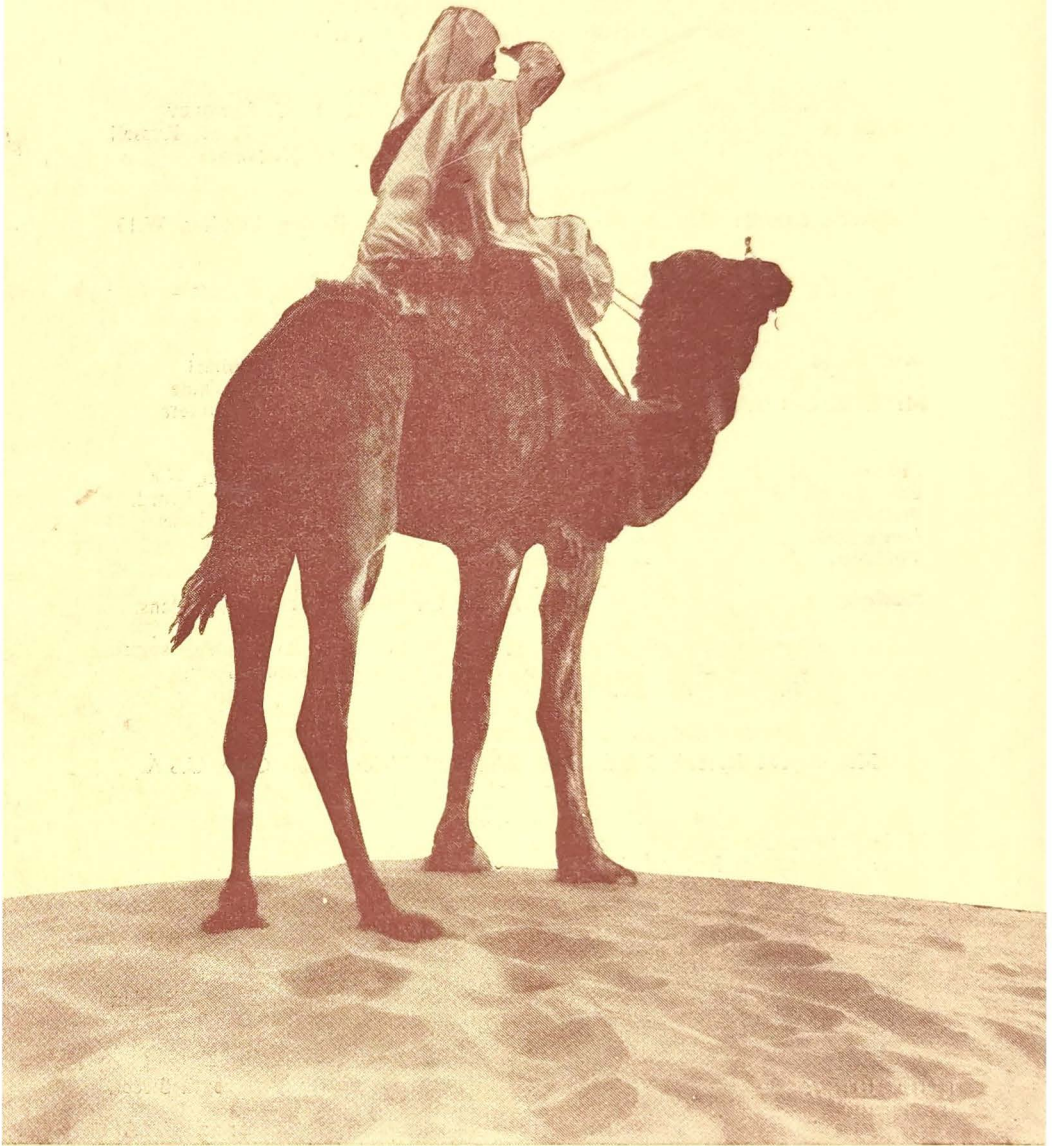


A Thirsty Land



Algiers Mission Band

No. 134.

JUNE, 1961.

ALGIERS MISSION BAND

Founded in 1888 by Miss I. Lilius Trotter

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A THIRSTY LAND

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MARCH TO MAY

NO spectacular events in the missionary work have marked these months—though in other respects Algeria has been only too much in the news. However, we can note again with thankfulness that the work we are here for goes on—hindered sometimes, but not stopped; and you will see, in what you read now, that there are still many doors open to preachers of the Gospel.

Easter was a happy time at Dar Naama. On Sunday and Monday, morning and afternoon, Bible Studies for men and women, in Arabic, were given by Mr. Ewing—a missionary of the North Africa Mission. His addresses were aimed at showing the necessity and the possibility for a Christian of growth in spiritual life in Grace and in the knowledge of the Saviour. There was deep attention in those who heard as he expounded to them the meaning of “THE LAMB OF GOD” and later dwelt on what is conveyed of progress and advance in St. Paul’s words to the church of Philippi (Phil. 3 : 8-14). These meetings are held to bring together the native Christians or serious inquirers, and lead them on from the first steps of conviction and belief to further depths of Faith and Love and Obedience until we all come “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”. (Eph. 4 : 12, 13).

Another similar course of studies is planned for July 14th and 16th in Algiers, when Mr. Marsh will be the leader. We pray that the Lord may use this also as a means of blessing to some of those who are truly believers, but have little opportunity in their isolated life for receiving further instruction, and have little chance of Christian fellowship.

This year several of our missionaries will be away from Algeria by the time this reaches you. Mr. and Mrs. Waine and their family will be on furlough for several months from the end of June. Miss Nash as well as Miss Clark and Miss Powell are all going on furlough before the end of this month : and Mlle. Chollet will be going on leave to spend the summer in Switzerland about the middle of June. Some of you will be hoping for opportunities to see, and hear some of these friends; and we hope that may be possible—but above all we hope that there may be

times of rest and refreshment for each of them. They certainly need it.

In the matter of Literature production, patience seems the most necessary of virtues: but now that we have, at long last, our Arabic Chorus book and tune book, and a tract on "Sacrifice" to be received shortly from the printer, and a new edition in French of "The most beautiful Story in the World" published (with the addition of coloured Bible pictures), we think again with longing of the Colloquial Arabic Edition of the New Testament which has been so long on the way and venture to hope that this year may see its completion, though printing, proof-reading, binding, etc. may yet take some time. Literacy is increasing on the whole among the Arabs in this country, and we long to put into their hands in the language of their speech, this complete translation of the New Testament.

V. WOOD.

VISIT TO BOU-SAADA

WE were buying picture postcards in the desert oasis of Bou-Saada when I noticed the translation of the Arabic name—the City of Happiness or Good Fortune. No doubt the many tourists who visited the town before the war in Algeria hoped to find this, but the two missionaries who arrived that day were seeking souls for Jesus Christ and hoping to contact families who once heard the Message of the Cross regularly from the lips of those who have now finished their course and have entered into the joy of their Lord.

Soon after our arrival we went down to the river to eat our picnic lunch. There was very little water and, although only April, the sun beat down fiercely. I sat in the shade upon an old garden wall that fringed the river bed. "Don't sit there," said my experienced companion, "that is a likely hiding place for scorpions." I rose in haste, and we finally sat on rocks in the middle of the river bed to eat our lunch, accompanied by the creaking of a thousand froggy voices. As we sat we prayed for the direction of the Good Shepherd in our visits.

Near the river was a large house, where Mlle. Chollet had often visited a shut-in Muslim woman. We knocked at the door. There was no reply so we opened it and went along a narrow passage and found ourselves in a lovely terraced garden. Along one side were four doors and, half fearfully in case of a dog being there, I knocked at the middle one. I aroused a young girl in her twenties, apparently the daughter-in-law of the one we thought to visit. On hearing who we were she invited us into one of the cool spacious rooms. Soon we were drinking mint tea and feeling at ease as she told us the family news. It wasn't long before we had the opportunity to introduce her to the message of God's redeeming love. She listened so attentively. She could read a little in French, so we left her a simple S.G.M. booklet to remind her of our message. Thus began two days of visits to both Jewish and Arab families.

As we knocked at the various doors and announced our arrival, there was a cry of wonderment and a joyous reception for Mlle. Chollet

whom they had not seen for five years. Everywhere they asked after Mlle. Butticz, affectionately known as Saida, and Miss McIlroy, and were profoundly moved to hear that they were no longer in this world. However, it was evident that these servants of God although dead yet speak. Everyone told us of the affection and help they had received, and of the Christian message they had heard and remembered. It was never long before questions were being asked upon this Message and



Journeying in the desert, Easter, 1949 :—Visiting Roumana, a village outside Bou-Saada. Nowadays, there is a road fit for driving on—no need of donkeys or camels. The riders on the donkeys in this picture are Mlle. Butticz and Mlle. Chollet; Mlle. Felix, who was paying them a visit, is on the camel. Mlle. Butticz is wearing a dark-coloured coat.

we were able to open the Bible in Arabic or French to read to them. One dear elderly Arab woman explained beautifully the meaning of Christ's death. I said, "Do you believe on Him?" "Yes," she said, "I do. Many years ago Miss McIlroy spent a whole afternoon teaching me and then at night the Lord appeared to me in a dream, and I trusted in Him."

The second day we stood surveying what had once been the Mission House, but now in a deplorable state—the garden neglected and the wall broken down. Outside the wall were market stalls and seeing us meditating on the sad picture, the men in the market recognized Mlle. Chollet and greeted us with much enthusiasm and spoke of all they had heard as boys through the consecrated witness of the women who had occupied that house. Many asked for literature to take home for their children who could now read as a result of the scholarisation of recent years.

As in most towns the population has almost doubled with the

resettlement of isolated groups within the protection of the town boundaries. As we looked at the new homes, some made of mud bricks and others of more substantial modern materials, and the colonies of nomads in their tents on the outskirts of the town, we wondered how long it would be before some messenger of the Gospel would come to stay more permanently and continue the work begun. So many said to us "Come and live here and teach us." All we could propose was a further and



Three sisters : Sadis, Kheira and their little invalid sister.

longer visit in the autumn, if the Lord will. Two families offered us accommodation.

Much change had come into the lives of those we visited and especially through the present strife. In all of nine homes visited there were sad tales of those who had been killed, put in prison, or disappeared. One thing remains unchanged with them—the Word of God. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away," said the Lord Jesus. Others have laboured to sow it in their hearts, but I came away challenged by the thought "Where are the reapers whom God calls to enter into their labours?"

A. P. MEE.

RE-VISITING BOU-SAADA

IT was in 1957 that Mademoiselle Butticaz and I last visited Bou-Saada together. Since then very little news had reached us from our friends there. So when we heard that permission was being given for tourists to visit the town at Easter, it became clear to us that we should go there too.

On Thursday, April 20th, I left Sétif in my 2CV car for Bordj-bou-Arréridj, where Miss Mee was to join me; and on the following day

we set out on the road to Bou-Saada, which we reached soon after 10 a.m. Our first visit was to an Israelite from whom we wished to get a little information : then, in the afternoon we went to visit some Arab friends.

In the first house we found the daughter-in-law of the woman we were seeking. She was a young married woman, from the Aurès originally; she seemed very friendly, and listened eagerly when we gave her a Gospel message. She told us that her mother-in-law had spoken to her of "Saida" and of the Gospel.



A young bride, F., niece of R.

In the second house we found dear D.B. (who had been formerly in Miss Nash's classes) and her eldest daughter. What a reception we had! So warm—so affectionate—how many reminiscences of times past, but also hearts open to receive the message of the Lord. We were sorry to have to leave them, but there were others we must visit.

In the third house we found the two daughters of Z. and some of the neighbours' children, who were much interested in the story with pictures told them by Miss Mee. Evening closing in, we were obliged to return to Mme D. to see her daughter, now a teacher in a village about 10 kilometres off. This daughter spent much time at the Mission house as a child, and seemed to us to be very open to the message.

The next day our first thought was to visit Rogaia. She was not in the house where we expected to find her, but there were other women there, including her sister-in-law, whom we knew well. All listened very attentively to the message. After that, we went to R.'s sister, who had declared her faith in Christ some years ago. When we left her, she gave us some indications as to how to find R., who is now living with her daughter in a new quarter of the town—in the same house as her cousin F. On the way, I had just said to Miss Mee how much I wished to see a certain Kabyle woman, when this very woman rushed up to us with great demonstrations of joy. She offered to show us the way, but was actually leading us in the wrong direction, when a little girl ran after us. She said it was in her father's house that the people we were looking for were living, so we went on with the child.

How happy we were to find there our dear R. and her eldest daughter. She has lost her second daughter, but has still a boy of seven years old, whom we have not seen. Her niece F. with her six children was also there. We could not pay them a very long visit this time, but hope to be able to do so next time.

In the afternoon we had a good time visiting the relatives of our old "house guardians" with whom we had so much to do when living there. S. and R., two sisters, live in the same house with their families. While we were with them their husbands, and another older woman came in and we had a very good conversation with them. The husband of S. had sometimes been in the house when we were visiting his wife; and had heard the Gospel from the lips of Mlle. Butticaz. It was an agreeable surprise to see how much he seemed to know of the Word of God; and it made us realise the need for men missionaries there to work amongst the men and boys. We had some occasions for offering literature to the men, in the market, when we went to see our old house.

In the evening, we went to see the former owners of the Mission house. There also we had a very cordial welcome. In this rather broad-minded Jewish family the two sons have read the Bible, and the conversation was easily directed towards spiritual things, and continued in Arabic after the men had left to go to the synagogue, for the old people speak Arabic better than French.

In each family visited, we were pressed to come again; and were assured that we should easily find a lodging. So, God willing, we hope to go back to Bou-Saada for some weeks in the autumn.

Will you pray with us that these doors, which are so wide open for the Gospel now, remain open; and that many more persons may yet have the opportunity for hearing the glorious message of Salvation. Owing to the gathering into the towns of so many people from the villages and isolated districts, the population of Bou-Saada is now estimated as about 80,000 persons.

On Sunday morning, April 23rd, we were able to leave, escorted by a military car, which was going to M'sila. The hand of the Lord was with us, and we give glory to Him for His goodness and faithfulness.

G. CHOLLET.

DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS AT MILIANA

THIS is the story of how the gifts (from America and Canada) sent to us through the French Protestant Church, were distributed to the needy of Miliana.

Our desire was to help the specially needy—big families, with a father in weak health, unable to work full time; families where the father is too old or infirm to work at all; widows or displaced persons with many children; and families where the husband has disappeared, and the wife does not know whether her children have a living father or no.

The first consignment of gifts this winter came in the form of sacks of powdered milk. For fair distribution, this had to be weighed out into paper bags, each containing about a kilo, and given out to those who were in need one or two days in the week. They were grateful, for the children liked it, and it helped to make up for the lack of “gravy” with the native dish of prepared semolina (cous-cous) when meat was too dear.

At other times the army chaplain brought or sent sacks of grain. These had to be carefully picked over on our flat roof by Arab women to clear the grain from little bits of grit or tiny stones, seeds, etc.—after which, it must be taken to the miller to be turned into flour. It certainly made delicious flat loaves of bread, baked on their fire-pots, and must have been very nourishing.

Later, sacks of old shoes arrived at our door; men's, women's, but chiefly little children's. We made our room into a shoe-shop, arranging as best we could the different sizes. Then we let the women come first to seek a pair that would fit themselves, and later for the boys and girls. It was a tremendous business. Children would set their hearts on red sand shoes, when Mother was determined that they should have something strong for school wear. Young women looked for patent leather shoes, or those with high heels; some were putting them on the wrong feet. But at last all who could find some about their own size were fitted—though I know of one woman who is walking about seemingly happy in two left foot shoes, meant for a man; and I suppose someone else has two right foot shoes.

These women seldom wear shoes in the house, and their feet spread with walking barefoot; so it distressed me to see them forcing their feet into high-heeled or narrow pointed shoes. But fashion rules nowadays, and no woman would walk into town without modern shoes and socks or stockings.

Our last and biggest problem was five sacks of clothing. Bright frocks attract, but black is not generally worn by Arab women. Still we found that the narrow black or grey skirts cut up well into small boys' trousers. And pleated skirts, in the hands of someone who has a sewing machine, can be turned into the middle-aged woman's serrouals (trousers) by sewing up the bottom and slitting up the sides a little way. But these must be skirts that have not a very tiny waist. The younger women, in the house or under their white “haik” which covers them well out of

doors, will wear European frocks if long enough, and blouses with skirts if not too narrow.

Anyhow, if the material is not too rotten with age, something can be done with almost any garment; for we have always a "babies' drawer" and something warm to wrap the baby in is always in request. The old ladies were our problem, and the stout ones; or those from the mountain villages, who have never worn anything tight or shaped, and want bright colours and long garments, tied in the middle.

We lost count towards the end; but I have marked in my book for one day that fifty-two received one or two garments that morning—and I could tell of many grateful women who have taken away bundles of different-sized children's garments, to be arranged and used for the big family.

M. D. GRAUTOFF.

RELIZANE

"JESUS was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." (Mark 6: 34.)

IN our travels from day to day we meet with a number of human beings who look very much like sheep not having a shepherd. There is the cripple who is to be seen daily seated by the public square, selling newspapers. He is not very friendly. No doubt he feels he has nothing to be friendly about, and yet he is disposed to listen to the word passed on as a newspaper is bought. There are two other cripples who keep him company. One has but two shrivelled stumps instead of legs, and he gets about by means of a flat piece of wood on wheels. The other one has crutches. At first, they too, were not very friendly, and the greeting was received with a scowl, and a rather suspicious look; but now their attitude has changed and we get a hearty greeting whenever they see us. There are also a number of Muslim teachers who greet us as we pass them. They are usually seated outside their small rooms that do duty as classrooms, as they wait for their scholars, whom they teach to read the Koran. One seems more interested than the others, and has accepted literature on several occasions.

This is only a part of the work that has to be done. There is also the visiting in the homes, where one is free to read and talk with the women, and where there are more opportunities than two missionaries can cope with. True, one is free to read and talk with the women, but there is not always a ready response to the message. Hindrances come in different ways, as, for example, the case of a woman we met in one of the homes, and whom we believe to be under conviction. At first she used to join the others, but lately she has preferred to stay in her own small room. The other day we were gathered as usual, and the women were listening attentively to the reading, when suddenly we were all startled by the sound of loud Arabic *music* ?? The women jumped up and fled to their rooms, but soon after they returned, and when they had

calmed down we continued with the reading and the message. Later we learned that this woman who is under conviction, having objected to what was being read, turned on her wireless to full force, thinking by so doing to stop the reading. But, as so often happens, the plans of the enemy were defeated, and the women listened more attentively than before. One woman whom we had thought was not taking much in, said how often she had thought of the words we had once read "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". This led to a profitable conversation during which another woman said, "How good it has been to listen to God's Word, it has rested my heart". Then too, there is work among the children, which has taken on a more encouraging aspect lately, and which could be developed still further.

There are great possibilities in this part of Algeria. Large blocks of new flats are going up everywhere, housing hundreds of people who have not yet been reached with the Gospel, because we have not the workers to cope with the situation. We cannot think that this state of things is in the will of God, and we feel it is a matter which demands the serious thought of every true child of God. We would like to repeat what we have said on more than one occasion. Can we who are privileged and enlightened by the Gospel remain indifferent to the state of the Muslim? Dare we as Christians remain indifferent and deny to those benighted souls the light of the Gospel of God?

E. CLARK AND A. E. POWELL.

A FRESH CONTACT

HE was a lanky sort of man, of the kind that never really seems to grow up. Strange to say, he was overseer in an Electric Light Company; and we got to know him when he and his men were changing the telegraph posts up our road. To do this they used a fearsome machine to break up the concrete base at the foot of each post. Even so, it was a lengthy process; we wondered if they would ever finish the job and leave us in peace.

One evening, our friend the overseer asked permission to leave the fearsome machine inside our gate for the night. It was so heavy that we were obliged to let the men leave it in the drive, and go out on foot ourselves, rather than try to get our car round it.

Mademoiselle Guibé had a long talk with the man about his soul, and we gave him Scripture portions and a Gospel to take home. We were touched and surprised when he asked us to visit his family living on the sea coast. It was not possible to go so far before Christmas, but we assured him that we meant to make the trip one day. The opportunity came one glorious winter day in January after a week-end of heavy rain. As we made for the coast, the fields on either side of our route were under water for some distance. At last we came in sight of the blue waters of the Mediterranean and as we sped down the hill, we knew it was time to stop and ask our way, for fear of overstepping the mark

entirely. A group of men outside a small shop looked as if they might be able to help us, especially as we had the name and occupation of the one we were seeking.

But we had reckoned without what are darkly referred to as "the events" or current affairs. Our inquiries were met by blank expressions and it seemed useless to repeat them to deaf ears.

We had not noticed a pale blue car, sliding down the hill past us, until it suddenly went into reverse and seemed about to crash into our bonnet. The driver pulled up in time, however, and out jumped the man we were seeking,—gay as ever. The whole atmosphere changed after that, as our host suggested that we should follow him to his house. So, greatly wondering how it was that he was not at work on this fine Monday afternoon, we followed the blue car down the hill and into a side turning, until it drew up before some buildings standing alone in an enclosure. While we were parking, word was given to the women folk to prepare for visitors. The guest room was opened and chairs were placed around a table, in the French manner. We were introduced to our friend's widowed mother, his wife, brother, and sister-in-law. Their small children were watching all that went on.

Over coffee, polite conversation was carried on in French with the two men. The two women were illiterate and had withdrawn. We learned that our host was head of the family and had travelled even as far as the Congo, for his Company.

Finally, I plucked up courage to say that I had come to have a chat with the women, in Arabic. Our host seemed to understand this and did not attempt to follow as I made my way out into the yard in search of my audience. They soon gathered round, holding babies in their arms, and the good news of the Saviour's birth was told to them.

We presented the two youngest children with knitted caps, which Mrs. Buckenham had given us before leaving the country.

The settlement as one might call it was built in terraces up the hill-side. We were shown the children's room where toys were on view. Everything was spotlessly clean and in good taste, but we had to curb our admiration of their possessions for fear they might feel obliged to present us with some object. There was no doubt about the warmth of the welcome and surely the Lord Himself had chosen this day of all the days to follow up a fresh contact.

P. M. RUSSELL.

HELPFUL WORDS ABOUT PRAYER

FIRST must be put the fundamental principle that God is perfect love and wisdom . . . so the first requirement in prayer is that we trust to God for all blessing . . . the next requirement is that we should persevere in prayer in spite of disappointment. We are to be sure that God will grant our prayers; and when He does not, we are to go on praying." This is "a challenge to us to seek the real reason why God may make long delay and then grant our request. The first requirement was perfect confidence. Does God wish to test our confidence? Of course not; He knows perfectly well what it is worth. But He may very likely wish to deepen it. The faith which takes the form—almost necessary at first—of confidence that God will do what we ask is, after all, faith in our own judgment as much as faith in God. We may not pray for anything except so far as we believe it to be God's will; that belief is very fallible. The purpose of God's delay may well be to detach our faith in Him from all trust in our own judgment. Scarcely anything deepens and purifies faith in God for His own sake as surely as perseverance in prayer despite long disappointment."

The "third and deepest requirement" in prayer is contained in our Lord's words in St. John's Gospel (14; 13, 14; 15, 7; & 16; 23, 24) where the promise is to prayer "in My Name": and the comment on this is:—When the condition mentioned is satisfied our wills are identified with the will of God; we are then praying for what He desires to give us and waits to give until we recognise Him as its source so that our reception of it will strengthen our faith and not encourage our neglect of Him. This means that the essential act of prayer is not the bending of God's will to ours—of course not—but the bending of our will to His. The proper outline of a Christian's prayers is not, "Please do for me what I want", but "Please do in me, with me, and through me what You want". The pattern prayer our Lord taught us is based on this principle; "after this manner therefore pray ye". (Matt. 6: 9.)

"Do we in our own prayers think at all about the glory of God or the coming of His Kingdom? Do we think about the conversation of Asia and Africa, or the conformity of our own national life to the standards of Christ? No: not as a rule. We say the great words, but we mean nothing by them. We do not pray 'Thy will be done' with triumphant expectation and ungovernable hope; we are more liable to say 'Well, God's will be done', when we find we cannot have our own way, and fall back reluctantly upon what we regard as a second best."

(On intercession.) "Prayer is the giving out of our love, in communion with the love of God, towards those for whom we pray; but if there is no love in us for those for whom we are saying prayers, there will be no true prayer said. . . . Yet where there is very little love, prayer can increase it; and by expressing in our prayer the very little love we have, it may be, for example, for the unconverted heathen, we shall come to feel more love for them."

“God is love; and the love from which prayer springs is the Holy Ghost at work in our hearts.”

“The truly effective prayer . . . is that offered by the man who does not primarily care about the difference he makes, but primarily cares about the glory of God. . . . God’s will for us may be that we should try even though we fail. . . . I may be going to carry out His purpose precisely through my failure, the way I bear it, and the lessons men learn from it.”

“Prayer is very difficult and needs all our strength; it is the most difficult thing that any man ever attempts to do, for it is the effort to see the world through God’s eyes, and to give ourselves wholly to do His will.”

(Gleanings from the writings of The Archbishop, William Temple.)

CHOOSING OR BEING CHOSEN

(At a time when I was thinking specially of the need for more labourers in the Lord’s harvest fields, and wondering perhaps that so few seemed to choose this way of service, the thought came—“Are there some whom the Lord has chosen, but who are not willing to make His choice their own?” About that time a friend, who is a reader of our magazine, and who is with us in prayer for the work, sent me this little meditation, which I felt might have a message in it for others, so I give it here just as she wrote it. V.W.)

St. John, 15 : 16.

“Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.”

He chooses because He has a design for the whole of our lives. It is when we are young that we sometimes think we can manage quite well by ourselves—we don’t want to be directed and told what to do. Well—God never forces anyone. If we really do not want Him, He will *let* us go our own way. We find out later on what a huge mistake we are making.

But no need to be discouraged—the remedy is in our own hands. If we turn to Christ He will instantly receive us. He won’t say “you ought to have come before”—He will welcome us *now*. And we shall have happiness and peace such as we never knew before. God gives beyond measure. His Love and Truth are given to us in spite of everything. We need never be afraid.

One cannot do better than follow St. Paul’s advice—“In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

Our Lord Himself prayed up to the last. When they nailed Him to the Cross He said “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

We do wrong things, knowing quite well what we do. Good Friday

is *the* day for us to be sorry and to ask God's forgiveness. If we have given our lives to Christ Easter Day will be a day of glorious happiness—the day that He conquered death and came back Alive to share His Life with all who believe in Him and try to be His faithful disciples.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever. . . .

ALIVE FOR EVERMORE

“ I know not by what methods rare—
But this I know—God answers prayer.
I know not when He sends the word
That tells us earnest prayer is heard.
I know He hears us soon or late,
Therefore we need to pray and wait.
I know not if the blessing sought
Will come in just the way I thought;
I leave my prayers with Him alone
Whose Will is wiser than my own.”

(author unknown)

E.K.

ERRATA in the March issue of “A THIRSTY LAND”—No. 133, 1961 :

Page 4, bottom of page, the last paragraph should read—It was at Tolga, only 23 miles from Biskra . . .

In Statement of Accounts, inside back cover—under *Receipts* the balance of “designated Funds” should read : —— 878 not 879.

