about God, Elohim, and Eve does the same. The serpent does not want to accept that God has entered into a special relationship with man, and Eve forgets this as well. When the enemy whispers thoughts of suspicion against God into our ears, man forgets his relationship with God. Once he forgets this, he forgets God's goodness and love.

What was the result? God had said, "in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt certainly die." The serpent says, "That is not true," which means so much as: God is a liar. And then he continues, "in the day ye eat of it... ye will be as God." This means: God has forbidden you that which would have given you the highest place. You are the highest earthly creature, aren't you? You should have the right to eat of everything, but God does not want this, for then you would be like Him. Eve believes this and eats of the fruit. That she becomes a sinner is not the most terrible thing, terrible as it may be, but rather the fact that she robs God of His honour. She has believed that God lied, that He did not love them, that He was not righteous, that He was not holy. Such was the state of affairs at that moment.

God could have proven His word to be true. If Adam and Eve would have died immediately, it would have been proof of His righteousness and holiness, that He cannot have any association with sin. But forever the question would have remained: Is God love? Does God love men? Nor would the love of God have found satisfaction. And so, God did not immediately execute the judgment. Certainly, He gave a shadow of it, but the actual judgment was not executed at that time. Adam lived for another nine hundred years and people who from the beginning did not believe in God have not received their final judgment even after six thousand years; another thousand years and some will pass by before they will be judged. It seemed as if Satan was right. And here we have what had to be accomplished by the work on the cross. *Not only had the Lord Jesus to carry our sins so that we would not come into judgment, but God had to be given back that what was taken from Him.* That is why the Lord Jesus through the Spirit of prophecy exclaims in the Psalms: "I restored that which I took not away" (Ps. 69:4).

This was the first point. But God wished to add to this the salvation of men. Besides, He had an even higher purpose in view. He did not want to restore man merely to the position in which He had placed Him before; God never does things this way. When man has spoiled something, His grace intervenes, but never to re-establish man into the old condition. God wants to give something even better. So, after the Lord Jesus had accomplished the work of the cross, He did not re-establish us in the garden of Eden, but He prepared for us the paradise of God, not an eternal dwelling upon earth, but the eternal house of the Father, a place which had not been man's portion in the beginning. God had prepared the earth for man. But as far as the generation of the last Adam is concerned, their place is in heaven and we will see that this is connected with the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

To be cont'd

QUOTE

"Thou art My Son: today have I begotten Thee" (Heb. 1:5). Scripture speaks of Jesus as Son in two different aspects: as Son of God, born in the world, and Son according to the eternal relationship. This verse refers to the first of these: Jesus is seen here not in His glory as essentially divine, but in His glory as born Son. Nevertheless it is very important to consider the glory of Jesus as Son of God before His incarnation; for we could not speak of the love of God as we do, if the One He gave us was not His Son.

J. N. D.

JOSHUA AND THE LAND

J. van Dijk

Joshua took the whole land, according to all that Jehovah had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions, by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

(Joshua 11:23)

And Jehovah gave to Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers; and they took possession of it, and dwelt in it. And Jehovah gave them rest round about according to all that He had sworn unto their fathers; and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them: Jehovah gave all their enemies into their hand. There failed nothing of all the good things that Jehovah had spoken to the house of Israel: all came to pass.

(Joshua 21:43-45)

These two passages contain some interesting instructions for all Christians. We will look at them, both in their application to Israel and in their typical application to every believer of today.

Someone disdainfully wrote, "These passages are accepted literally, without reservations, by all except those 'prophetic scholars' who remain beguiled by notions of a future restoration of natural Jewry to a land supposedly never yet completely given or possessed." This interesting remark prompted this study; not to enter into controversy but because there are some good lessons contained in the subject matter.

We first must turn to the Word of God to see whether or not the land was completely possessed. Peter has warned us that the scope of no prophecy of Scripture is had from its own particular interpretation (2 Pet. 1:20). We do not have to go beyond the book of Joshua itself to get more light on the two passages before us. We read:

"Joshua was old, advanced in age, and Jehovah said to him, Thou art old, advanced in age, and there remaineth yet very much land to take possession of. This is the land that remaineth..." (Joshua 13:1-2). Then follow three long verses describing the land that still remained to be taken. Let us note that God Himself was speaking here and that these words were spoken when Joshua was very old.

We also read in Joshua 13:13 that the Geshurites were not dispossessed. In 2 Samuel 13:13 we see that Absalom fled to Geshur, the king of Geshur being a relative from his mother's side. In Joshua 15:63 we read that the Jebusites were not dispossessed and 2 Samuel 5:6 tells us that David made war against them. 2 Samuel 16:10 records that the Canaanites still dwelt at Gezer, and 1 Kings 9:16 informs us that Pharaoh took Gezer and slew the Canaanites and gave the city as dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife. Joshua 17:11-13 presents a list of villages whose inhabitants had not been removed, in chapter 18:3, Joshua admonishes the people about their slackness in taking possession of the land which God *has given them*. Finally there are interesting verses in the 23rd chapter, particularly vs. 1-3, 7, 13 and 14.

To end all controversy on the matter Judges 1 records the wars of Israel to take possession of the remaining land *after the death of Joshua*. Besides this, there are the numerous remarks throughout Judges which speak of the several villages and their inhabitants who had not been dispossessed. So God's factual records show us that all the land was not possessed in Joshua's day in spite of the previously quoted remark that the two quoted passages which began this study are accepted literally, *without reservations*, by all except those 'prophetic scholars'. As we have seen, God Himself has certainly shown us that some "reservations" are appropriate when seeking to understand the significance of our introductory verses.

How can we explain the seeming contradiction in the verses we have before us? We can adopt several attitudes. Some reader might say, "Well, there you are. The Bible is written by men and it is not more than a record book with religious

overtone. You have to glean for yourself the worthwhile from the useless. You have nicely proven why I say God's Word is in the Bible but that the Bible is not God's Word." However, if this is your reaction, then the Bible will not do you any good. You are now its judge, but someday God, its Author, will judge you on the basis of this very Book. Yours is the infidel's attitude.

The attitude of one who really loves God and His Word will be considerably different. There will be a quiet prayer, "Lord, Thou doest not make mistakes even when things appear to be contradictory. Lord, Thou no doubt hast a worthwhile lesson contained in this. In Thy grace, show me what Thou hast to say to me." This is the only valid approach.

I recall reading of an incident that occurred shortly after the liberation of Holland in 1945. The Queen was in southern Holland which had been liberated in the fall of 1944. Finally the great day came and the German command in the Netherlands surrendered. Everywhere it was announced, "Holland is free. No longer are the Germans in control." These were true reports and yet when an officer of the Queen was sent from the South to Amsterdam to place a wreath on behalf of the Queen at a monument in the Capital, he had to be very careful since much of the countryside was still entirely controlled by German army units in possession of all their equipment and capable of defending themselves and even attacking anyone traversing that part of the country. Of course we all understand such a condition. We realize that, although the main allied units had done *their* duty and conquered the main enemy forces, the follow up units had such a formidable job that here and there they had not as yet been able to complete their task. If they had not been diligent, many calamities and much unrest would have been the result long afterwards.

This is exactly what Israel experienced in the land of Canaan. God had been with them in the main battles. He had given the enemy kings and their armies into the hands of Joshua. The strength of the enemy was completely broken. Joshua had been faithful and God had done for him all that He had promised. But a task remained to be done by each tribe, by each family. They had to go and deal with the enemy pockets of resistance that remained. They failed in this work. All the kings controlling the land had been defeated. All that was left to be done was to go and take possession. But the Israelites were tired of fighting and of being harsh on the inhabitants of the land, so they did not drive out the inhabitants. As a result, the inhabitants eventually regained their strength and were able to assert themselves and to hinder the Israelites from taking possession of certain pockets and of certain tracts of land, even when they later wanted to do so. The people of Israel never came as far as Damascus during the days of Joshua and that was far short of stretching towards the Euphrates, which, according to Genesis 15, Deuteronomy 11:24 and Joshua 1:4, was to be the limit of their possessions.

All this may be very interesting but we have found very little spiritual profit so far. But what we have observed will enable us to understand why many serious Bible students say that since Israel has never yet possessed the entire land. In a following issue we will look into the spiritual significance of these passages for those who have come with confession of sins to Christ.

To be cont'd