

BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Pages</i>
The Gospel According to Matthew, viewed dispensationally:—	
Christ the King of the Jews.	1
John the Baptist	9, 18
Nazareth to Capernaum, and the Sermon on the Mount	21, 29
The sending forth of the twelve.	31, 37
My Servant and the Sign.	41, 49
Parables of the Kingdom of H e a v e n	50, 57
The Charge of the D i s p e n s a t i o n	63, 69
The Transfiguration and the Coming K i n g d o m	73
The Entrance as King into Jerusalem, and the rejection by the Jewish Nation.	81, 87
Facts relative to the coming of the Son of Man and the end of the a g e	90, 99
The Betrayal and Crucifixion and the accusation in the superscription on the C r o s s	100, 111
The sending forth of the eleven in contrast to the sending forth of the twelve.	111
Remarks on " the Seed of Abraham "	17
The character of Matthew's Gospel.	17
Wheat and T a r e s	84
The eternal fire	109
Questions and Answers 8, 16, 28, 48, 56, 68, 78, 86, 98, 110, 118	

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JANUARY, 1946.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Christ, the King of the Jews.	1
Questions and Answers	

CHRIST, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

From Bradford, Leeds **and** Halifax. —How appropriate it is that the Gospel according to Matthew should be the first in the canon of the New Testament! This book, with its emphasis upon Christ's office and character as King, is a fitting commencement to the newer revelation. For long the prophets had been silent, and now at last their prophecies have been fulfilled; the King, the Messiah has come ! But not to the palace has he come. No, the new-born King is found in a stable, with a manger for His resting place; and yet He is of the royal line. His genealogy is traced down from Abraham to David and we see that David received assurance that the throne of his kingdom would be established for ever (2 Samuel 7. 16). And so from David to Joseph the royal line descends, each father, no doubt, indicating which of his sons was to be his successor to the legal right of kingship. Thus the newborn child of Mary legally regarded as (though not actually) the son of Joseph, was the rightful King of the Jews.

In studying His genealogy we observed the difficulty which occurs in the second of the three series, that of David to the Captivity. Here it seems that only thirteen generations are given. It was suggested, however, that the clue to this discrepancy is given in verse 11: " Josiah begat Jechoniah *and his brethren.* " Josiah was of course the grandfather of Jechoniah, and further, Jechoniah had but one recorded brother. Perhaps, therefore, the term " brethren " is used in the wider sense not uncommon in scripture, and may include Jechoniah's father, Jehoiakim. Thus a generation is recognized, but not specifically named.

Amidst the humble circumstances of the Lord's birth, it is touching to note the adoration and costly tributes which the Magi bring to the infant King. From far in the east these wise men (the scientists and astronomers of their day) come as guided by the star to lay their homage at His feet. How remarkable it is that whilst the multitudes of Israel were in ignorance of the glorious fact of Messiah's birth, these oriental strangers had received a revelation from God Himself!

The envy of Herod, his fear of losing his power, and the persecution which these actuated, are typical of the treatment which the King received at the hands of those who should have been ready to welcome Him. At every phase of His life, from the manger to the cross, the civil and religious authorities sought to oppose Him.

The birth of the Christ in Bethlehem is a remarkable example of God's overruling hand in the fulfilment of prophecy. The home-town of Joseph was Nazareth, but by God's guidance Joseph and his betrothed wife were newly arrived at the city of David when the Lord's birth occurred. The flight to Egypt from the persecuting hand of Herod is additional testimony to His Messiahship.

But where do the prophets say that He would be called a Nazarene ? [I agree with the remarks of Bradford, Leeds and Halifax hereafter given as to the prophetic message regarding Nazareth. " The Nazarene " came to be an opprobrious epithet connected with the Lord's name, and, in consequence, the Spirit of God through Matthew says that this was what the prophets said he would be called, meaning that He would be despised by men; One whom the nation abhorred (Isaiah 53. 3; 49. 7). —J. M.] We notice that it is no particular prophet, and are led to think that this verse means that the general implication of the prophets' messages was that He would be " despised and rejected of men. " Nazareth—that city out of which one thought that no good thing ever came—was a fitting home for the outcast and despised King of Israel.

In these incidents we have considered we see the beginning of a new dispensation, the very inception of a new era and a new administration of God. What a great contrast there is between the thunderings of Sinai and the nation-wide revelation there, and the lowly birth of the Christ which was so far removed from all worldly publicity and show !

W. Rowan.

[We give our friends in Yorkshire a very hearty welcome and hope that they will find rich blessing in their fellowship together. —Eds.]

From Cowdenbeath. —The genealogy of the Lord Jesus is a very important document, which proves His right in incarnation to sit upon the throne of David and to bear the title, " King of the Jews. " This title, although His by right of birth, was never acknowledged by His own people. Twice only, and that by Gentiles, was the title given, by the wise men at His birth, and by Pilate on the occasion of His death. Truly, His own people received Him not !

The possession of a genealogy by which means a member of the Israel nation was able to trace His descent back to Abraham was something of very great importance to every Jew. Not only was the Lord a true Son of Abraham, but He was the Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3. 16), the One who was promised, in whom all the families of the earth would be blessed. David also was promised that God would establish the throne of his Seed for ever (2 Samuel 7. 12, 13). Both promises were fulfilled in the one blessed Person, who could claim descent from both men. The genealogy, besides being divided into three groups of equal size (i. e., 14 names in each) has a natural division of three groups. The first, from the patriarchs to the establishment of the kingdom; the second, the period of time during which the kingdom continued; and the third, the days when Israel were without a king. The fact that the third group was available to Matthew when he wrote, shows that during the dark days of captivity in Babylon, and throughout the difficult days which followed, genealogies were carefully kept. It is of interest to note that the names of five women are mentioned, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, the wife of Uriah and Mary. These were not all virtuous, honourable women. How wonderful that God should permit Gentile women of Old Testament times a place in the chosen and what became the royal line ! Yet how much more wonderful is God's design that His own Eternal Son should become incarnate and be born of a woman. Yet be it noted, that Mary, unlike the other four, was a virgin.

Herod **was** ruling in Jerusalem, having been put upon the throne **by** the Romans. It **is** no wonder therefore that he **was** troubled when he heard that the King of the **Jews** was born, and that His birth had been signalled by the appearance of a star. It **seems** to **us** that when the Creator became incarnate this **was** how creation recorded the wondrous fact, just **as** the fact of **His** death **was** so wondrously recorded by the failing of the sun's light. The **wise** men **it** would **seem** had some true knowledge of the expectation of the Israel nation concerning a coming king. Although outside the commonwealth of Israel, the desire of their hearts **was** to worship Him, albeit **He was** only a Child, a wonderful recognition of **His** divine claims.

James Bowman.

From Glasgow. —The question of a genealogy **is** an important one with a Jew. The legal right to the throne of David must be first of all proven, so that no doubt can **be** attached to **His** claim of being the promised King.

The genealogy of our Lord in Matthew differs from the one in Luke. The one in Luke 4. proves that Mary, the mother of **Jesus**, **is** of David through the house of Nathan. The genealogy of Matthew shows that Joseph, who was supposed to **be** the father of **Jesus** (Luke 3. 23), **is** a descendant of David through the line of Solomon. The descendants of Solomon have the legal right to the throne. **But** the last king of Judah, Jechoniah, a descendant of Solomon, **was** so wicked that a curse was pronounced upon him and he was to **be** childless (Jeremiah 22. 30). However, this curse did not **affect** the legal claim to the throne. [Jechoniah **was** not the last king of Judah; Zedekiah his brother reigned eleven years after he **was** deposed by Nebuchadnezzar. Jechoniah only reigned three months. 2 Kings 24. 8 **is** probably correct when **it** says that he **was** eighteen years old when he began to reign, for Zedekiah his elder brother was twenty-one when he **was** made king. 2 Chronicles 36. 9 says he was eight years old when he began to reign. The prophecy of Jeremiah 22. 30 has always been a difficulty to **me**—" Write ye this man childless. " Actually he was -not childless. Jechoniah does not come into Luke's genealogy. Matthew says that Jechoniah **begat** Shealtiel; Luke says that Shealtiel **was** the son of Neri. **It is** obvious Shealtiel could not **be** the son of two men. Probably he was the son-in-law of Neri. **But** the difficulty remains, for Shealtiel the son of Jechoniah is in the direct line of the genealogy of **Jesus** Christ in Matthew and Luke. How **is** the Jeremiah prophecy solved?—J. M. J. But **Jesus was** not the Son of David through Joseph, but through Mary the Virgin, who **came** of David through the line of Nathan. No **curse** rested upon that line. As the supposed son of Joseph **He** inherited the legal title to the throne, through Joseph, but being the Son of David through Mary the curse which rested upon Jechoniah was not upon Him. The genealogy tells a story of decadence and hopelessness. **As** generation after generation **is** given, we follow the shameful history of Israel, a history of unbelief and judgment.

Notice the four Gentile women in the genealogy of the King. Tamar (telling out the ravages of sin); Rahab (she was saved by faith); Ruth (under the curse of the law, but brought into relation with Israel); then the wife of Uriah, that **is** Bath-Sheba. [There **is** no evidence that Bath-sheba **was** not a Jewess. —Eds.] These four women tell out beforehand the story of the gospel. The promised King would also **be** the Saviour of the Gentiles.

The story of the visit of the wise men seeking the new-born King of the **Jews** has been doubted, **because** no other evangelist reports this incident. It belongs properly to the Gospel in which our Lord **is** portrayed **as** the King. There **is** no evidence that the wise men were only three in number, nor are they said to **be** kings. They troubled Herod, and all Jerusalem with him. The visit **did** not take place immediately after the birth of our Lord. The correct rendering of the first verse **is**, "**But Jesus** having been born " : that **is**, some **time** after, and not immediately after. It was most likely a year after **His** birth that the **wise** men from the east appeared. Luke 2. 41 shows that **His** parents went to Jerusalem every year; they **must** then also have visited Bethlehem again.

The promised King is unknown in His own city, Jerusalem, His own people are ignorant of Him. Gentiles come first to do Him homage. The indifference of the chief priests and scribes points to their coming antagonism. They bring gold, typical of divinity; frankincense, indicating the fragrance of His life; and myrrh, that which is used in burial, a hint as to His death.

Note that this is not a fulfilment of Isaiah 60, 6. That passage refers to the time when the Kingdom is set up on earth. Myrrh is not mentioned in Isaiah.

Throughout the chapter the child always occupies the first and prominent place. It is never, "Mary and the child," or the "mother and the child," but "the little Child and **His** mother." W. R. Wallace.

EXTRACTS.

From Atherton.—Frequently in God's word, we can trace in the genealogy of men the wisdom of God, but we have something more precious in Matthew 1., where we find the name of the Lord Jesus associated with men, or rather men linked up with Christ. The genealogy is traced to Abraham and David; we see Him as the Seed of Abraham, to whom the promise was made (Galatians 3, 18, 19), and the Seed of David, to whom belong the throne and the kingdom. The Holy Spirit through Matthew sets forth Christ as the Saviour—King of Israel, and Jeremiah tells us plainly that the Christ shall be of the royal line of David. Luke agrees with Matthew on these important points, but he takes the genealogy back to Adam, the son of God; not merely to present Christ to the few, but to all mankind. Matthew seems to stress the line of royalty from David, Luke the human side from Adam. In Matthew we can trace Abraham as the head of the nation, and David the king of the people. It is to be observed that the Spirit uses the word "beget" until we come to Joseph. Then we get the change: "Mary, of whom was *born* Jesus." In view of the fact that Joseph was not the real father wherein lies the Lord's claim to Kingship? The Lord was born in wedlock, and Matthew 1, 16 is sufficient proof of the Lord's rightful claim: "And Jacob begat Joseph the *husband* of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." It is significant that only four women [and Mary] are mentioned in Matthew's genealogy, namely, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, three of them being Gentiles according to the flesh.

A comparison is seen in the visit of the wise men, at His birth, and the desire of the Greeks, prior to His death, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12, 21). In the visit of the Magi, we trace too the all-wise purpose of God in the Gentiles (see Matthew 12, 17-21). They came not just merely to see a king, for their attitude was one of worship; they worshipped Him who is the Son of God (Matthew 2, 11). Mention was made of the kingly gifts they brought, gifts which were not brought haphazardly. In the gold, we see Christ as the Anointed King, telling of His Deity; the frankincense shows forth that One in all His spotless purity; suffering and death are seen in the myrrh, for in spite of His divine and pure state, He must know the bitterness of death.

We give a suggestive order of events surrounding the birth of the Lord. Luke 2, 4, 5, Joseph and Mary go up to Nazareth from Bethlehem. Luke 2, 7; Matthew 2, 21, B. C. 4., Birth of Christ; Bethlehem. Matthew 2, 2, star appears to Magi. Luke 2, 8, Angels appear to shepherds, near Bethlehem. Luke 2, 21, Circumcision on eighth day; Jerusalem. Purification after 40 or 41 days from birth (see Leviticus 21, 1-4); Jerusalem. Luke 2, 39, return to Nazareth. Matthew 2, 1, Magi arrive in Jerusalem. Matthew 2, 9-11, Magi find the Infant, presumably in Nazareth (most authorities give Bethlehem). [If the Magi found the Young

Child in Nazareth wherein lay the **need** of flight into Egypt ? It **says** that Herod slew all the male children in Bethlehem and in all the borders thereof. Nazareth **was** far from the borders of Bethlehem, hence there **was** actually no danger. I believe the whole narrative indicates that the Lord was in Bethlehem **at** the time of the visit of the Magi. —J. M.] Magi worship and return another way. Matthew 2. 13, 14, flight into Egypt. Matthew 2. 16, slaying of the infants, 2 years and under. Herod dies B. C. 3 or 4 (secular history). Matthew 2. 22, 23, return from Egypt to Nazareth.

Perhaps there is significance in the fact that Joseph made to go into Judaea, after his return from Egypt, as if returning to the place from which he went; was that Bethlehem or Jerusalem ? [Bethlehem, I judge. —J. M.].

There does not **seem** to be any particular scripture referring to Christ being called a Nazarene, which causes us to assume certain things. Attached to the name Nazarene there **seems** to be reproach (see for example, John 1. 46). It **seems** by the trend of what the prophets wrote, that we **must** presume that prophecies relating to this important point are such **as** are found in Isaiah 53. 3, Psalm 69. 9, 10, and Psalm 22. 6. *D. H. Butler, G. Sankey.*

From Kilmarnock. —God made a covenant with Abraham, **as** we **see** from Genesis 17. 2-6: " I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. " As we read down the genealogy in Matthew 1. (what we might call the royal line), we **see** how that covenant was kept. Although there was much failure in the rulers (see the record in Chronicles), God preserved the line unbroken until Christ came. We have a notable example of God's preserving care in 2 Chronicles 22. 10-12, when Athaliah " destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah "; but Joash was hid in the house of God **six** years. This we take as an attempt of Satan to frustrate God's purposes. It is worthy of note that the names of Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah are not mentioned in the genealogy in Matthew; probably this was owing to their connection with and being influenced by the wicked house of Ahab, God thus showing **His** displeasure. After Zerubbabel, only the names of the descendants are given in scripture; there **is** no record that they had a place of rule in the nation. **We** understand the Jews would be under Gentile rule more or less.

God, who knew the wicked plan of Satan through Herod, overruled for **His** own glory, and warned Joseph, who was " a righteous man, " to "take the young Child and **His** mother, and flee into Egypt. " **We** note how quickly he obeyed the warning, and remained in Egypt until the death of Herod. **We** might **ask**, Why flee to Egypt, the place that had been the scene in bygone years of God's sore judgment ? Now **it** was a place of safety for Emmanuel, and the scripture was fulfilled, "Out of Egypt did I call My Son" (Hosea 11. 1). **But** Egypt **was** not to be the scene of Messiah's labours, so again an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, saying, "Arise... and go into the land of Israel. " **He** was not told what city or town he was to go to, but in deciding to go to Nazareth we judge he was guided by God, as the Lord was to be called a Nazarene. The despised village was thus the honoured place where the Messiah, the future King of the Jews, was brought up and laboured. From Luke 2. 47 **it is** evident **He** had been a diligent student of the Scriptures, an example to all young disciples at the present time.

A. G. S.

From Ilford. —Matthew's account of the early life of our Lord has three points which are stressed particularly, and the most outstanding of these **is** the way in which he shows that the Jews had every opportunity of recognising the Messiah even from the very early incidents in **His** life.

Firstly, **He** was, according to the promise given in Genesis 12. 3, in direct descent from Abraham; and Matthew shows that He was in David's line **as** had been promised also. Prophecy **is** fulfilled when Joseph takes Mary and the child Jesus to Egypt (see Hosea 11.), and **again** when they are led from there to Nazareth.

Faced with this collection of facts, which must surely be too many and particular to be in accord purely by coincidence with the prophetic account of the Messiah's coming, it seems incredible that the Jews found it impossible to recognise Christ as the One for whom they had been waiting so long, especially when these are added to the possibly less obvious facts of His virgin birth, the coming of the wise men, and His being born in Bethlehem.

Thus are we led to the second lesson, namely the need for, and the justification of faith. The account of Christ's genealogy points to this, in that the Saviour of the world does not have only godly men amongst His antecedents, but great sinners as well, which is but another indication that Christ came into the world on a comprehensive mission intending to have dealings with sinners and not with the righteous only. The whole story of His birth demands faith, but the way in which all the incidents of His early life were according to prophecy surely gives sufficient justification.

The third lesson which Matthew brings out so forcibly is that God will be able to work out His purposes in spite of man's obduracy and wickedness. Jews who witnessed the massacre of the babes would surely be led to enquire why this thing was, and would again be taken to prophecy concerning the Messiah.

The Jews obviously were hindered in some extraordinary way from correlating all these evidences of Christ's being their looked-for King. They must therefore have been led astray by their own preconceptions, and the traditions handed down to them by the Hebrew teachers. This brings home very forcibly the danger to any of us of allowing prejudice and tradition a place in God's things.

Eric Morgan.

From Yeovil. The genealogy given in Matthew 1. goes back to Abraham and David, and shows that the Christ, according to the natural line, came of royal blood. In comparing the numbers of the generations with the names stated, it was noted that the total number given is 14 for each of the three stages, totalling 42. The number of names given is only 41. The question was asked, Where is the other one? The suggestion was made that as the Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit, this should count as a generation, and so make the total 42. [The explanation does not lie in what our friends say. This is a difficult matter to solve.—J. M.].

The coming of the Magi with their enquiry, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" is another indication of His right to the office. This is further brought out in the gifts, which would only be suitable for a king. He is thus shown to be the rightful King of Israel. Herod, the king at the time, had no right to the throne, as he was an Edomite, and no such one should sit on the throne of Israel.

A. S. Glover.

From Edinburgh.—The genealogy found in the first chapter of Matthew shows the Lord Jesus Christ as a descendant both of Abraham and of David. He was the rightful Heir to the throne of David. In keeping with the promise made to the fathers (Acts 13. 23, 32, 33) He was to be the Saviour of Israel. The angel of the Lord said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins."

Herod, who had been made king of Judaea under Augustus Caesar, when he heard the news brought by the wise men of one that was born King of the Jews, was naturally troubled, and he began to plan immediately to kill Him. It appears that the people of Jerusalem also were in the grip of the adversary, for they were in sympathy with Herod. The wise men evidently had been looking for the coming of this King. They have been described as Persian astronomers, and, no doubt as a result of the captivity of Judah, had heard of God's promises to Israel. Their object was to worship Him and to offer to Him their treasures. In this way the Son of God was honoured at His coming to earth. That which was prefigured by

the calling of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 4. 22, 23) and spoken of in Hosea 11. 1 was wondrously fulfilled, and the power of God was shown, in that He placed His Son in Egypt, beyond Herod's reach, and kept Him there until it was His pleasure to bring Him back to Israel. Thus Satan's plans to bring about, through Herod, the death of the young Child were foiled, and soon afterwards this tool was taken out of his hand, for Herod died. Again the word of God was fulfilled by Joseph's coming to dwell in Nazareth, resulting in the Christ being called a Nazarene.

J. A. H. R.

From Birkenhead. —One remarkable feature of the account of the birth and childhood of the Lord that Matthew gives, is the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in many ways. Even the massacre of the innocents was predicted, and the return from Egypt, so that from His birth the Lord fulfilled the things required by the Jews of their Messiah. He was of the tribe of Judah, and in the line of David, and was born in the place that the prophets had indicated. The sign of the star that brought the Magi from their eastern land to find the King that was born cannot have been an omen associated with the birth of an ordinary king. Herod was troubled about the matter because he knew that his rights to the throne were not recognised by many as he was not of the seed of David, and in his fear of frustration he was driven to the dreadful, despotic act of massacre. So it was that there was fulfilled by the wrath of a cruel man the prophecy of Jeremiah in a day long before.

The mention of the fulfilment of, " He shall be called a Nazarene, " occasioned some difficulty. The word Nazarene certainly came to be used as a name of contempt and disgust, and it seems that this is the only reasonable explanation of the verse, but it **was** not at all clear to us.

L. H.

From **London**, S. E. —A servant need not produce a genealogy, but a king must have one; man may have one, but God cannot. Matthew's is the royal, and Luke's the human; Matthew's descending and Luke's ascending. Matthew's is through Solomon, Luke's through Nathan. Both meet in Joseph, the son of Jacob by birth and son of Heli by marriage with Mary. [They also meet in Shealtiel and Zerubbabel. —J. M.]

As Son of David, the throne of Israel was His; David is Israel's divinely chosen king of the tribe of Judah, the royal tribe. He was a man after God's own heart, and a wonderful type of the Man who said, " I am come . . . to do Thy will, O God. " As Son of Abraham He was preeminently the faithful One, the faithful and true Witness. Abraham was the father of the faithful, and he was the friend of God.

The genealogy of Matthew is through Solomon, and as such really ended in Jechoniah (Jeremiah 22. 30) [But Jechoniah begat Shealtiel. —J. M.], though carried on by others, for God's promise to David still stood firm (2 Samuel 23. 5). The genealogy of Luke runs through David's son Nathan, so that both Joseph and Mary were of the royal blood. Luke is careful to record of the Lord, " being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, " and I understand that by adopting (to use an ordinary phrase) the Lord as his son, by Jewish law this son became his heir. [There is no evidence that Joseph adopted Christ as his heir. The Lord was born in wedlock. Joseph took unto him Mary his wife whom he knew was to be the mother of the Messiah. God gave Joseph a Son miraculously. —J. M.]

It was in Herod's days that both John and the Lord were born. The Jews, it is true, were back in their own land, but under a foreign yoke. The gap between Old and New Testaments is about 400 years, and we can only rely on profane history for that period. This Herod is commonly called " the Great "—he was an Idumean. In Genesis 27. 41 we read, "And Esau hated Jacob. " Herod did not belong to Jacob, he belonged to Esau, and that long line of hatred had lasted through the centuries. Surely this is an arresting fact! It was at the time that Jesus was born that Esau was ruling over Jacob. Herod was a vassal of Rome.

He had erected vast and gorgeous temples for the worship of idols. They were used by the Gentiles in the land, and their influence would react on the Jews. He had also introduced games which were to be the ruin of Rome itself. It was in those days that some were looking for Christ's coming. Simeon and Anna were among them, and probably Zechariah, Elizabeth, and their parents, for Zechariah means "Jehovah remembers," and Elizabeth, "the Oath of God."

Wise men came from the east to Jerusalem. They came asking, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" The star they had followed all the way westward had apparently waited whilst they were having audience with Herod, and immediately went before them again. I take it Jesus had already been born for a little time. They say, "Where is He that *is* born." The star leads them to a house, not a stable, and they saw the young child, not a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. Their gifts were three, leading some to assume there were three wise men. The gold would be a wonderful provision for Joseph and Mary when going to Egypt.

It would appear that Herod had made a shrewd calculation from what the wise men told him, and thus arrived at the fact that two years old and under would cover the age of Jesus. No man, let alone a king, likes to be mocked, and his rage broke all bounds in the order to slay all the male children in Bethlehem. But God had already made his plans, and the young child was already well on his way to Egypt, taken by Joseph and Mary, thus fulfilling the Scripture of Hosea 11. 1, and Herod's dastardly act fulfilling Jeremiah 31. 15. Their sojourn was not a long one, for 4 years after Christ was born Herod was dead, and Joseph was told by the angel to return. Again scripture must be fulfilled, as Herod's son was reigning now, so he turned **aside** and went to Nazareth.

H. J. Owles.

Questions and Answers.

Questions from Glasgow.—(1). Is the genealogy given in Matthew and Luke, or in Matthew through Joseph and in Luke through Mary?

Answer 1.—This matter of the genealogy of the Lord as given in Matthew and Luke is one of much difficulty and points in it are probably impossible to solve. It is held by some, as, for example, by Alford, that both genealogies are those of Joseph and not Mary. I am disposed to the view that the word "begat" in Matthew shows the natural descent of persons by birth, but the word "son" in Luke 3. 23 does not signify natural descent. The word "son" is never repeated throughout Luke's genealogy, the genitive definite article *Tou*—"of the," is used in every case, which literally rendered is—of the Heli, of the Matthat, and so forth, right back to "of the God." Now if in the first case the Lord is not the natural son of Joseph (which He was not) then it follows that it is not necessary for us to conclude that Joseph was the natural son of Heli, though he must have been the natural son of Jacob, for Jacob begat him, as in Matthew. He might have been the adopted son of Heli, or more likely the son-in-law of Heli, Heli being the father of Mary. If Heli was the natural father of Mary then Luke gives Mary's line, and when we remember that the Gospel according to Luke specially presents the Lord as the Son of Man who came to seek the lost, we see in Him the One who is the promised Deliverer—the Seed of the woman.—J. M.

Question 2.—Was the Lord Jesus 2 years old when the Magi found Him in the house or was He 33 days old?

Answer 2.—It is to be observed that Herod learned carefully from the wise men when the star appeared. Clearly there must be a connection between this and Herod's slaughter of all the male children from two years and under, for the words of verse 7 are repeated in verse 16—"according to the time which he had carefully learned of the wise men." If we conclude that the star appeared when the Lord was born, then it follows that nearly two years had passed since this heavenly phenomenon had occurred. Consequently the Lord was between one and two years old when the wise men came from the east.—J. M.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
John the B a p t i s t	9
Question and A n s w e r	16

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

His Ministry and Mission to Israel.

From Kilmarnock. —We think it is interesting to notice how the writers of the Gospels introduce John the Baptist.

Matthew presents him as the " Preacher of the Kingdom of Heaven " making ready the way for the *King*. (Chapter 3. 2, 3).

Mark shows him as the " Lord's Messenger " preparing the way for *Jehovah's Servant* (chapter 1. 2).

Luke tells of his natural birth and also of Gabriel's message, " He shall be *filled with the Holy Spirit* even from his mother's womb " (Chapter 1. 15).

John makes him known as a " Witness-bearer " to Jesus as *Son of God* (Chapter 1. 15-35).

In the message of Gabriel to Zacharias we seem to have John's mission foretold, viz., " to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him " (Luke 1. 17). No doubt this was a fulfilment of the prophecy in Malachi 3. 1 as we see also from Matthew 11. 10. The nation of Israel had wandered far from God, and although professedly they were looking for the Messiah, they were neither in a condition to receive Him nor that His kingdom could be set up in their midst. John's message was therefore a " *call to repentance*, " and although many of the common people responded, confessing their sins, and were baptised by him, there was no sign of repentance on the part of their leaders. They might boast of their position, claiming Abraham as their father, but the rule of the heavens had no place in their hearts.

From Luke 3. 10-14 we get the instructions given by John to those who were desirous to know what they ought to do. Such principles of assistance, as in verse 11, are similar to what we have in 2 Corinthians 8. 14 and 1 John 3. 17, for those acknowledging the rule of God in churches of God at the present time. John's message was not received, however, by the nation as a whole, and his ministry was abruptly brought to an end by Herod shutting him up in prison. It would seem from Matthew 4. 12 that this happened to John after the Lord's return from the temptation in the wilderness; verse 17 says, "From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (or "hath drawn near"). While the Lord's messenger was silenced, they were yet to hear the message from the King Himself, and to see if they would indeed reverence the Son (see Matthew 21. 37).

John's message specially directed repentant ones to Christ as the Lamb of God who was to come after him, as Paul said to the twelve men in Acts 19. 4, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus." They thus justified God and condemned themselves, while the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God. (See Luke 7. 29, 30). A. G. S.

From Atherton.—John is introduced to us in prophecy in two ways; as the voice of one crying in the wilderness (Isaiah 40.), and as the messenger of the LORD (Malachi 3.). In both instances we see the sovereign authority of God, to be put into effect by the miraculous birth, life and ministry of one to be used mightily of God, foretold indeed 700 years beforehand by Isaiah, and 400 years beforehand by Malachi. As indicated by the prophets, and by the angel Gabriel prior to his birth, his work was preparatory. Filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, having the zeal and power of Elijah, he would turn the hearts of the people to the Lord, "to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him." Instructed by the Holy Spirit while in the deserts, in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar, God called him to the river Jordan to proclaim as a herald with great authority the kingdom of heaven and the King who had already come. '

The closing words of Malachi had revealed the sad spiritual condition of Israel—hence the necessity to repent. Isaiah's word was one of comfort, speaking to the heart of the people that the glory of the Lord would unquestionably be revealed, preceded by the clear testimony of one in the wilderness, "Make ye ready the way of the Lord." Eastern practice is in evidence here, for whenever monarchs entered upon an expedition, or took a journey through a desert country, harbingers and pioneers were sent out beforehand to prepare all things, to level the ways, to open passages and to remove all obstacles.

The setting of this ministry was in the rule of the iron kingdom of Daniel 2., the Roman power having sway in the earth, following the passing of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Grecian Empires. In Daniel 2. 44, 45, we are introduced to a coming kingdom which would break in pieces all Gentile power—a Stone cut out of the mountains without hands was to fill the whole earth. For this kingdom the Jews waited, and when John proclaimed, "The kingdom of the heavens (plural) is at hand," many responded to the call, believing his message. But the rulers and leaders rejected this divine message, rejected for themselves the counsel

of God, being not baptised of John. Many followed these religious leaders, so that it **was** impossible to establish Messiah's kingdom under such conditions; and this **was** further emphasised when the great King Himself, taking up the **same message** where John had left off, was "despised and rejected of men" (see Matthew 4. 12, 17).

The day will yet dawn when a people shall be prepared for Messiah's reign on the earth, when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: . . . and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isaiah 40. 4, 5, c. f. also Psalm 2. 1-3, 6). The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom in that day will effect the very purpose for which John and the Lord preached, that the Jewish nation should acknowledge unreservedly their true Messiah, in order to enter into the glories of the kingdom according to the rule of the heavens.

We may consider what passed through John's mind when he heard of the works which the Christ did. Well might he ask, "Art Thou **He** that cometh?" This phrase could only apply to the Messiah, for John had **said** of Him, "Whose fan **is** in **His** hand, and **He** will thoroughly cleanse **His** threshing-floor"; and again, "The **axe** also **is** laid unto the root of the trees" (Luke 3. 9). Apparently to John this did not coincide with his position in prison. Compared with the words he had spoken of the Coming One, how different were the Lord's works of grace!

We would suggest concerning the statement about the greatness of John in Matthew 11. 11, that it **is** the sequel to John's final testimony to the Lord Jesus found in John 3. 29. The friend of the Bridegroom (John) **is** said to have rejoiced greatly **as** he heard the welcome tidings that people were coming to the Lord Jesus (verse 26). It was the highest praise when the Lord Jesus said that John had borne witness to the truth (John 5. 33), yet how much higher we are raised, with all those who have heard the testimony of the One whom John pointed out **as** the Bridegroom! For the **Bride** has greater spiritual privileges than John, who in spite of his own denial (John 1. 21) was truly the Elijah foretold by Malachi. [John said quite distinctly in John 1. 21 that he was not Elijah, nor yet was he the Elijah foretold in Malachi 4. John came in the Spirit and power of Elijah with an Elijah ministry of restoration, but John was John and Elijah was Elijah, two distinct persons.—J. M.].

We tried to seek out the reason why John continued to baptise after the Lord had commenced **His** public ministry. Some suggested that John's work **was** completed when the Lord commenced His, and that this **was** the reason why he was taken out of the way and put into prison. [Where the Scriptures are silent we do well not to censure God's servants; particularly so in the case of John the Baptist, where the Lord's commendation was so strong. **We** should rather take the **View expressed** in Ilford's paper that John's imprisonment and death were the penalty for his faithful testimony.—Eds. J. **He** should have followed the Lord, and directed his disciples to **Him** also. Apparently he **did** not do this, apart from the instance in John 1. 35-37, for **we** read many **times** of John's disciples. Others felt that John the Baptist's words in John 3. indicate his high appreciation of the Lord and **His** work. John worked with the Lord and not in opposition; **it** was one work, and we need to **remember** that their concurrent **activities** covered only a very short period.

E. Birchall, J. K. Southern,

From **Edinburgh**. — John the Baptist was the man sent from God to prepare the way before the Lord, and to baptise in water that the Lord should be made manifest to Israel (John 1. 31). Of Him the Lord said, " Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist. " He was held in such high esteem by the multitude that Herod feared to put him to death, and the Pharisees feared to say his baptism was from men (Matthew 21. 26). Although he was entrusted with so high a mission, and although he was so highly spoken of and so highly esteemed, he was a very humble man, making no claim to be anything other than " a voice. " He also was a very plain man, plain in his dress, plain as to his dwelling (in the deserts, Luke 1. 80), plain as to his eating. Plainness characterised his ministry also.

The burden of his ministry was the nearness of the kingdom of heaven and, in view of this, the necessity of repentance from the heart on the part of the people of Israel. As a nation Israel was cold in heart and unfruitful toward God. Filled as he was with the Holy Spirit, John was competent to judge the heart condition of those Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, whatever their outward profession might have been. He made plain to them the danger of remaining in that condition in view of the fact that the axe was even then laid to the root of the unfruitful trees, and of the thorough cleansing that would be carried out by the One who was coming after him, of whom it had been written, " But who may abide the day of His coming ? and who shall stand when He appeareth ? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap " (Malachi 3. 2).

While many obeyed the message of John and were ready for the manifestation of Christ their King, Israel as a nation did not hearken and was not ready. In keeping with what God had said to John, " Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit, " the manifestation of the Christ took place when Jesus Himself came and was baptised of John in the Jordan. John saw and bore witness that this was the Son of God (John 1. 33, 34).

After this manifestation, John stood in a relationship to the Lord similar to that of the friend of a bridegroom to a bridegroom. " The friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice. " John could say, " This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I **must** decrease " (John 3. 29, 30). *J. A. H. R.*

From **Ilford**. — John the Baptist plays a very important part in the divine purposes, yet, comparatively speaking, the scripture record of this long-foretold prophet is limited to a few brief references. Nevertheless, in these are contained the essence of his mission and ministry to Israel. As in the case of Christ Himself, John's advent had long been foretold, and in Matthew 3. 3 he is identified with Isaiah's prophecy concerning " the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ye ready the way of the LORD, make His paths straight. " The language of this prophecy is peculiarly apposite. It is quite evident from the scriptural record of the state of mind and heart of the Israel nation as a whole, that they were entirely unprepared for the advent of Messiah, and even more pronounced was their misconception of the Christ, and the position He was to occupy from an earthly standpoint. They were anticipating the establishment of an earthly kingdom, and, later in the Lord's ministry, they would have taken Him by force to make Him King.

In the face of this unpreparedness and misconception, therefore, John the Baptist **came** to prepare the way, that Israel might **be** receptive of the long-awaited Messiah. It **is** very clear from Matthew 3. that John **came** with **a** call to repentance, and **a** warning **as** to the consequences to Israel **if** they rejected the Messiah. The importance of repentance cannot be over-emphasised. The call to-day **is** unchanged. Repentance on man's part **is** necessary to enable God righteously to **exercise** the gracious work of the remission of sins.

An outstanding characteristic of John the Baptist **is** his humility and self-effacement. It **was** his delight to proclaim, " **He** that cometh after **me** **is** mightier than **I**, " and **as** the Lord **was** starting on **His** ministry John could say, " **He** must increase, **but** **I** must decrease. "

To the Pharisees and Sadducees John **was** fearlessly outspoken. In this he might be compared with Elijah, who in an earlier dispensation similarly accused the wicked Ahab and his wife. The hardness of heart of these leaders of the people in the **face** of such accusations, and the unmistakable warning of their being **cast** off **if** they did not repent (Matthew 3. 10-12), displays how their eyes were blinded so that they could not see.

John's testimony to the Christ was also plainly demonstrated to the people on the occasion of his declaring " Behold, the Lamb of God. " To him was granted the inestimable privilege of baptising the Lord Jesus, and like many another faithful servant he paid the penalty of his faithfulness first by imprisonment and then by death. Before this occurred, however, he had fulfilled the divine purpose for which he was sent. His ministry was blessed, for many believed and were baptised (Matthew 3. 5, 6). Nor was he soon forgotten by the leaders of the people, for when the report **came** to Herod concerning Jesus it **is** recorded that he **said**: " This **is** John the Baptist; he **is** risen from the dead. " Oh for such fearless courage, singleness of purpose and humility of heart **as** were evidenced by this lowly yet great man ! A. G. *Jarvis* (*Jun.*).

From Glasgow. —The days of John the Baptist were dispensationally of **a** transitional character, for **we** read that the law and the prophets were until John, and from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God **is** preached (**see** Matthew 11. 13; **Luke** 16. 16). It **is** significant in connection with John's ministry that being of the priestly line, he might have worn **a** linen ephod, **but** instead he wore **a** leathern girdle about his loins; and instead of eating the portion of the Shewbread which **was** the priest's right, and also of the offerings, he lived on locusts and wild honey, and he **was** in deserts until the day of his showing unto Israel.

John the Baptist **came** in **a** very dark day in the history of the children of Israel, and, **as** in the days of Eli, **we** see the waning glory of that great kingdom of which God **at** the earliest time in its history could say, " **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 " (see Exodus 19. 5, 6). The coming of John marked the end of one **age** governed by the first covenant, now becoming old and

nigh unto vanishing away, and he was the one to set forth the beginning of a new dispensation under a new covenant, for from that time the gospel of the kingdom was preached (Luke 16. 6).

John the Baptist's ministry was particularly to Israel, and it bore a likeness to Elijah's ministry. For like that prophet of the Old Testament, **he** spake concerning Israel's sad departure from the God of heaven, and also rebuked **them** for their unbelief. Luke tells us that it was prophesied of John that he would go before the Lord's face in the Spirit and power of Elijah, so that he might turn **the** hearts of the **fathers** to the children, and the disobedient to walk in **the** wisdom of the just, thus making ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him. John's mission was concerning the repentance of Israel towards God, signifying by their baptism a truly repentant heart, ready and prepared to accept their **Messiah** and King, and ultimately receiving the remission of their sins. The Pharisees and the religious leaders in that day were opposed to John's preaching, so they are likened unto children sitting in the market places, and not regarding either the joyful piping or the mournful wailing. They deliberately rejected John's call to repentance, and also the Lord's invitation to joy and gladness.

In Matthew 14. 1-12 we have the sad disclosure of how John through his faithfulness to the word of God was put in prison by Herod, and latterly put to death. Herod was truly convicted of this unlawful deed, for when **he** heard of **Jesus** **he** supposed that this was John the Baptist risen from the dead. This Herod **we** believe to be Herod Antipas and not the **same** Herod **as** in chapter 2. of Matthew; **the** latter was Herod the Great, but it was Herod Antipas who took **his** brother. Philip's wife, and who was condemned by John the Baptist for doing so.

John's **message** to Israel was not supplemented by miracles and signs, but was marked out by the rite of baptism. The strength of John's ministry **was** of an uprooting nature. To those who sought to claim Abraham **as** their father **he** said, "Even now **is** the **axe** laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit **is** hewn down, and cast into the fire. "

It **is** striking to notice that Peter in Acts 1. **22** makes reference to the baptism of John as the beginning of a new era. Furthermore, Paul also alludes to it when reading the law and the prophets to the men of Israel in his day, and points out the significance of John's preaching the baptism of repentance (see Acts 13. 24-26).

As we **see** the boldness and faithfulness of John the Baptist in such a dark day we do well to remember **the** Lord's words concerning him, for **he** was indeed "the lamp that burneth and shineth. " **He** had a unique privilege **as** witness bearer to **the** Light of **the** World, and **as** torch-bearer in the deepening gloom. **He** was given the highest commendation that ever a man could **get** here, for the Lord **Jesus** in speaking concerning **him** said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist " (Matthew 11. 11).

Fred Harvey.

From Cowdenbeath. —The long silence of God toward Israel from the days of Malachi, whose last words gave promise of the coming of Elijah, was broken by the voice of John the Baptist in the wilderness of **Judaea**, calling upon the people to repent in view of the imminence of the appearing of the Messiah whose kingdom would soon **be** established.

In view of this coming John preached that the people should **be** baptised. His preaching showed that they were unfit, because of their sins, to welcome the coming One. Many submitted to be baptised, confessing their sins, and so, figuratively, the past **was** buried in Jordan, the river of death, and a people was being prepared for the Lord. Many valleys were thus exalted and mountains and hills made low, crooked places were made straight and rough places plain.

John was specially fitted for his work, being filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb. He was possessed of great perception and spiritual discernment. Only such **as** manifested repentance were baptised. **He** fearlessly reprov'd the Pharisees for failing to give evidence of repentance. They did not believe John and consequently were not baptised of him. How they contrasted with the Lord who, although **He** had no need to **be** baptised, being sinless, yet was willing to become identified with the people in this revival! The baptism of the Lord provided the occasion for the fulfilment of the promise made earlier to John, whereby he was to be able to identify Him without mistake.

John fulfilled a greater mission than any of the prophets who preceded him. Isaiah and the others, **as** they prophesied through the Holy Spirit, saw **His** coming from afar, but to John was the singular honour given of announcing the actual arrival of the promised One. In this sense, we believe he was greater, not so much because of his own personal greatness, but rather because of the greatness of the position which he filled. And yet he that **is** but little in the kingdom of heaven (or kingdom of God, Luke 7. 28) **is** greater than he. John was a man sent from God with God's **message** for the people. This mission John discharged faithfully. **He** spake with equal boldness to the common people, the soldiers, publicans, scribes and Pharisees and even the king. As the result of a reproof delivered in faithfulness to Herod, John was **cast** into prison. During this period of imprisonment John **seems** to have become despondent. **He** was fully prepared to recede into the background and allow the Lord to receive the publicity ("**He** must increase, but I must decrease"), but this fate which had befallen him, that of languishing in a prison, did not **seem** to be compatible with the Messiah's presence on earth, concerning whom Isaiah had written, that **He** was sent to proclaim liberty to the captives (Isaiah 61. 1). John's disciples returned **as** eyewitnesses of the Lord's wonderful power to work miracles, and as bearers of a personal message to John, "Blessed **is** he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me." Who can estimate to what degree John was strengthened by such words, or to what extent they upheld him till the fateful day arrived when he must yield his life to satiate the desire of a wicked woman? What a sad [and yet great] end to such a worthy life! The Lord spake very highly of John, but not in the presence of his disciples. John will, no doubt, be fully rewarded in a day, to come for his faithful service and will personally hear a high commendation spoken to him by his Master.

John's ministry had the effect of bringing the people to a state of expectancy, and a great revival took place causing much joy. Yet this lasted only for a season (John 5. 35). Had he been received nationally, then John's coming would have been [a fulfilment, but not] the fulfilment of the promise that Elijah should come first. But John, like the Lord, was rejected. **His** ministry and manner of approach were different from the Lord's, yet both received the same treatment.

Jas. Bowman.

[We extend a welcome to our Cowdenbeath friends and regret that we failed to do so in January's "Bible Studies." —Eds.]

From Bradford, Leeds and Halifax. —The King had come, but before His personal appearance is made it is necessary that His forerunner and herald should proclaim His coming. John, the cousin of the Lord, is the chosen vessel of God to carry this proclamation. He came in " the Spirit and power of Elijah, " with the message " Make ye ready the way of the Lord. "

John is without doubt a most remarkable man, " much more than a prophet, " the " greatest of those born of women. " Coming from, the deserts, where for so long he had lived, clad in coarse garments of camel's hair and eating locusts and wild honey, and preaching with such fiery zeal, he was a man likely to attract attention. His message was no less remarkable than the man himself. The King, Messiah, is at hand ! Let His subjects prepare themselves for His rule, let them repent of their sins and ungodliness, for " the kingdom of heaven is at hand. "

Multitudes of the people came and, repenting, were baptised by John in the waters of the Jordan. Even the Pharisees and Sadducees were influenced by the great movement, and came to John seeking his baptism. But how vehement is his reproof of these hypocrites ! Even Roman soldiers came to him and (though they were probably Gentiles) he had a message for them too.

With the Lord's coming, John's mission is complete and shortly we find this wonderful man immured in the prison of Herod. What is the meaning of the visit of John's disciples to the Lord ? Had his faith been shaken by the trials he had met with ? or was his purpose to convince his disciples that this was the One whom now they must follow ?

How sad it is that this man, so courageous and zealous as he was, should die at the whim of a foolish worthless woman ! The scriptures show well where true greatness may be found. Not to the palace must we go, but to the hermit in the deserts, or to the **Babe** lying in a cattle shed. *W. Rowan.*

Question and Answer.

Question from Glasgow. —Was it right that John the Baptist should have rebuked Herod for what he did, seeing that Herod was a Gentile and not under the Law of God which was for the Jews ?

Answer. —The law relative to adultery is applicable to Gentiles as well as to the Jews, and well both Herod Antipas and Herodias knew they were doing wrong in the wicked life they were living. I am of the opinion that John was perfectly right in rebuking Herod's immorality. The Lord called Herod a " fox, " for his cunning, cruel ways, for he killed John and would have killed the Lord Himself (Luke 13. 31, 32). —J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Remarks on " the Seed of Abraham "	17
The character of Matthew's G o s p e l	17
John the Baptist	18
Nazareth to Capernaum	21
Questions and A n s w e r s	28

REMARKS ON " THE SEED OF ABRAHAM " (Hebrews 2. 16).

As a matter for general consideration, may we draw attention to Hebrews 2. 16 ? " For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham "; or, " Not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham " (R. V.). This is generally looked at as being the same as verse 14, which tells us, " He also Himself likewise took part of the same " (blood and flesh). In the Scriptures there is a *Saviour* for the sons, or seed of Adam. For the sons of Adam who accept the Saviour and thus become Abraham's seed (Galatians 3. 29), there is a High Priest.

In chapter 1., the angels, instead of being helped, are themselves helpers, doing " service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation. " When Abraham was returning, battle and travel-weary, Melchizedek came out to meet him with bread and wine. Abraham was succoured, or helped by Melchizedek, and we suggest that is the thought here. Thus verse 14 has reference to John 1. 14, when " The Word became flesh " (what He *did*). Verse 16, on the other hand, has reference to what He now *does*, ever since He has been named of God, a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (chapter 5. 10), taking hold of, helping the *seed* of Abraham, **as** foreshadowed in Melchizedek's ministrations to Abraham himself. The American revisers translate verse 16 thus: " For verily, not to angels doth He give help, but He giveth help to the seed of Abraham. " " Took them by the hand " in chapter 8. 9 gives the thought in mind. [J. M. agrees with the views above given on Hebrews 2. 16].

J. Blair.

THE CHARACTER OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

" The book of the generation of Jesus Christ: the Son of David, the Son of Abraham " (Matthew 1. 1). Thus opens Matthew's gospel, a prayerful perusal of which should lead to the revealing of " Things new and old " (chapter 13. 52).

As Son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ is certainly set forth in this Gospel as " The King of the Jews " (chapter 2.), and like His father David, He was rejected; but why is He also spoken of as Son of Abraham ? The general view of Matthew's Gospel suggests that Abraham is looked upon here as the father of

Israel only (chapter 3. 9; John 8. 83-39). True, Jesus was born ¹ King of the Jews, " but is He not also " King of kings, " and Isaiah 49. 6, 7, makes plain that His reign over Israel is but a small part of God's purpose concerning Him; with this the closing verses of this Gospel agree.

Abraham is spoken of as " the father of *many* nations, " " the friend of God, " ⁴⁴ the heir of the world. " It is written of Israel as a nation that they shall " dwell alone " (Numbers 23. 9). Part of the world, from the great sea to the river Euphrates, is their promised inheritance (Deuteronomy 1. 7; 11. 24). But Abraham is " heir of *the world*. " A little study of Romans 4. and Galatians 3. in relation to Abraham will prove helpful regarding what is before us here. If we recognise in Matthew's Gospel not only the record of the birth, life and death of Israel's Messiah and King, but also the record of the coming of Abraham's promised *Seed*, through whom all the nations will be blessed, then instead of being surprised at what mention is made of Gentiles in this " Gospel of the kingdom, " as it is called, we should be more surprised were no mention made of them at all. While Matthew does not give it in the same words as John 3. 16, the same truth is evident, for the field in chapter 13. is " the world, " while at the end of it, " the world, " is the field for the preaching of the gospel.

Time and space, and most of all our inability, forbid the setting forth of the many precious things that open to our view with even a little understanding of these two basic truths of verse one. It may be of interest to some to remark that Abraham is mentioned seven times in Matthew (which is often spoken of as the Gospel of the kingdom), while in Luke (the Gentile Gospel) it occurs fifteen times; in Mark once; in John eight times.

It is very instructive to notice how Abraham is brought into view in the epistle to the Romans and to the Galatians as " the father of all them that believe " (Romans 4. 11); therefore we suggest a little acquaintance with truth in relation to Abraham in this respect, will broaden our vision as to what can be seen in the

" Genesis " of our New Testament. J. Blair.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

His ministry and mission to Israel.

From **Brantford, Ont.** —We understand from Matthew 11. 11, that the Lord speaks very highly of John the Baptist. He was born of a woman by the name of Elizabeth, whose husband's name was Zacharias, and it was to this man the angel Gabriel spoke, telling him that his supplication was heard, and that his wife Elizabeth would bear a son. This son would go before the Lord's face in the Spirit and power of Elijah, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him (Luke 1. 17). We read from Luke 16. 16 that the law and the prophets were until John, and from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God was preached. This goes to show that the law and the prophets and John's preaching are clearly two dispensations. [A comparison of Luke 16. 16 with Matthew 11. 9, 13, would rather show that John the Baptist was the last of the prophets. When his ministry was accomplished, the Lord began to preach the gospel of the kingdom (Mark 1. 14, 15; Luke 4. 43). Eds.] John's preaching consisted of two main things, repentance and baptism. He baptised in water, whilst the One that was to come would baptize in the Holy Spirit. As was said before, John's mission was to prepare a people for the Lord. The Lord Himself entered this fold in the same way as the rest of the people, through baptism, and immediately following this the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. When this was finished, the Lord spent forty days in the wilderness, where He was tempted of Satan, and on His return He commenced His preaching, " Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand " (Matthew 4. 17). Where John's ministry finished is hard to determine; it seemed more or less to blend in with the preaching of the Lord.

Neil Wood.

From Birkenhead. —John the Baptist was separated unto God from his birth, and grew up in the wilderness, away from soft raiment and king's houses, so that he might become the herald of the Lord. He was as it were, only a voice; bodily pleasures do not seem to have affected his attitude to life in the slightest.

The Spirit was in John, and his message was the word of God. He was young, very young, and he died when most men are reaching maturity, yet he performed one of the most honoured tasks that a man has ever been called upon to perform. Did he fail in accomplishing his mission? Luke 1. 16, 17 describes his mission, and he accomplished it. It is wrong to say that his mission was doomed to failure because the atoning death of the Lord was inevitably to occur. John's mission was not a failure. He did achieve something, and what he did achieve was the exact part of the web that men call history which God had appointed for his weaving.

One thing that is noticeable in this transition period is the manner in which it brings out the fundamental similarities of the dispensations, and the principles that do not change. The basis of repentance and change of heart, and the separation that is associated with baptism, are all present in John's teaching.

There are some very difficult verses with regard to John, which many times have been puzzled over. Yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he " (Matthew 11. 11), seems to suggest that John had no place in the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God (Luke 7. 28), but was only the herald of the approaching kingdom. Matthew 11. 12, which speaks of men taking by force the kingdom of heaven, and the similar verse about the kingdom of God (Luke 16. 16) are also difficult. [This passage in Matthew 11. 11-15 (especially verses 11 and 12) has provided food for thought and matter for discussion to many. In verse 11 we have evidently two planes of human experience and activity in (1) " them that are born of women, " and (2) those in the kingdom of heaven. The latter involves a new birth; hence it follows that the " lesser " (see R. V. marg.) amongst the latter are greater than the greatest amongst the former. Having regard to the difficulty the Lord had in regard to Jewish claims as to natural birth from Abraham, we see the force of the Lord's words about John, whom the Jewish leaders despised, that he was greater than any who claimed Abrahamic parentage, or, for that matter of it, greater than any who had ever been born. He was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, and no doubt herein lay his greatness. In regard to verse 12, the solution lies between (1) those who eagerly grasped what was set before them in the preaching of John and the Lord and His apostles, so that they might share and be enriched in the coming kingdom which they hoped was soon to appear, without any due appreciation of what they were pressing into; and, (2) such as violently resisted so as to destroy all hope of that which was preached ever being realised. I judge the truth of the passage lies in (1), in that eager, ardent multitudes pressed into the kingdom of heaven in the great revival of John's and the Lord's time, but without any real spiritual perception of the implication of the truth taught. In consequence of the truth taught by the Lord many went back and walked no more with him. Such an elimination of unstable people occurs in all movements when excitement dies down. —J. M. J. It is clear that John's silence did not end the teaching of the kingdom, because we know that when the Lord heard of his arrest He began to preach the gospel of repentance in new parts, so that the words " from the days of John the Baptist until now " are speaking of the period when the Lord was preaching the same message as John had preached.

[Clear distinction should be drawn between the message of John the Baptist and that of the Lord. The Holy Spirit twice records that John preached " the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins " (Mark 1. 4 and Luke 3. 8). The Lord preached the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4. 28), otherwise described in Mark 1. 14 as the " gospel of God. " While it is true that John said, " Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand " (Matthew 3. 2) the gospel of the

kingdom was not the theme of his ministry: repentance and baptism were the great burdens of his message. *From the time of John, the gospel of the kingdom was preached by the Lord to His disciples (c. f. Matthew 9. 35). —Eds.] L. B. H.*

From **Cardiff**. —John 1. 6, *' A man sent from God. "

John **1. 7**, " Bear witness of the Light, that all might believe through Him. "

Luke **1. 16**, " And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. "

Mark **1. 4**, " John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. "

Matthew 3. 2, " Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is **at** hand. "

The above scriptures give **a** summary of the ministry of John to the nation of Israel. His message was one of rebuke and warning, calling the nation to repentance for their sins. He spoke severe words of judgment to the unrepentant.

One thinks of the anxious questions of the multitudes, the publicans and the soldiers: the answer was that they were to depart from all evil. To the Pharisees and Sadducees the message was to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. How this ministry probed into the hearts of the people like **a** two edged sword, in order to prepare the way of the Lord, to make His paths straight!

In Mark 1. we read these words: " The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. " By this we understand that the ministry and mission of John the Baptist, although severe and condemning, was yet good news from God to the truly repentant Israelite (see Luke 3. 18).

The Lord Jesus testified concerning John that there had not arisen **a** greater, but John testified, " He that cometh after me is become before me: for He was before me. " We recall the words of Zacharias concerning John, " Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people in the remission of their sins. "

While John, in response to the questions of the Jews, said that he was not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet, but the voice of one crying in the wilderness, yet the angel said that he would come in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1. 17.. The Lord said concerning John: " And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, which is to come. "

The character and work of the great prophet Elijah in Old Testament times, **and** also his austere manner of life, should have been discerned when John the Baptist appeared. Like the Lord Jesus, John came but they knew him not. The Lord said, " Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things. " John came to prepare the way for the Lord, to make His paths straight. It was a great time of preparation. The spiritual condition of Israel is seen in the foregoing words. There were those who exalted themselves against the Lord; they were to be brought low. The crooked ways of the people were to be made straight, the rough ways of men to be made smooth and the great purpose was that all men should see the salvation of God.

C. Wilkinson.

From **London, S. E.** —John stands unique among the prophets. He is the last of the old dispensation, and the herald of the new. He is the spiritual Elijah (Matthew 17. 12, 13).

It is remarkable to notice the amount of space devoted in the Gospels to John's biography. It stands second only to that of the Lord Jesus Christ. They run almost concurrently in Luke's gospel.

A man's dress is often an outward reflection of his character. It is perhaps for this reason that scripture describes John's clothes. These are outstanding when compared with those of his fellows. A helpful reference is given in Zechariah 13. 4. This speaks of some of the house of Israel wearing hairy mantles to deceive. Here the mantle is identified with the prophet, and in the normal case obviously speaks of truth. John is spoken of as the spiritual Elijah [This is not a scriptural expression, but we assume our friends imply that the character of John's ministry was akin to that of Elijah. —Eds.], and in 2 Kings 1. 8 Elijah is recognised by his hairy mantle. The fifth verse of Zechariah 13. gives a plain reference to Christ. How delightful to realise that the sum total of prophecy is to tell of Christ!

Locusts were one of the species of creeping things allowed to be eaten under Levitical law (Leviticus 11. 20-23) and so John is seen walking in the law of the Lord. Locusts are commended in Proverbs 30. 27.

John has oftentimes been condemned for his lack of faith in sending to the Lord. However, there do seem to be other reasonable explanations, *e. g.* (1) He may have wanted quietly to draw attention to his imprisonment. Imagine what this must have been to a man who spent most of his life in the desert! (2) To confirm his own disciples' faith. (3) To allow his disciples to see some of the works of the Lord. (4) To bring his disciples in touch with the Lord.

R. D. Wood.

Nazareth to Capernaum and the Sermon on the Mount.

From Hamilton, Ont. —Matthew's Gospel presents Christ as King, and in speaking of the things touching the King, well may our hearts overflow with the goodly matter! (Psalm 45. 1). In Matthew 5. we hear the wondrous Speaker, He who was full of grace and truth. Truly never man so spake such sublime words of grace as proceeded from His lips on that occasion!

It would seem from Matthew 5. 1 that it was the disciples alone to whom Jesus spake. His message, we believe, was primarily to His own, who were the sons of the kingdom (Matthew 13. 38), those who would later be His witnesses, to whom this teaching would be most essential for their future service. This truth is borne out in Luke's Gospel, where we also learn that those sayings occur in various contexts (Luke 6. 20-49; 11. 2-4; and 12. 22-34). [Although Luke records certain passages similar to the Sermon on the Mount in different parts of his Gospel, it seems clear that Matthew 5. to 7. was one continuous discourse. The Lord may, of course, have spoken similar words on different occasions. —Eds.]. But it is evident from Matthew 7. 29 that it was also to the multitudes that Jesus spake. They were included, there was much teaching for them too, and they recognised power behind His words, for He spake with authority as King, inasmuch that they were astonished.

It is well to note that the Lord Jesus continued God's work where John the Baptist left off. His message to Israel [at first] was the same: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4. 17). John was the forerunner of Christ, and spake of that coming kingdom, showing that a new dispensation was approaching, that of the law and the prophets being until John (Luke 16. 16).

We also see a close connection between what the Lord was then teaching, and the **future** when the gospel of the kingdom shall again **be** preached during the Great Tribulation. As **He** could say to His disciples in Matthew 10. 28, " **Ye** shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man **be** come. " **We remembered** that when they **were** persecuted in the days of the Acts, they rejoiced that they were "counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the **Name**" (Acts 5. 41). The Lord Jesus Himself they hated without a cause. Again how **great** will **be** the persecution in the **future** ! Blessed shall they **be** when they shall hunger and thirst, and **be** killed, **etc.** (Matthew 24. 9, 10; 25. 35-40).

The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount will apply again to the Jewish nation, especially after the Church is removed. It sets forth the spiritual condition of those who will enter and possess the kingdom. It also sets forth the laws, the manner and the condition of things that will prevail in His kingdom during the Millennium. Then God's Anointed, the heavenly King, shall reign and **be** acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6. 15). For although Jerusalem was the **city** of the great King (Matthew 5. 35*), **He** was never openly acknowledged **by** Israel **as** a nation; they **refused** to own Zion's King. This will have its fulfilment when **He** shall reign from Jerusalem, and **His** rule shall extend throughout the whole earth—from the river unto the ends of the earth (Psalm 72. 8).

Then the words of Matthew 6. 10 will come true to a **great** extent, when the will of God shall **be** done on earth, and God will **get** His place. **He** shall bring about those heavenly conditions amongst men, and blessed indeed shall **be** the portion of the poor in spirit, " for with righteousness shall **He** **judge** the poor, and reprove with **equity** for the meek of the earth " (Isaiah 11. 1-5). Then will **He** " comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to **give** unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning " (Isaiah 61. 2).

In a general sense the teaching applies to every dispensation, especially to our own. For every scripture is inspired of God and profitable for teaching (2 Timothy 3. 16). For example, Matthew 7. 13, 14 sets forth the two ways, and the two gates; chapter 7. 24-27 the two foundations; both **are** used as practical examples of the gospel message, and **are** statements that apply to men in general.

It is important to notice the new mode of teaching which Jesus set forth, something beyond what the law said, and **yet it did** not conflict with the law; it brings out the **great** contrast between law and grace. What the Lord Jesus said was infinitely grander, and was to supersede that which had gone before. The law, the prophets, and the psalms had their fulfilment in Him. Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness (Romans 10. 4; Matthew 5. 17). Thus grace was to accomplish what the law could not do.

Although those words **were** spoken prior to the death of the Lord Jesus, **yet** there is contained teaching applicable for us to-day. What a high standard is set before us in these three chapters ! **We** have instruction as to our behaviour and testimony towards the world (Matthew 5. 13-16); how **we** ought to pray as individuals (Matthew 6. 5-15); loyalty to God in service (Matthew 6. 24); our dependence, trust and faith in God in temporal things (Matthew 6. 25-34); the necessity of judging self **and** not our brother (Matthew 7. 1-5); teaching concerning fruitbearing (Matthew 7. 15-21), and also our responsibility and relationship toward our brother regarding worship (Matthew 5. 23-24). The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is further developed **by** the writers of the Epistles (compare Romans 12. 9-21 and Ephesians 4. 17-32). **Here** we have a similar message on our practical Christian living, an attitude of mind and heart that should **be** true of all believers.

T. Ramage.

From Edinburgh.—Verses 1 and 2 of chapter 5. introduce the most profound definition of Christian living to be found anywhere in the Bible. When He began, the Lord was speaking to His disciples, but when He ended His words there were multitudes listening. In this portion twenty-four complete guiding principles are laid down for the manner of life, walk, example and Christian bearing of all who would seek to glorify God and His Son. Many instances can be treated as applicable to the Jews, but the guide-line is such that every Christian should seek to go by the rule as detailed there, and God, who sees in secret, will openly reward. It is worthy of note that condemnation is given, warning is given, but to the "whosoever" blessing also is given. This is a divine principle. Whosoever glorifies God receives His blessing. In all things let us remember to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto us. So we will be able to speak at all times with the voice of one having authority.

We have sought to summarise the teaching of this portion as follows:—

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Verses</i>	<i>Theme.</i>	<i>Lesson.</i>
5.	1-2	Introduction.	
	3-11	Blessedness or the "Beatitudes."	Humility is the key-note of the Christian life. Nine things which the world abhors, but which make rich toward God.
	12	Promise.	Suffer persecution for righteousness' sake—looking unto Jesus.
	13	Taste.	Proclaiming Christ in our life—so shall our savour permeate the earth.
	14-16	Beacon.	Christlike actions cause us to shine like beacons calling all men to repent.
	17-20	Law of Moses	Christ vindicates God's law—proves that he who keepeth the law shall live by it.
	21 -23	Animosity \	* Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity " ! Necessity for disciplinary action (see 1 Corinthians 5. 5; 1 Timothy 1. 20). Delivery unto Satan for destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
	24-25	Peace. /	
	26	Judgment.	
	27-32	Morality.	From the everyday life He calls for singleness of heart, soul and body, all fixed on the Christ. Let none of our members cause us to swerve from the narrow way.
	33-37	Swear not by anything.	Danger in multiplication of words—Satan's trap—honest sincerity—brief and to the point—speaking only the things we know to God's glory.
	38-42	Overcome evil with good.	In all things go willingly—live at peace with all men—not brawlers.
	43-48	Love.	Let love to <i>all</i> men be manifest—" If I . . . have not love, I am become sounding brass" (1 Corinthians 13. 1).
6.	1-4	Humility is the secret.	No show to self-glory, but quietness and unobtrusivness to God's glory. Each will have His reward. The key-note is simplicity, yet covering all things needful.
	5-15	Prayer.	Make not a vain show in the letter of the law—again humility.
	16-18	Fasting.	

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Verses</i>	<i>Theme,</i>	<i>Lesson,</i>
	19-21	Treasure.	" Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. " Lay up treasure for eternity.
	22-28	Light.	Let the light of the glory of Christ shine in you .
	24	Service.	Only one to whom allegiance can be granted —otherwise confusion.
	25-34	Leave all in the Father's hand.	God cares for and attends to the needs of all His creatures— ye are the sons of God and joint heirs with Christ— all things needful will be supplied.
7.	1-5	Judgment.	Self analysis first—humility is judgment—tolerance and forbearance, remembering our own weaknesses and failings.
	6	Carelessness.	Note that familiarity breeds contempt.
	7-12	Asking.	Seek and ye shall find—all <i>earnest</i> seekers are rewarded.
	13-14	Separation.	Two paths—choose the path to God's glory.
	15-23	Fruit.	By your fruit shall ye be known—not words but deeds count with God.
	24-27	Building.	The wise and the foolish— dig deep and build on the Rock—none other foundation will endure.
	28-29	Conclusion.	All have heard His words and amazement is expressed because He spoke as One with authority. <i>Thomas Hope,</i>

EXTRACTS.

From **London, S. E.** —It is significant that the Lord's first public ministry was not as **we** might have **expected, in Judaea** or Jerusalem, among the orthodox **and** religious Jewish leaders, **but in** " Galilee of the Gentiles, " thus fulfilling Isaiah 9. 1, 2. [Note: John 2. 13—3. 36 comes before His Galilean ministry. See John 4. 3—J. M.].

The Sermon on the Mount was primarily spoken to the disciples, **but** the multitudes apparently gathered around during the discourse. The Lord tells forth the laws of the kingdom. He shews the blessings of the **new** dispensation of **grace** compared with the old dispensation, which the book of Malachi concludes with the words relating to the smiting of the earth with **a** curse.

All Christians **can apply** its lessons **to** themselves, *e. g.*, " **Ye** are the salt of the earth "; **and again,** " **Ye** are the light of the world... so let your light shine before men. " Those words show that believers are **in the** world not only for the purpose of checking the spread of error, **but** also for the spreading forth of the truth. The **nine** beatitudes **are** also the possession of **all** " sons of God. " The Lord shows the necessity of faith **in** God for temporal blessings, **and** warns against having **undue** anxiety. The Lord Jesus also teaches concerning prayer, emphasising main features, *e. g.*, **reality** without vain repetition. The Lord's **prayer** was not **intended to be repeated** word by word, **but we** should pray after a similar manner. In it we **get spirituality, dependence** and comprehensiveness with brevity. He shows that prayer has **a** threefold **aspect**—ask, **being** a petition; seek, **being** a supplication; knock, **being** importunity. As our heavenly Father **is better** than **any** earthly father so **we can be** certain that He **will** respond to our requests far beyond any earthly father.
Wm, F, Shulver.

From Glasgow. —In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord unfolds the principles and laws, and describes the subjects, of His kingdom. Not one verse of this discourse, be it observed, is recorded in Mark who, though generally following Matthew invariably omits what is connected with power in the kingdom, as inconsistent with the view which it is his office to present to us.

In Matthew 5. to 7. many points are characteristic such as the tone of authority throughout the repeated "I say unto you" (chapter 5. 18, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 39), where the letter of Moses' law is set aside to make way for that which is higher. There is special teaching too, as to the connection of the law of Moses with the new era; how the latter was not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them (chapter 5. 17; 7. 12). The doxology in the Lord's prayer, with an allusion to the kingdom of heaven, is given here, but omitted in Luke (compare Matthew 6. 13, R. V. M., with Luke 11. 4). There is repeated reference to a kingdom, the character of which is remarkably implied in its distinctive title; in other gospels it is called the kingdom of God, here only the kingdom of heaven (*e. g.*, chapters 5. 3, 10, 19, 20, etc.), a peculiar expression which occurs nearly thirty times in this Gospel. We also find the marks of His subjects, among which righteousness is specially named. All this, not to speak of other points, is peculiar to Matthew and all characteristic.

Regarding the word righteousness, to some it may seem trifling to notice that this word occurs frequently in Matthew and scarcely ever in the other Gospels. Here it is repeated again and again, *e. g.*, "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake." In Luke it is distinctively reproach for the son of Man's sake (compare chapter 5. 10; Luke 6. 22). Again where in Luke it is written that the blood of all the prophets from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zachariah shall be required of this generation, in Matthew we read, "From the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zacharias... whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Luke 11. 51; Matthew 23. 35). Then in Luke we merely read, "Seek ye His kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you"; in Matthew it is said, "* Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness" (compare Luke 12. 31; Matthew 6. 33), righteousness being a special characteristic of the Lord's kingdom. So Paul teaches, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14. 17). The gospel of the kingdom peculiarly marks this, in its notice of righteousness, adding also in reference to peace, "Blessed are the peacemakers," a beatitude only to be found in this Gospel.

W. R. Wallace.

From Ilford. —The first question which arises out of the Sermon on the Mount is, "To whom does it apply?" We must look into the portion itself to find the clues necessary to discover this. In chapter 5. 47 we read, "And if ye salute your brethren... do not even the Gentiles the same?" Chapter 6. 7, "And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do." Chapter 6. 32, "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek." This is conclusive evidence that the address that the Lord gives in the chapters before us is to Jews, those of the chosen people. I mention that the Jews were the chosen people because of the application of the Sermon of the Mount for us to-day. We who are God's chosen people, **and** those outside are sometimes referred to as "the Gentiles" (*f. e. g.*, 3 John 7). It is obvious, too, by verse 13 of chapter 5. that the Sermon is to believers.

We have presented to us in chapter 5. the law, which was given by Moses, in its true application, as it were. If we live the life contained in the Beatitudes, we have brought before us the blessings that will accrue. The teaching of Christ makes it clear that the pathway of a true Christian is not a rosy one, but the blessings which will be ours will be a true recompense for we must remember that man seeth only the outward part, but God can see into our hearts and He will recompense.

Chapter 6. introduces the subject of reward for the labours of love which we may do, and Christ expects His disciples to lay up for themselves treasure in heaven. For **He** well knows the heart of man, and **He** expresses the thought, that where our treasure is there will our heart **be** also (verse 21). Paul seemed to realise the great advantage of laying up treasure in heaven when he said, " I am persuaded that **He** is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him. " May this mind **be** also in us, for our heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of.

E. H. Jarvis.

From **Bradford, Leeds and Halifax.** —From His obscurity in Nazareth the King has come to His people. He has not come vested with any temporal power or dignity; He has come with a power that is divine.

We can well imagine the effects of the initial impact of the Lord Jesus upon the Jewish nation. His searching message and the wonderful miracles which accompanied His teaching caused His repute to spread throughout all Syria. Great multitudes followed Him; some doubtless from mere curiosity or desire for novelty, but some also of those who in belief of John the Baptist's message, were looking for the coming King.

These chapters (3., 6., 7.) are in the nature of a promulgation by the King. He first describes the subjects of His kingdom, then prescribes the law of His kingdom, and following this come the precepts which should govern the behaviour and characters of His subjects.

Is there not an evident progression of thought in those beautiful verses commonly termed the Beatitudes? First come the poor in spirit—surely this is the initial condition of all those who seek the Lord Jesus. It is not the haughty of spirit who seek Him. Then, they that mourn—a godly sorrow, repentance. Then the meekness which, realising the lack of personal merit, leads one to the Saviour. It should characterise the saved one that he " hungers and thirsts after righteousness. " Then will follow mercy, purity, and peace. Lastly there is the honour of being counted worthy to suffer with Him.

The exalted moral teaching which is contained in this sermon is widely recognised, though not adhered to, by Christendom. Glibly these words fall from the lips of those who, if they practiced them, would find themselves socially ruined. It is essentially a rule of the heart and not of external observances, the spirit as opposed to the letter. The criterion of behaviour is—" What do ye *more* than others? " (verse 47).

Are some of these laws expressed hyperbolically? It is common in the East to exaggerate in order to emphasise. For example—" If thy right eye cause thee to stumble, pluck it out " (5. 29). This may mean, in the words of Hebrews 12. 1—" Let us . . . lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. " On the other hand the one who realised the nearness of the kingdom, and burned with desire to enter it, would be prepared to make the literal sacrifice.

The primary application of this sermon is beyond doubt to the disciples and to the Jewish people, at large. It is the law of Messiah's kingdom and will be their law in that coming day when He shall reign.

But it is a little dangerous to try to draw distinctions between primary and secondary applications. That it does apply to us cannot be questioned. Every principle of conduct which it enunciates is equally applicable to us in this present day, and our testimony to the world will be strengthened by our adherence to these principles in their broadest interpretation. The spirit of this wonderful heart-searching message of the Lord Jesus should characterise us in every sphere of our activities.

We shall be wise if we hear His words and do them.

W. Roman.

From Cowdenbeath. —The Lord views His disciples as filling a very important place in the world: "Ye are the salt of the earth, " a powerful force which hinders the process of corruption in this vile world. Yet how sad the warning, that the life of the disciple which ceases to be a savour of Christ unto God becomes ineffective and worthless ! In the midst of this scene of darkness, the disciples are seen as lights shedding rays through their good works which may lead men to glorify their heavenly Father. No doubt, such teaching had never before been heard, and no matter how much at first it may have seemed like it, yet in essence it was not in opposition to the law. Rather did the teaching of the " Lord show the real meaning and give the true understanding of what was written of old time. He showed that the commandments did not simply bear the narrow meaning which the scribes and Pharisees taught, and upon the observance of which their righteousness was based, but that their fuller meaning called for a fuller observance which affected the hearts and consciences of men.

He spoke in strong condemnation of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Their desire was to be seen of, and to be highly respected by, men. The joy and pride which filled their hearts as a result, was and will be their only reward. In contrast, the Lord declares that in regard to the doing of righteousness and prayer and fasting a recompense will be the portion of those who do these things in secret. Every word of the Lord's teaching is vital to disciples as His summing up shows. We are either wise or foolish, wise if we are doers of the word and foolish if we are hearers only. The testing time shall come and the proof shall be in evidence. The building of a life-time shall either be swept away or it shall stand as a lasting memorial to the wisdom of the builder. May our lives conform to His teaching so that there may be that which shall endure to our honour throughout eternity.

James Bowman,

From Kilmarnock. —From Luke 4. 14 it is evident that after the temptation in the wilderness the Lord returned into Galilee and taught in the synagogues in that region. He came to Nazareth, and while those in the synagogue at first marvelled at His words of grace, they ultimately were filled with wrath at His words of truth, and thrust Him forth outside the city. They thus rejected Him, and possibly this was the end of His living at Nazareth, and the beginning of His sojourn at Capernaum. It may have been at this time that John the Baptist was imprisoned, as Matthew 4. 12 tells us, " When He heard that John was delivered up . . . leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum"; thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 9. 1-2. We note that it was from the time of John's imprisonment that Jesus began to preach, and to say, *' Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand " (Matthew 4. 17). He thus continued the message that John proclaimed, and also healed all manner of disease among the people, so that great multitudes followed Him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea and beyond Jordan " (verse 25). On looking at a map it would seem that the places mentioned comprise the greater part of Palestine, and it may be that the Lord grasped the opportunity of putting before so many people the conditions necessary for the kingdom of heaven

We judge that had all the rulers been in the same condition of heart and mind as Nicodemus (John 7. 50) the kingdom would have been set up, and the Lord would have got His place as King, and God would have wrought through Israel in blessing on the nations of the world: but it was not so. We understand the Lord's teaching in Matthew 5. to 7. to have been primarily for the Jews at that time; the truth concerning the Church had not then been revealed, but we believe there is much practical teaching that is applicable to disciples in churches of God at the present time.

A. G. S.

From Atherton. —The Lord Jesus is described as the prophet from Nazareth (Matthew 21. 11). In Luke 4. 16 we read, " He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and He entered, as His custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. " The Lord preached in other synagogues (Luke 4. 44), but only read in this one, which shows that He was acknowledged

as a member of it. The result of His remarks are very striking. " They rose up, and cast Him forth out of the city. " Seemingly this is what Nazareth thought of Him after nearly 30 years of living in their midst. Ultimately, then, He made Capernaum the city of His choice. He left Nazareth, and came and dwelt at Capernaum, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. From this point He began to preach. Miracles were wrought there (see Matthew 8. 5; John 4. 46); parables were spoken there (Matthew 13. and Mark 4.); yet we read the sad condemnation for impenitence (Matthew 11. 20-24).

The teaching presented in Matthew 5. to 7. relative to the kingdom of heaven is made highly important because of certain dominant features. First among these is the wondrous Person who Himself is the great Teacher. As we consider the full and comprehensive teaching He presents, denoting wisdom and knowledge incomparable, we feel bound to quote with Elihu, " Who is a Teacher like unto Him ? " (Job 36. 22; Colossians 2. 2, 3).

A second great feature is the place from which the teaching was imparted. It was a mountain scene, and is in this respect like the law given from Mount Sinai. Also, when the Lord in all authority gave " the great commission, " involving teaching unparalleled in God's dealings with men, • it was from the " mountain where Jesus had appointed them " (Matthew 28. 16-20). It would appear that the Son of God in all three instances plays a personal part, for we suggest that He is the One referred to in Acts 7. 38 (compare Isaiah 63. 9). Thus in the mountain scene we have the link between the divine and the human, God with a message to men, and like the ladder Jacob saw joining heaven to earth.

A further feature is the Lord's oft-repeated mention of the Father—mentioned no. less than 17 times. It is suggestive of relationship and responsibility, the Father's relationship to disciples- in the kingdom of heaven, and their responsibility to Him. The Son speaks of the will of His Father, and very searching, and sobering are some of the words associated with the title, " My Father, " " your Father, " " thy Father, " " your heavenly Father. "

J. Bullock, G. A. Jones.

Questions and Answers.

Question from **Edinburgh.** —What is the teaching of Matthew 7. 6, " Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you, " as applied to the present dispensation ?

Answer. —See Philippians 3. 3 as to the meaning of "the dogs. " Dogs and swine describe the unclean or unregenerate—such as have never known a birth from above. Hence they have no appreciation of that upon which the believer sets great value, namely, his jewels and that which is holy. God's things are to be given to such as will value them. The unbeliever gets nothing of a spiritual sort from God. Note the force of 1 Corinthians 2. 14. —J. M.

Questions from Brantford. —(1) Matthew 1. 21—Who are the people who were or are to be saved from their sins ?

(2) Who would the little be in Matthew 11. 11 ?

(3) Who is the speaker in John 3., verses 31 to 36 ?

Answers (1) All such as are loosed from their sins by (or in) His blood, according to Revelation 1. 5. otherwise all His redeemed. I do not understand the salvation of Matthew 1. 21 to be the day by day salvation of the saint.

(2) " The Little " or " Lesser " I understand to be such as are born from above in contrast to such as are *' born of women. " See note in paper from Birkenhead.

(3) John the Baptist. —J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

Nazareth to Capernaum	29
The sending forth of the twelve.	31

"NAZARETH TO CAPERNAUM, **AND THE** SERMON ON **THE MOUNT** . "

From Vancouver. —The **time** came **in** the course of the Lord's ministry for Him to depart into Galilee (Matthew 4. 12-16). **We** say with reverence that His movements were not **made at** random, but rather in perfect harmony with His Father's will, and also in fulfilment of all that **was** written aforetime concerning Him. The Lord's sojourn by the shores of Galilee therefore **was** no mere expedient, but in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophetic **message**, that these people to whom **He** came, should see " a great Light. "

The Lord's call to repentance, coupled with the announcement that " the kingdom of heaven **is** at hand " (Matthew 4. 17), revealed that **He** had come to a people " laden with iniquity, " and great **was** the necessity of availing themselves of the divine remedy, ere they could enter into the kingdom **or** enjoy **its** manifold blessings. The principle of repentance towards God ever remains an essential in God's dealings with **His** creatures, so that whether the prospect of Messiah's kingdom being set up was immediate, or postponed "until the times of restoration of all things, " (the latter being the case), the conditions of blessing are the same. The Lord came to a people no better than those of whom Isaiah wrote thus, " The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity " (Isaiah 1. 3-4). This condition remained a barrier between the people and the blessings announced by the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5. 1-20).

The Lord doubtless had numerous disciples besides those whom **He** had chosen to follow Him, and we suggest that the primary application of **His** words was to them, although the multitudes heard the **message** also (Matthew 7. 28-29). Many who were the Lord's disciples and heard His message, remained such, and were found **as** the nucleus of **His** people at Pentecost, and much that **He** had taught them would remain in their hearts. There were those who followed the Lord only because of the signs and the loaves and fishes, but failed to receive Him **as** the heaven-sent Messiah, thus forfeiting the glorious opportunity which lay within their grasp of becoming the children of God (John 1. 11-12). There were those also amongst the common people who because of **His** mighty works would have made **Him** King by force (John 6. 15), but such an action lay outside the scope of God's purpose for His Anointed. God wants men to accept Him, not make Him King. **He** is that, and God has (in His purpose) **set** Him upon His holy hill of Zion. The same people who in the flush of excitement would have made Him King, joined with the angry mob who clamoured for **His** blood when **He** stood alone before Pilate.

The fact that " He came unto His own, **and** they that were His own received Him not, " (thus preventing the kingdom of heaven coming upon Israel **as** a nation) did not alter the deep-lying current of **God's** eternal purposes, nor did it prevent a great and important phase of the kingdom of heaven from developing, namely the kingdom of heaven **as** it has been revealed and **exists** in the present dispensation (see Colossians 1. 13). The operation of this wondrous purpose has its foundation in the manifestation of the Christ of God, and its resultant blessings from **His** sacrifice at Calvary.

R. Armstrong.

From Cardiff.—These particular scriptures we have under review seem to be essentially Jewish in character [A thing is not necessarily Jewish because it comes to the Jew first. The gospel was to the Jew first, but is not Jewish. The New Covenant which was promised to Israel, is enjoyed by the Gentiles before Israel. —J. M.], that is to the Jew first, while there is a secondary application to all men. The Lord Jesus was sent from God His Father to be Israel's King, and as the nation bowed to His authority and rule, so would be fulfilled those words, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."

Chapter 5. brings before us the Law for the Lord's disciples, as we have the Law of God given to God's people in the Old Testament. Just as God promised His blessing to those who were obedient to His word in that day, so the obedient one is promised blessing in this day. The blessing depends upon the spiritual condition of the people, both individually and collectively, and seems to be confined to earthly blessings. This thought seems to run through the whole discourse: for instance, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." We know from other scriptures that the sphere of blessing for believers in this dispensation is "the heavens in Christ," [Just so, so far as the present is concerned, but consider the words—"shall inherit" in the light of 2 Timothy 2. 12; 4. 1; 2 Thessalonians 1. 4-9. The faithfulness of saints now stands related to the coming of the Lord to earth. —J. M.], and while we may know much of God's blessings in this life, we shall enter into their fullness in the glorious life which is to come. The time will come when these conditions will be fulfilled by Israel as a nation, and as a result the blessings contained therein will be experienced, but it will only be when they bow the knee to His authority, and acknowledge that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Meanwhile there is much to learn from this wonderful discourse, because we have two kingdoms spoken of in the New Testament:—(1) the Kingdom of Heaven; (2) the Kingdom of God. It appears that the first has to do with Israel [But consider the commission of Peter in Matthew 16. 19, to whom was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, how this stands related to the Church, the Body. Surely this is not connected with Israel. There is much to be learned of the kingdom of heaven, as to what is meant by the term. Again, the kingdom of God has much wider application than to God's people in this dispensation. —J. M.], while the second with the Holy Nation of this dispensation. The teaching contained in these chapters is applicable to both kingdoms, and one feels that therein is contained the germ of the teaching which is more fully explained in the epistles. The essential need of subjects of either kingdom is to bow to the all-authority of the one Lord, and then we both shall experience, each in our separate spheres, the blessing of the Lord.

C. Wilkinson,

From Victoria, B. C.—In the opening verses of Matthew 5. we see the Lord Jesus seeking a quiet place to instruct His newly found disciples. The student of the word may in faith go up into the mountain and hear again those words which are so commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. In them we discern a new teaching which was not merely an exposition of the Law and the Prophets such as might have been heard at any time in the synagogues. The multitudes recognised the authority with which the Lord spoke (chapter 7. 29). The language is clear, dealing as it does with the things of everyday life, and applicable to both high and low. The objects of illustration are within the grasp of all, e. g., lilies, birds, etc. We marvel at the directness of speech and the beauty of teaching.

Well might the throng wonder at this lowly Nazarene, and His grasp of the law! The fulfilment of the Law seems to be the burden of the passage. In some parts, such as chapter 5. 27-32, it appears to apply to those "under law"; the rest is general in scope, taking in all who would live godly in Christ Jesus. [Note the alterations the Lord makes between past teaching and His message: "Ye have heard that it was said... but I say unto you." —J. M.]. At Sinai there was given a law which brought swift and severe punishment upon the transgressor (e. g., chapter 5. 38). From the lips of the Lord Jesus we find a further thought, a nobler purpose. In the law the natural thing is dealt with;

in Matthew 5. to 7. we find that which is against nature. Things despised of men are given a high place, and those that manifest their own self-righteousness are rebuked. The people of God are urged to turn from the materialistic and look heaven-ward, their treasure not on earth, but in heaven, and trusting in God as Father, with a deep and abiding faith.

A. McL.

From Brantford, Ontario. —Various expressions of mind were advanced relative to the primary application of the teaching contained in the Sermon on the Mount. Some thought that only His disciples were present to hear what is contained in chapters 5. —7. This mind was based on the words hi Matthew 5. 1.: " His disciples came unto Him. " But the words in Matthew 7. 28, where we have the statement, " The multitudes were astonished at His teaching, " persuaded most of us that many more than His immediate disciples heard the discourse. We found it very helpful in drawing our conclusions on this point to take into our considerations Luke 6. We believe that amongst the multitudes referred to in Matthew 7. 28 there were many who were His disciples. To support our belief we refer to Luke 6. 13, also Luke 6. 17. These verses make it clear to us that:

1. He called unto Him His disciples.
2. He chose from them twelve, whom also He named Apostles.

Now note carefully Luke 6. 17. There are three points to be observed here.

1. He came down with them.
2. Amongst them a great multitude of His disciples.
3. A great number of the people from all Judaea and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon.

Summing up our views as to the application of the teaching we think the primary application was to His disciples. Then it was for any then present who had ears to hear. Finally it is for us in our day who are His disciples. A perusal of the three chapters reveals much to us which has an application to our time and should characterise those who are the present-day disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

W. Walker, A. Walker.

THE SENDING FORTH OF THE TWELVE.

Matthew 10.; 24. 14.

From Yeovil. —It is true that " He came unto His own. " In this chapter we see that the Lord's first concern was for the House of Israel. In the latter part of the previous chapter we get a picture of how the people of Israel really were, when their Messiah came: " But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd " (Matthew 9. 36). Thus moved with compassion, He sends the twelve apostles on their first mission, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (chapter 10. 6).

Their message is one of the good news of the Messiah, and their work one of healing and ministering to the sick in body and mind (verse 8). They themselves had received wonderful gifts from God, and they were to be generous in dispensing to others what they had received. The chapter then goes on to give details of how they were to conduct themselves as they went from town to town. They were to be lightly clad and free from responsibility other than that of preaching the word. They would receive hospitality from the Jewish people, this being God's means of providing for their needs, the labourer being worthy of his hire.

They were told that the people would be hostile in many parts, but in all the difficulties, trials and persecution of their preaching they were assured of God's protection and the help of His Holy Spirit. The effect of the preaching would be to cause division among friends and relations. Following Christ was to cost something to those who undertook it.

These are the general principles outlined in the chapter, and they apply in particular to the apostles of that day in the places where they preached. We, however, may gain instruction from them, for much of what accompanied the preaching of God's word then is the same to-day, when we preach the gospel of the grace of God, and the true discipleship that should follow when it is received.

A. S. Glover.

From Ilford.—Whenever there is a need, God raises up people who are in the right condition to satisfy it, and so we see that the twelve disciples were commissioned by the Lord to go out into the plentiful harvest, to the Jews, to preach the near approach of the Kingdom of Heaven. Before the Lord would send them forth, however, they needed the power and authority from Him, to perform all the wonders they later were able to do. They could have done nothing of themselves; so it is with us to-day. Similarly with the disciples in the early chapters of Acts, before they could start out on the work they had to receive the Holy Spirit. To be used, as God would desire us, we must be in the right condition.

At first the message was only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," since to them the promises of the Messiah and His rule were given. But they refused it, as Paul states in Acts 13. 46, and thus in the counsel of God the message was able to come to all nations (Matthew 24. 14). [We must distinguish between "this gospel" of Matthew 24. 14, one feature of which is stated in the previous verse, "But he that continueth to the end, the same shall be saved," and the gospel of the grace of God which is proclaimed in this dispensation, by which disciples of all nations are to be made, according to Matthew 28. 19. "The end" in Matthew 24. 13 is the end of the Tribulation when the Son of Man will come. Note what is said in Matthew 10. 22, 23, where we have the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom referred to again, and note particularly the words: "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." When the Lord comes to the air for the Church, men enlightened by God, probably mostly of the Jewish race at first, though Revelation 7. 9-17 shows a vast number of martyrs of all races who will be martyred during the Tribulation, will then begin to carry the gospel of the kingdom far and wide. Continuing to the end does not mean, in my view, that men will be saved from hell then by final perseverance. Salvation is ever by faith. But those that continue to the end will be saved from antichrist's persecution, and will enter the Millennium without death.—J. M. J. This was brought about by the refusal of the message by the Jews, and so we see the mysterious yet marvellous inter-working of the counsel of God and the decisions of man.

In sending forth the twelve, the Lord does not promise an easy path, but rather that they will be persecuted. But this is not all. He who allows it, will also supply the necessary strength to endure.

Verses 32-39 of Matthew 10, were noted as being very heart-searching words to each of us to-day, as individuals, and should exercise us about our own testimony and stand for our Lord and Master. The concluding verses of Matthew 10, show us that although the cost of service may be great, even the smallest action out of love for Him, will not pass unnoticed. Indeed, the words of the Apostle Paul, who suffered much, come to mind, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward" (Romans 8. 18). *F. E. Jarvis.*

EXTRACTS.

From Cowdenbeath.—From the last paragraph of Matthew 9, we see that the Lord has completed a very wide and extensive campaign, during which He has visited all the cities and villages, teaching, preaching and healing. His contacts with the multitudes have impressed Him with the great failure on the part of those who had been entrusted with the leading and care of the people. They were distressed and neglected (Alford) as sheep not having a shepherd. "Woe unto the shepherds that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 23. 1). "I will seek that which was lost, and will bring again that which was driven away" (Ezekiel 34. 16). Unto the scattered and lost sheep of the house of Israel the Lord therefore sends forth the twelve apostles with power to heal and regain.

Much precious seed has been carefully and prayerfully sown during those days when the Lord went from place to place, and now a plenteous harvest is in prospect. But the labourers are few, and so the Lord exhorts His disciples to pray that labourers be sent forth. Very strange, it seems, that they who were

thus exhorted to **pray** were themselves sent forth to labour. Might it not **be** that through praying, and continuing to pray, these men became exercised concerning their own responsibility to answer this call? **We** cannot think that they were called and sent forth **by** the Lord without any **exercise** or desire on their own part. Neither would **we** exclude **Judas** from this company of exercised men, for **we** can scarcely think that the Lord would empower a man to do such works whose heart was not right with Himself. [Although **as** a general rule what our friends say is true, Judas **is** a clear exception to the rule. The words of John 6. 64, 70, are decisive. "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who **it** was that should betray **Him**... Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you **is** a devil." Judas was ever a devil, a man who had no change of heart through regeneration; one who believed not. **He** was undoubtedly a religious man, **but** so was Cain. Religion which **is** worldly (not pure religion) makes a man a devotee, **but** never changes the native covetousness of his heart. Judas was only exercised in covetousness. **He** carried the **bag** and stole the Lord's money, then sold the Lord Himself. —J. M.]

Their message and ministry **was** to **be** exclusively for Israel, but in a day to come when this **same** gospel of the kingdom shall again **be** preached it shall **be** unto all the nations. It seems that **it is** unto these days immediately preceding the coming of the Son of man to **set up** his kingdom that much of this teaching applies. In those days when the world will manifest **its** hatred more openly, and will persecute more cruelly, it will cost a lot to **be** a witness for Christ. Faithful witnesses shall **be** delivered up to the authorities, some even by members of their own family, to **be** scourged and put to death, but the promise of the Father to **be** very near **in** the hour of trial shall be realised by many helping them to give witness before their persecutors. The work of testifying **is** to **be** accounted of very great urgency, and those who would witness **are** exhorted to flee, not **because** of fear, but in view of the vastness of the field of labour, and the near approach of the coming One. The Lord makes it very plain that persecution shall **be** the lot of the faithful follower and witness. The fear of what men may say or do should not deter the true disciple. Even in persecution there **is** a limit beyond which man cannot go. They may kill the body, and we think of how many faithful ones have displayed this complete lack of **fear** for the threatenings of men when **face** to face with death, **and** have joyfully sealed their testimony with blood. **We** oft-times read of the loyalty of those who took such a noble stand for their Lord with admiration in our hearts, yet also with a deep conviction of shame. It is very sobering to think that our lives may **be** a denial of the Lord, and instead of giving **Him** the joy of confessing **us** before his Father **He** may with **grief** **be** compelled to deny us. Truly, a **life** wholly given up to following Him, wholly consecrated to **His** service, will be a life lost so **far** as the **World is** concerned, but **in** the Lord's reckoning a life well spent **and** which shall **be** fully rewarded.

The Lord accounts of great importance the manner in which the message and the messengers are treated. They who refuse to believe have nought **but** the expectation of judgment even more severe than that which awaits the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. But for those who shew even the least kindness such as the giving of a cup of cold water a reward **is** in store. Indeed, it would seem that many shall **be** given a place **in** the Lord's kingdom because of such **an** action.

James Bowman.

From Matlock. —In tune with the aspect of his Gospel, Matthew shows the Lord as One having authority: to those who are **His** subjects, **He issues** commandments and supersedes old traditions **based** on the Law; **He** invites weary ones unto **Him**, **He** casts out demons, heals the infirm, **and** resists **Satan's** temptations; to a kingly **judge** **He issues** warnings.

Because of this **it is** interesting to compare Matthew's Gospel with Mark's, in which **He is** the humble Servant. Nowhere in Mark's Gospel **is** **He** called "Lord." In the A. V. of Mark 9. 24, "Lord" **is used**, but—correctly **as** most authorities believe—it is left out in the R. V. For further examples, compare Matthew 8. 2 with Mark 1. 40; Matthew 26. 22 with Mark 14. 19; and Matthew 8. 25 with Mark 4. 38. In Matthew 10. 5, the Lord sends forth **His** servants

with authority, whilst we read in Mark 3. 14, "He ordained twelve *that they might be with Him*." Thus they are there **seen** not **as** subjects of the King, **but** rather as servants. [But note that Mark adds to the words quoted, "and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons." Eds.]

Only in Matthew's Gospel are we told to whom they were to go: "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This sphere of service was limited to Israel while the Lord lived, but then it extended to "all nations" (Matthew 28.; 24. 14). Only when Israel refused their King was the message sent also to the Gentiles.

The message recorded is peculiar to Matthew: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Why not "The kingdom of God" as in other Gospels? We judge that because of the earthly-mindedness and the pride of their exclusive position, the fact that the kingdom was of heaven needed to be impressed upon the Jewish more than upon the Gentile believers [I do not think that this is the explanation. —J. M.]. In the kingdom of heaven, the importance is to be born from heaven and not from Israel; to have heavenly, spiritual, and not patriotic aims; to have a heavenly king and not an earthly; and to have the heavenlies and not the earth as the true abode of life and interests. [Also, I do not think that the "heavenlies," as in Ephesians, enter into the subject. —J. M.]. What is more, we are told that this particular Gospel is "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the Son of David, the *Son of Abraham*." This should surely have been a lesson to the Jew, for anyone who was a descendant of Abraham was born unnaturally [What is called Abraham's seed, and Abraham's descendants, are two different things, I judge. —J. M.], of one almost dead, and thus of grace. The Jews were (figuratively) children of Hagar, born after the flesh and in bondage (Galatians 4. 21-31). His disciples were sent forth with the power of God behind them. They were to be dependent on their King for everything; they were to deny even the claims of earthly relationship for His sake. The Lord was to care for them, and those who rejected them would be rejecting Him, as well as the Father who had sent **Him**. **K. G. Seedhouse.**

[We give a hearty welcome to this first contribution from our friends in Matlock.—Eds.]

From **Glasgow**. —The message of the twelve was that the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. The King being in the midst, the rule of God drew near. God was about to set up on earth a literal kingdom, ruled over by Christ the Son of David (see Matthew 4. 23). [Is this correct? Though the King was present and offered Himself to Israel, is it right to conclude that God was about to set up a literal kingdom? I think not!—J. M.] This divine rule was expressed in Christ. The Kingdom of Heaven is a visible establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. [The Kingdom of Heaven is not the Kingdom of God. Those in the Kingdom of God are deemed to be God's saints (see John 3.), but eternal punishment is a feature connected with the Kingdom of Heaven (see Matthew 13., also 25., where the door is shut on some). —J. M.]

This gospel of the kingdom was preached until the rejection of the Lord Jesus and His crucifixion (see Matthew 11. 20, 24; Matthew 27. 33, 37). But it will again be preached unto all nations during the Great Tribulation; then shall the end come.

We learn from the Scriptures that the gospel of the kingdom will again be preached by men whom the Holy Spirit will take up, as of old, the Spirit coming upon them and working through them (see Acts 2. 14-17; Joel 2. 28-31; Daniel 11. 32.) In reference to this, we have in Revelation 7. 4-8, 144, 000 sealed out of every tribe of the Children of Israel. It has been suggested that the gospel of the Kingdom being preached, will result in a great multitude saved of all the nations, both Jews and Gentiles (see Revelation 7. 9-17).

Also in Revelation 11. 3-4 we have the two witnesses who had the power to prophesy during 1, 260 days. Two were required by the Mosaic law to constitute valid testimony (Deuteronomy 17. 6; 19. 15) The two witnesses are described

as two olive trees and two lampstands, oil being the symbol of divine grace. A lamp replenished with oil and shining brightly represents the light of a holy life and holy doctrine (Zechariah 4. 11-14). The two witnesses are God's two olive trees and two lampstands, because they are the repositories of His grace, and the lights which He has appointed for this dark world at that period.

Matthew 10. and Matthew 24. shew that they will evangelise under great difficulties. Their reward will be as the scripture describes in Revelation 7. 16-17.

Robert Mack,

From Bradford, Leeds and Halifax. —The King has chosen His servants, twelve unlettered men, and has bestowed on them the great office of proclaiming His arrival. They have been with their Master for some short time, and have heard words of wisdom and grace fall from His lips. Now they must spread abroad the wonderful truth they have learned. Their message is the same in its import as that of John the Baptist and the Lord Himself—"The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."—and their mission also is the same in scope, to "the house of Israel"—lost sheep wandering far from the Shepherd. Now the Messiah, David's Son, has come, and He is, even as David himself was, but in a deeper spiritual sense, a Shepherd-King.

To support the divine character of their message, the twelve are given the power to do beneficent miracles, even to raise the dead. They have not to take any payment for their message or their work; freely they have received, freely they must give; nor are they to spend any money of their own upon their errand. God will supply their need, and in doing so will teach them a lesson of faith.

It is noteworthy that their message was not spoken in their own power. Even when they stand before the law courts of the world they must not study to make their appeal with great eloquence, well turned phrases and sparkling wit; their dependence is upon the Spirit for their message. He will give the form and substance of the message. His purpose is not to gain the intellect by gaudy rhetoric, but to enter the honest and believing heart.

The sending forth of the apostles in this passage is reminiscent of that later commission which they received as recorded in Matthew 28. But on the later occasion the scope of their work is enlarged—it is to all the world and all nations—and their message is different. Their new message was of the slain, the resurrected and exalted King.

In a future day, after the Lord has returned for His church, others will carry on a similar work. During that dreadful week of years prior to the coming of the Son of Man with power and great glory, the gospel of the Kingdom will once more be preached, this time to all nations. No doubt the two witnesses of Revelation 11. are the leading men of the second half of that period. [It should be noted that the time of witness-bearing of the two witnesses is during half of Daniel's 70th week—1, 260 days. Now if this is the second half of that week then they are killed when the antichrist or beast is himself cast into the Lake of Fire, for the battle of Armageddon takes place at the end of the seven years. This conclusion that the time of the testimony of the two witnesses is the second half of Daniel's week is a moral impossibility, I judge. Note the force of what is said, that whereas no man could hurt the two witnesses during the time of their testimony, the Beast, who comes up out of the abyss in the middle of the week, makes war with them and kills them; I judge the time of their testimony is the first half of the week, not the second. —J. M. J.]

The message is the same—the imminence of the Kingdom, and that those who endure to the end shall enter it. We note that in that coming day also the power to perform miracles is given to the two witnesses. But in keeping with the character of the age they are not beneficent miracles of the early days, but are punitive ones.

W. Rowan.

From Cardiff. —Matthew 10. 5 teaches us that the sending forth of the disciples was definitely to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It was ever God's desire that Israel should be the nation through whom He would bless the nations. How grieved He was because of their rebellion! The Old Testament and the

Gospels are **full** of His forbearance **and** longsuffering with Israel. It would appear from Acts 13. 46 that a turning point came in God's dealing with Israel. In a previous time God had to say, " My Spirit shall not always strive with man "; so He said through His servant Paul, " It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. "

In Romans 11. 1 the Apostle says that God is going to take up Israel again, and asks the question, " Did God cast off His people ? " Although He had spread out His hands in pleading to that disobedient and gainsaying people, yet in longsuffering love He is going to take them up again. While at present a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, it is only until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and then all Israel shall be saved, even as it is written, " There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: And this is My covenant unto them, When I shall take away their sins. " There is also the thought of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2. 28) where we read, " And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh. " This prophecy had a fulfilment at Pentecost, but in a future day will have its fulfilment, when the sons and daughters of Israel shall prophesy, old men shall dream dreams, **and** young men shall see visions. C. Wilkinson.

From Atherton. —A few outstanding features were noted that seem to go along with the message. The Lord invested them with great power and authority like unto Himself. It would seem that the Lord anticipated the people's slowness to believe, and so endowed the twelve with power and authority to work wonders, in healing the sick and raising the dead. A great deal depended upon Israel's acceptance or rejection of the message. Furthermore, these signs and wonders seem to stress the tremendous importance of the message and the kingdom. What a wondrous opportunity Israel had at this time ! Never had the earth in all its history experienced anything after this manner, but all to no avail. Here we have the ambassadors of the King, fully empowered with their King's credentials.

We also have related to us the preparation for the journey involved in the proclamation of the message, the Lord's instruction to them clearly indicates that they must be prepared to renounce all earthly possessions. It was suggested that poverty and frugal appearance were characteristics of those who proclaimed the message, but against this suggestion it was said that the Lord intended the twelve to exercise great faith, and be wholly dependent upon Himself.

We considered the attitude of the twelve to those who would not receive their message. The Lord seems to introduce some drastic yet necessary action against the unrepentant, suggesting that if the message were refused, their last opportunity had gone, and tremendous responsibility rested upon those who heard the " message of the kingdom " and refused it. At this point the question was raised as to whether we had any scriptural guidance, to put into effect in our preaching to-day what we have recorded in Matthew 10. 14 ? It was pointed out that we have on this matter the experience of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13. 50 and 51. It seems that the Apostles had a special gift in discerning such a condition of the people. We may not possess that gift to-day.

Along with the preaching of the message, the twelve must be prepared to suffer (verse 16). This would seem to imply the condition of things at that time, when the country was filled with the enemies of the Lord, ravening wolves on every hand. It was suggested that from verse 16 onwards could only have its fulfilment in a day yet future, for we do not read that the twelve were at this time delivered up before councils and in the synagogues. On the other hand, it was said that while this passage has an application to a future time, yet because scripture is silent, we must not take it for granted that these things did not happen during the preaching of the twelve. For we have the warning from the King Himself that they would be delivered up.

We do know that the " gospel of the kingdom " will be preached in a future day. What has been left off in God's goodness will be taken up to His own praise and glory.

(Other papers held over till next month,)

BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The sending forth of the twelve.	37
My Servant and the s i g n	41
Question and A n s w e r	48

THE SENDING FORTH OF THE TWELVE.

From Atherton (continued).

Again it will be a gospel of preparation for the coming kingdom. A notable difference is that the message will then not only be to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," but to the whole world (Matthew 24. 14). Again, the kingdom *'at hand" will eventually give place to the kingdom being set up, for the king will take His place and reign. The query was raised as to who will proclaim the message in that future day; it was suggested that along with the two witnesses (seeing the gospel has to be preached world-wide) many would be needed. Would these be converts who already had embraced the message? [I am disposed to the view that God will begin again after the Church is taken with men of the house of Israel, to which nation the gospel of the kingdom was preached first of all. This time this gospel will not be limited to Israel, but will be preached to **all** nations. Converts as numerous as those of Revelation 7. 9-17 will be made from amongst the Gentiles, all these of the nations becoming potential missionaries in their turn. Thus the work will widen and deepen as time goes on. —J. M.]

Joseph Lee, G. Sankey.

From Kilmarnock. —Until this time the Lord had been going about all the cities and villages teaching and preaching the "gospel of the kingdom," but now He is about to send forth the twelve disciples to deliver the same message, and to carry on the work of healing. Not only were they to preach, but the Lord empowered the disciples to perform signs and wonders, thus showing their power and authority was from God. We note, too, that they were not to burden themselves with the things of this life, but were to go in dependence upon God to supply their daily needs by means of those who would receive their message, and those who refused to receive them would suffer in the day of judgment. From Luke 10. it would appear that at a later time the Lord sent forth other seventy with the same message, with power to heal and cast out demons, and although no doubt many received them, yet, as a nation, Israel rejected the Messiah. Might we not say that the 500 brethren to whom the Lord appeared after His resurrection were part of the result of the ministry of the Lord and His disciples? (See 1 Corinthians 15. 6). [I think so. —J. M.]

We are inclined to think that from verse 17 to the end of Matthew 10. the Lord is referring to the time of the end as we get in chapter 24., and these instructions will be for those who are His messengers in that time of testimony.

Verse 28 of chapter 10. says, " Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come. " What the Lord says to His disciples in Matthew 24. is definitely for the guidance of those who will be His faithful witnesses during the Great Tribulation. Verse 14 (R. V. M.) says: " This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony unto all the nations "; it will not then be confined to the Israel nation, but, as it were, preparing the nations for the coming of the Son of Man. Perhaps Daniel 11. 38 refers to those who will be the preachers of the kingdom gospel then. There is no indication that they will be empowered to perform signs and wonders as the twelve disciples were.

A. G. S.

From Liverpool. —The twelve were sent forth with the tidings that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. John had been sent to prepare the way; to prepare the people for the coming of the King, God's King, and the setting up of His kingdom. Now, the King was in their midst, and He sent forth His disciples to proclaim the kingdom of heaven in Israel, giving them power to relieve and banish the sufferings of men brought about by their thralldom in the kingdom of darkness. The message was to the house of Israel. God's dealings with Israel had passed through many stages since the time when He promised Abraham that He would make of him a great nation, and that in his seed would all the nations of the earth be blessed. In the time of Moses He led them with a mighty hand and established a covenant with them, that if they obeyed His voice, then He would be their God and they would be His people. But they rebelled and finally we see them carried away captive into Babylon, and the dominion of the earth turned over to Gentile rulers. Now the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were to be fulfilled. It was the Messiah, the King of Israel, who was to establish the rule of the heavens on the earth. Therefore it was to Israel only that the twelve were now sent (verses 5 and 6). The Samaritans claimed Abraham for their father (see John 4.), but we read in 2 Kings 17. who their antecedents were, —aliens brought in by the Assyrians to replace the Israelites, who were carried away captive. Thus their portion was with the Gentiles, to be blessed through Israel. In the words of Simeon, that Child he held in his arms was to be to the Gentiles a Light for revelation, but to Israel, their Glory. The Gentiles were not forgotten (see verse 18), but it was to Israel He came as King.

Much of the Lord's instructions in the chapter seem to refer to a period beyond that upon which they were then entering, and have a parallel in the later words of the Lord in chapter 24. In that day, before the end, the gospel of the kingdom will be preached, apparently to good effect. As to who are the preachers in that future day we are not quite clear, unless it be that the testimony of the two witnesses (of Revelation 11.), together with the evidence of the Scriptures, are sufficient to fulfil this word. At any rate, we read in Revelation 7. of a great multitude, that no man could number, of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, that come out of the great tribulation to stand, with robes washed white, before the throne and the Lamb; and they are there as a result of the preaching of this gospel of the kingdom.

A. Roberts, ft. 5.

From **Brantford, Ont.** —Israel was lost (Isaiah 53. 6), but the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. The long-promised Messiah has come. The shadows of the law and the words of the prophets are being fulfilled. God is dealing with His people through His Son (Hebrews 1. 1, 2). The law and the prophets were until John. From that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached. The gospel message was short and plain, " Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. " It centred on the Christ who Himself preached it (Matthew 4. 17). It was the message given to John the forerunner (Matthew 3. 2). It was the message preached by His followers.

The Son of Man was reaching out to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He was seeking the lost that He might save them. There was no message here for the Gentiles or Samaritans, a vastly different commission from that of Matthew 28. where the message will be to all the nations. The gospel of the kingdom was the pleading of God with Israel to return. The message was only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and was preached only until the nation rejected the Anointed One.

But even as He spoke to the twelve in Matthew 10., He looked out over the years to the time of His return to the earth as Son of Man. He addressed them not only as apostles to the lost sheep of Israel of their day, **but** also as representatives of those who will in the future preach the same gospel throughout the whole world, for He says, " Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come. "

Who will preach the gospel in that day ? God will have to raise up His messengers from the remnant (Joel 2. 32). The taking home of the Church the Body will cause many to turn to the Scriptures, and of those left behind some will call on the name of the Lord and be saved, but will have to endure to the end. Salvation to-day is free to those who believe. How hardly would we be saved if called on to endure to-day. [Salvation from hell in the future will not be by final perseverance. " The end " is not the end of one's life, but the end of the Tribulation. —J. M.]

R. Gibson, S. K. Sneath.

From London, S. E. —In Matthew 10. 1 the Lord " called " His twelve disciples to Him; this is not the choosing, which we find in Mark 3. 13-19. The Lord called unto Him whom He Himself would, and they went unto Him, and he appointed twelve that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach and to have authority to cast out demons. Then are those same disciples named apostles, of whom it is said in Luke 6. 13, " He called His disciples, and He chose from them twelve whom also He named apostles. " That was the choosing, and now those whom the Lord has chosen are sent out. They are sent out with authority to cast out demons and to heal. This is the carrying out of His word to Peter and Andrew " Come ye after Me and I will make you fishers of

Verse 5. If we compare this verse with chapter 11. 1 there can be little doubt that the discourse was all delivered at the same time, and that this is the first sending of the twelve. How often its solemn injunctions may have been repeated on similar occasions we cannot say. Many of them reappear at the sending forth of the 70 (Luke 10. 2).

Its first reference is to the mission of the apostles to prepare the people for the Lord's visit to those of the house of Israel (see chapter 11. 1), but I would suggest that it includes certain instructions for the ministers of the gospel to the end of time.

The whole chapter is fittingly divided into three parts.

" He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. " In order to understand these words it is necessary to enter into the Lord's prophecies concerning His coming, as having an immediate and literal as well as a distant fulfilment.

In the first place, in verse 21 it is evident that the destruction of Jerusalem is referred to; "the end" directly spoken of is that event, and the "shall be saved" the preservation provided by the warning afterwards given in chapter 24 15*18; - ["The end" in Matthew 10. 22; 24. 18; and Mark 13. 13* is not the destruction of Jerusalem, but the coming of the Son of Man which brings to an end the great tribulation, and by His coming the faithful are saved from the dread persecution of those times. — J. M. J. The next verse directly refers to the journeys of the apostles over the actual cities of Israel or where Jews were located. But as certainly do all these expressions look onwards to the great final coming of the Lord, the end of all prophecy. With equal certainty the "shall be saved" here bears its full scriptural meaning of eternal salvation, and the endurance to the end is the finished course of the Christian. [Our friends are here teaching eternal salvation' by final perseverance. This is the falling away doctrine root and branch. Have they forgotten Acts 2. 21 and Romans 10. 13? Note how "saved" in verse 13 is a continuance of the same sort of salvation as in verse 9. — J. M. J.] The precept in verse 23 is to apply to the conduct of all ages with reference to persecution, and the announcement that hardly will the gospel have been fully preached to all nations (or to all the Jewish nation, *i. e.*, effectually) when the Son of Man shall come. It is most important to keep in mind the great prophetic parallels which run through the Lord's discourses and are sometimes separately, sometime simultaneously, presented by Him to us.

Verse 23 says, "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel." Does that not apply to the time when the 12 had finished their course on earth as well as being true of the time "till the Son of Man be come"? [Quite evidently there is a gap in Matthew 10. between the sending forth of the 12 and the future work of the preachers of the gospel of the kingdom. "Ye" of Matthew 10. 23 must be read in a similar way to "ye" of Matthew 24. 15. — J. M. J. *G. Reeve.*

From Birkenhead. — It is essential in order to visualise the circumstances in which the twelve were sent forth, to consider the concluding paragraph of the previous chapter. There we are informed that He was moved with compassion for the distressed multitudes, who were as sheep without a shepherd. As far as we know, until this period the Lord Himself [following the work of John the Baptist] had done all the active work in the propagation of the gospel of the kingdom, and His twelve disciples, whom He had appointed shortly before the Sermon on the Mount, were being trained as a result of their constant companionship with Him. Surely they could not have received a better training, because not only would they be taught the gospel, but also the life and the conduct becoming the citizens of that kingdom. The purpose of their appointment was that He might send them forth to preach (Mark 3. 14), before they could be successful, but He must instill into them love for the Shepherd and love for the sheep.

Their message is identical with that of John the Baptist: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was a simple message, easily understood, unlike the teaching of the kingdom which seemed to be only partly understood by the disciples. Although their message was somewhat limited, their power to heal was not in any way limited. They were not to charge money for their services, but were to be supported by the people amongst whom they found themselves.

The spirit in which they were to go forth is given in verse 16, "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," and this should be the manner in which we conduct ourselves in all work for the Lord.

B. T. McCormick.

MY SERVANT AND THE SIGN.

(Matthew 12.).

From London, S. E. 5. —After denouncing the Pharisees for their condemnation of the guiltless, the Lord demonstrated that it was quite lawful to heal on the Sabbath. He then proceeded to cite Isaiah's prophecy concerning the pattern Servant. It is probable that His citation was from the Septuagint version, and: this probably accounts for the slight differences of translation, as evidenced thus: —

Isaiah 42- 1-3.

Behold My Servant, whom I *uphold*;My *chosen*, in whom My soul *delighteth*:I *have* put My Spirit upon **Him**;**He** shall *bring forth* judgement to the Gentiles.**He** shall not *cry* nor *lift up*, nor cause His voice to be heard **in the street**.

A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench:

He shall *bring* forth judgement **in truth**.

Matthew 12. 18-20.

Behold, My Servant, whom I *have chosen*.My *beloved* in whom My soul *is well pleased*:I *will* put My Spirit upon Him,and **He** shall *declare* judgement to the Gentiles.He shall not *strive*, nor *cry aloud*; Neither shall any one hear **His** voice **in the streets**.

A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench.

Till He send forth judgement **unto** victory.

[Matthew here differs from both the Hebrew and Septuagint, though on the whole it is nearer to the Hebrew. Only two of the verbs in the passage quoted above agree with the LXX and one of these is in a different form. Only the last clause of the quotation " in His name shall the Gentiles hope " is in verbal agreement with the LXX. —S. B.]

The modest, self-effacing character of God's beloved Servant is thus beautifully portrayed in language so simple yet so sublime. " The compassionate, condescending and kind nature of Christ's miracles are there described; His personal ministry and persevering in the midst of opposition without disputation, with the general effects and success of His gospel, and His kind, tender dealing with weak and tempted believers in all ages, is described. Surely face does not more exactly answer to face in water, than the character of Christ drawn by the prophet, to His temper and conduct as described by the evangelists. Far from breaking, He will strengthen the bruised reed: far from quenching the smoking flax, He will rather blow it into flame. "

But this modest Servant was none other than the Christ of God, His Chosen. He was: —

(a) greater than the temple (verse 6), inasmuch as the God of the House *m* greater than the House of God;

(b) greater than Jonah (verse 41) inasmuch **as** the latter was resurrected from figurative death only, whilst the former " became dead "; Jonah fled from the scene of his mission, but Christ said, " Here am I, send Me ";

(c) greater than Solomon (verse 42) because Solomon, in spite of all his wisdom, fell into sin, whereas He " in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden, " knew no sin.

The Lord Jesus was more noble, more wise, more holy and more majestic than all others; and His death, burial and resurrection constitute the greatest sign of all ages.

Yet the Pharisees rejected Him. They wrongfully accused His disciples of breaking the Sabbath (verse 2); they " went out, and took counsel against Him, how they might destroy Him " (verse 14); they scathingly accused Him of casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons (ver 24); and finally and in unbelief, they asked for a sign from Him (verse 38). It is small wonder indeed that the Lord retorts with extreme indignation and incisiveness. He calls them an " offspring of vipers " (verse 34), "an evil and adulterous generation " (verse 39); He accuses them of being worse than the men of Nineveh (verse 41), and He finally prognosticates that their last state would be worse still (verse 45).

It is not surprising that in this solemn setting of blatant unbelief, the Lord speaks solemnly of " blasphemy against the Spirit. " The Servant upon whom God had put His Spirit, was being accused by the Pharisees of deriving His power from Beelzebub. This was bordering on flagrant speaking against the Holy Spirit of God. So the Lord was exceedingly anxious to drive home the heinousness of their unbelief. He did not actually charge the Pharisees with this blasphemy, but He gave them a solemn and stern warning against the crime. It seems clear that such blasphemy leaves the sinner in unbelief and impenitence, and one would conclude that those who indeed repent and believe the gospel have not committed this sin. Unbelief is the basis of all sin, and cannot be forgiven in this age or in that which is to come. [Surely unbelief is possible of forgiveness. Paul who was a blasphemmer said, "I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Timothy 1. 13), but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is something very different. —J. M.].

One outstanding feature accompanying the Lord's stern denunciation of that generation of unbelieving Jews, was the pronounced and consequent inclusion of the Gentiles within the sphere of divine blessing. " He shall declare judgement to the Gentiles " (verse 18); " in His name shall the Gentiles hope " (verse 21). Nineveh was a vast Gentile city and the Queen of Sheba was a Gentile monarch. Thus did the chosen Servant foreshadow the setting aside of Israel and the bringing in of the Gentiles. Unbelief caused the cutting off of the former, whereas faith is the basis of Gentile inclusion. The death, burial and resurrection of the Son of Man bespeak hope to the Gentiles; the same sign is still the only sign. And inasmuch as we died with Christ, and were buried with Him in baptism, and were raised to walk in newness of life, we provide the " sign of Jonah the prophet. " [But this is not the sign of the prophet Jonah. The sign is "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so *shall* the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. " There is nothing like this in believer's baptism. —J. M.]. *F. L. E.*

From Bradford, Leeds **and** Halifax. —In considering the twelfth chapter of Matthew, it is of great importance to notice the position it occupies in the general scheme of the gospel. Prior to this period of the Lord's ministry the message had been " The kingdom of heaven is at hand. " The forerunner, John the Baptist, had proclaimed the imminence of the kingdom; the Lord Himself, and His apostles also, had gone throughout the land with this message. As proof of the divine origin of the message great miracles were wrought. These mighty works had as their object the convincing of the Jewish nation and were intended to bring about repentance in their hearts. As we read through this gospel we see how that the word of the kingdom was rejected, and the King Himself despised. This rejection reaches its climax in chapter 11., and brings from the Lord's lips those words of denunciation upon the unbelieving cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum.

In chapter 12. **we see** the outcome of their rejection of the King. The Pharisees follow Him about seeking to find fault with His teaching; they try to trip **Him** up in His words, and to **criticise** His behaviour. This trivial fault-finding **is** exemplified in the incident in the cornfield on the Sabbath **day**, and in the healing of the man with the withered hand. These, the leaders of the nation, have rejected Him; then they actively oppose **His** work, and in verse 14 **we** read of their determination to destroy Him.

Man's attitude to the kingdom and its King has been revealed, and now in marked contrast to this **we** get God's opinion of **His** Servant (verses 18-21).

From this time **we** find **a** change in the character of the Lord's work and teaching. The miracles **He did** were once public proofs of **His** authority, but now they are performed in **a** more private way. No longer does **He** seek to convince the nation by **His** works; instead **He** instructs those who are healed " that they should not make **Him** known (verse 16). [But **He** had similarly instructed others in the earlier phase of **His** ministry, *e. g.*, Matthew 9. 30; Mark 1. 44. —Eds.]. **His** teaching also changes and **assumes** the form of parables, so that hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

The Pharisees have now fully formed their opinion of God's Son, and do not hesitate to revile **Him** freely. The **case** of the demoniac carries their audacity to new lengths; they utter the unreasonable words that these miracles are performed by the agency of Beelzebub. The absurdity of the assertion **must** have been apparent even to them, and the Lord speedily disproves **it** for them. From **His** lips then come the terrible words of condemnation. " Blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven... neither in this **age**, nor in that which **is** to come. " This unforgiveable sin, blasphemy against the Spirit, **is** clearly the attributing the work of the Spirit to Satanic agency. **It is** not, **we** think, the accidental, or even mistaken, attributing of **His** work to the devil, but **is** the culmination of **a** deliberate course of rejection of God's revealed truth.

The deliberate and obstinate rejection of the King **is** further revealed in their request for **a** sign (verse 38). But to this evil and spiritually adulterous generation no sign shall be given but that of Jonah the prophet. One wonders **if** these men, now conspiring to bring about **His** death, realised the meaning of His words, and remembering this occasion later when their fell purpose **was** accomplished, it led them to ask for the sealing of the tomb. **It is** of considerable interest to note the similarities and also the contrasts which exist between Jonah, the disobedient prophet, and Jehovah's righteous Servant.

In verses 43-45 **we** get **a** short, vivid **picture** of the state of the Jewish nation before God. In the past they had deserted Jehovah and **He** had inflicted upon them the sore punishment of the captivity in Babylon. As **a** result of this there had been repentance, and the remnant which returned had sought to serve God more truly. **But** an even greater apostacy **set** in—in the words of the Lord, " the last state **was** worse than the first. " This complete spiritual depravity of the nation **is** most emphatically shown in their rejection of God's Servant, their Messiah and King. [The concluding sentence of verse 45 would rather support the view that the Lord **was** referring to the cleansing and preparation of Israel through the ministry of John the Baptist and the earlier phase of **His** own mission to Israel. The Pharisees' rejection of Messiah opened the way for the reinforced forces of evil to incite the **murder** of God's Son, leaving the last state of Israel in **a** worse state than when the Lord **came**. —Eds.]. **W. Rowan**,

From Cowdenbeath. —The **life** of the Lord **Jesus**, although well-pleasing to God **in every way** and at all times, **was** very often disapproved **by the** Pharisees. Envy filled their hearts **because** of His popularity with the common people, **and** their envy of **Him** was the real reason, **as** Pilate **was** able to perceive (Matthew 27. 18), **that** they finally delivered **Him up** to be crucified. They sought every opportunity to find fault with **Him** so that they might **make** Him appear in the eyes of the multitudes **as** One who was fallible, **and** who **acted** contrary to their esteemed law and traditions. As Jehovah's perfect Servant the Lord's life **was** beyond reproach, and His inscrutable wisdom to **deal** with **His** accusers **made** evident their **utter** folly.

Their effort to brand Him **as** a sabbath-breaker, **because** He allowed His disciples to pluck, and **eat** the ears of corn, provided the Lord with the opportunity to show that the rigid observance of the Sabbath **is** not of **supreme** importance. In certain circumstances an **act** of mercy or of necessity **is** more acceptable to God than **perfect** law-keeping. "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice" is a guiding principle of great importance for us. Their subsequent effort in the synagogue **to accuse** Him, **but** served to shew the mercy which **was** in **His** heart towards the unfortunate man with the withered hand. The **defeat** which He inflicted upon them was too humiliating to **be** acceptable. Their wicked and **agreed** design **was** to destroy Him.

Another notable miracle **is** performed and the Pharisees, **being** unable to dispute it, and, beholding the readiness of the people **to** acknowledge that one with such power **must** surely **be** their Messiah, in order to counteract the propagation of such a truth, they scornfully referred to Him **as** "this Man," and asserted that He was empowered **by** Beelzebub. This **was** not only a fake and easily disproved assertion, **but was** also a very serious sin for which there **was** no forgiveness, being blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Not only did He expose the absurdity that Satan should **act** against himself, **but** further showed that before the release of the possessed man **from** Satan's kingdom could **be effected**, it required **One** stronger than the strong man **to** bind **and** dispossess him. This He had done to Satan. The evidence to a good work having been accomplished was overwhelming, and although nature clearly taught that a corrupt tree could not bring forth good fruit, yet **did** these men in their hatred towards the Lord **assert** that the worker of this outstanding miracle was energized by an evil power. The **fruit** which they produced gave evidence of the type of men they were; being evil they spoke evil. Words are important, and evil words cannot **be** spoken with impunity, for in the day of judgment words shall condemn men **just as** powerfully **as** works.

What some of the Pharisees failed to accomplish with open opposition others sought to do through temptation. "Why doth this generation seek a sign" ? (Mark 8. 12). Surely His preaching and His works should have been sufficient proof to convince them that He was the sent One. They had heard preaching greater than Jonah's, and beheld wisdom which excelled Solomon's, yet they remained unrepentant. No more outstanding proof of the Lord's claim to **be** the sent One can be found than His resurrection from the dead. This He gave them **as** a sign. He called them an evil generation, and likened them unto a man possessed with a demon. **Had** they received the Lord they never would have **been** in that empty state which exposed them to the danger of again being possessed **by** the evil one. The rejection of the Lord **by** the Israel nation, **and** their refusal **to** believe the **sign** of Jonah, would place them **in** the position of which He spake, their last **state** being worse than the first.

Although hated and rejected **by** the many there **were** the **few** faithful ones **whose** faithfulness the Lord prized, and whom He accounted **as** being **more** closely related **to** Himself than even His mother or His brethren. *James Bowman.*

From Birkenhead. —The prophecy of Isaiah is beautiful in its fulfilment. The Christ was not to be made known to His people amidst noise and tumult, by shoutings and proclamations, but He was to be quiet and reluctant to receive public acclamation, and His ways with men would be gentle and loving. All this Isaiah told, and the people to whom it was written did not understand. Was Christ not binding up the bruised reed when He said to the sinful woman, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more" (John 8. 11)? Was He not fanning the smoking flax when He said to the scribe "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12 34)?

When the multitudes, seeing the wonderful demonstration of divine power in the healing of the man that was blind and dumb, were led spontaneously to acclaim Him the Son of David, the Pharisees were incited to rash and passionate speech. The Lord did not get angry, but He showed to them with much patience and forbearance how impossible it was that their charges could be true. The twenty-eighth verse bears out the fact that wickedness is not tolerated in the kingdom of God; because the kingdom of God was come upon them, the demons and the evidences of evil then present must be cast out. It is not merely sin, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that is an eternally indictable offence. The Lord was Man, and words against Him could be forgiven, but blaspheming against the Spirit of God was beyond forgiveness where it was deliberate. Even under the old dispensation blasphemy brought death to the sinner. It is a solemn thought that every idle word that a man shall speak will be before him at the judgment; the basic truth is that idle words are foolishness. Verse 37 does not seem to be in keeping with the present dispensational truth of justification by grace, thus it would seem to have another dispensational character. [Why, in view of Romans 10. 9?—J. M.]

The Jews were desiring to see a sign that they might know the Lord as their Messiah. It was a characteristic of the Jews, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1. 22, that they wanted visible signs. Gideon and Hezekiah are two examples of men who besought God for a sign, and Moses was given a sign to prove to his people that God was with him. This time the Lord refused them a special sign because they had seen enough signs already to prove to them His divine power. [Did He not give the sign of Jonah the prophet?—J. M.] B. W., L. B. H.

From Glasgow. —The Pharisees were ever reminding Jesus as to what was expected under the law which was given by God through Moses on Mount Sinai, and when God gave it he meant it to be kept, but man did not keep it, as sin in man's heart rendered the law entirely impotent, not because of any weakness in the law, but because of man's corruption through sin in the flesh.

Jesus Christ came as the sinless One and kept all the law, for when He became incarnate He became a Servant, and a servant's place is to obey. God had many servants in the past, but they all failed in some way. Jesus Christ emptied Himself, taking the form of a Servant, being made in the likeness of men.

As we look at Matthew 12. we can see very plainly from the attitude of the Pharisees that they had rejected Christ. They cite the law as they see the disciples pluck the ears of corn on the sabbath day. The Lord reminds them of what David did in a past day, an act contrary to the law, and also what the priests (fid as they laboured in the service of the temple. He reminds them that in their midst is One greater than the temple, proving that He Himself was above the law. In verse 23 we read that all the multitude were amazed at His power, but the Pharisees in their blindness condemn Him, and say His authority comes from Beelzebub the prince of demons. The Lord's answer tells of certain sins that shall be forgiven, but the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God was unpardonable.

As Hebrews 10. 26-29 and 1 John 5. 16 tell us, we are all prone to sin as believers, and there are two kinds of sin, a sin unto death and a sin unto death. The first might be done in ignorance and can be forgiven, but the other is done wilfully, after they have received the knowledge of the truth; for such we are told not to pray.

Jas. Gartshore.

From Atherton. —There are at least seven different words employed in the original writings to give us some insight as to the servant, his relationship to his master, his responsibilities, and the character of his service. The particular aspect of the servant character outlined in Matthew 12. 18 is delightful to consider, for the word *Pais* means a child, or youth as applied to the Lord Jesus: in Luke 2. 43 it is rendered "the boy Jesus." It can further be applied to a son by relationship, as in John 4. 51, "his son lived": again in its fuller sense, to a beloved Ambassador of God, called and sent by Him, to perform some special service, as in the case of Luke 1. 54, "Israel His servant," and Luke 1. 69, His servant David. How impressive then are the words of the Father, in reference to the One whom He had watched so carefully with infinite delight, as a boy, who was also His only begotten Son, the darling of His bosom, sent to do and to teach. "Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased."

In verses 31 and 32 the Pharisees are warned about a sin which, if they had not already committed, they were getting very near to committing. To condemn and speak about the Lord Jesus as a "gluttonous man," a "wine bibber," "one who broke the sabbath," or again as a "blasphemer" (Mark 2. 7), may perhaps have been due to their narrowness and opposition to the Lord Jesus. But to see a man freed from the power of Satan unto God, to watch the mighty working of the Spirit of God, and to attribute the work to evil powers, left no room for repentance, and therefore none for forgiveness. In the discussion it was suggested: (1) that this sin which the Pharisees committed was entirely dispensational, and could only be committed by persons who saw the miraculous workings of the Holy Spirit in perfect freedom through the Son of God, and attributed it to Satanic power; (2) that it could be applied generally to all who came under the conviction of the Holy Spirit in the gospel message, and reject His constraining power, and continue to slight His constant workings in their heart. [It seems to me that the Lord is making plain in this instance what is forgivable and what is unforgivable, and covered, as He said, both "this age," and "that which is to come." Every sin (that is every personal kind) and blasphemy is possible of forgiveness but one, and that is "blasphemy against the Spirit." This is what the Lord calls in Mark 3. 29, "an eternal sin." So it is evident that this sin is not dispensational, that is belonging to one period only, and may be committed at a time when the Lord Himself is not present on earth working miracles. The specific character of this sin is shown in Mark 3. 30. "They said, He had an unclean spirit." To say this will never be forgiven. Unbelief is of course forgivable, but where a person dies in unbelief, a Christ rejector, that will not be forgiven hereafter, but that is quite another matter from blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. —J. M. J.]

E. Birchall, J. K. Southern.

From **Kilmarnock**. —Matthew 12. 38. The scribes and Pharisees desire a sign. God has used many signs in the past in His dealings with the nation. In Isaiah 7. 14 a sign is given in connection with the birth of the Messiah, and in John 1. 33 John the Baptist tells of the sign of the Holy Spirit descending on Christ. The Lord also was continually performing wonders and signs, but still they refused to acknowledge Him, and the sign for them now was "the sign of Jonah," which prefigured the Lord's burial and resurrection. The people of Nineveh repented at Jonah's message, and the Jews had heard a message from "One greater than Jonah." Would they repent when they saw His sign?

Acts 4. 2 tells us the leaders were " sore troubled " because Peter and John taught the people, and " proclaimed in Jesus the *resurrection from the dead*" Although they had proof from the guard that the Lord had risen (see Matthew 28. 11), they still refused to repent, so that the " last state was worse than the first, " as a nation.

When the Lord said, " The Son of Man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth " we understand He did not refer to His *body* in the tomb, but to His *soul* in upper Hades (see Acts 2. 27 and 31), and when He ascended, ⁴⁴ He led captive captive " (Ephesians 4. 8). A. G. S.

From Edinburgh. —In the words " My Servant " we have a wonderful aspect of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. When He came into the world, He could say in the words of the psalmist: " Lo, I am c o m e ; . . . to do Thy will, O My God " (Psalm 40. 6-8). His whole life was in full and complete obedience to His Father. " I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. " Though men saw nothing in Him, we see God's pleasure in Him when, from the open heaven was heard, " This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased " (Matthew 3. 17: 12. 18).

Looking at the tabernacle, and viewing the rams' skins dyed red hidden by the badger skins, we see the life of the Lord Jesus typified Godward, hidden from the eyes of men, but His disciples were privileged to see beneath the exterior, for they could say, " We beheld His glory. "

In Exodus 29. 20-22 we read of the ram of consecration, whose blood was placed upon the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot, of the priest who was being consecrated. We remember it is said of the Lord Jesus, " He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as they are taught " (Isaiah 50. 4). He declared: " I must work the works of Him that sent Me. " Again, His walk before God was perfect, culminating in His atoning death on Calvary. In Him, the perfect Servant, was found the fully consecrated ear, hand, and foot. [But the Lord needed no blood of consecration on His ear, thumb and toe, though He was fully consecrated. He is a priest by oath not by the law of any carnal commandment. —J. M.].

Regarding the healing of the deaf and dumb man, Satan had defaced the image of God (see Genesis 1. 26), and the Lord had to heal to procure service.
Jas. Paterson.

From **Yeovil**. —It is evident from this portion of God's word that the Lord Jesus suffered much persecution as a Servant in doing His Father's will. The Pharisees, who ought to have known better, sought how they might find occasions of stumbling. Their ignorance and blindness is further exposed as we proceed with this chapter. Take for instance the restoration of the man's withered hand. They saw this miracle with their eyes and yet it is recorded that they went out and took counsel against Him, how they might destroy Him.

In Isaiah 42. 1 we read those beautiful words concerning our Lord Jesus. *' Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My Chosen, in whom My soul delighteth "; and in John 4. 34 the Lord says to His disciples: " My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work. " Surely this work was being carried out and that openly, right in their very midst, for next we see how that one is brought unto Him possessed with a demon, blind and dumb, and He healed

him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and saw. All the multitudes were amazed, and said, "Is this the Son of David"? (Matthew 12. 22-28), but again the Pharisees disallowed this wonderful healing, and went further, saying "This Man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons."* They attribute the work of the Spirit of God to Beelzebub; hence the blasphemy against the **Spirit of God is made** manifest. *Leonard Shore.*

From **Iford**. —The Lord deliberately healed on the Sabbath the man with a withered hand. Thus the passage leads to the fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah of the Lord Jesus Christ in His servant character. The whole thought of this chapter was that the Lord was greater than any of the things they could bring against Him. True to His servant character, the Lord, although He had wrought so wonderfully in healing, charged them that they should not make Him known. His mission as Servant was to carry out the will of the Father. He made Himself of no reputation, He came to show forth the Father.

The Pharisees, following the healing of one possessed with a demon, attributed it to the work of Satan, and arising out of this terrible accusation, the solemn words in connection with blasphemy against the Spirit were made. This is a singular scripture. It was observed that believers may lapse into sin, such as doing, "despite unto the Spirit," to "lie to the Holy Spirit," and even to "quench the Spirit." But the expression here is much stronger than any of these, and seems to be, by the context, applicable to the unregenerate, as to how far one may sink in sin, as a result of rebellion against the Spirit's pleading. Paul says of Himself that he was the chief of sinners, but He never committed the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Spirit.

The Pharisees were never satisfied with seeing, but the Lord from whom they now sought a sign had already given ample evidence of His divine character, had they been willing, and therefore the sign of Jonah was to be sufficient, and a further was denied them. Their condemnation was sealed, and in the judgment, **by their own words they shall be** condemned. *S. J. J.*

Question and Answer.

Question from Atherton. —To whom are verses 43-45 of Matthew 12 applicable? Two views were expressed. (1) The sweeping out of the unclean spirit typified Israel of old, through idolatry going into captivity, and returning and continuing until the coming of the Messiah, of whose (Israel's) condition at that time was likened to the man with eight spirits. (2) Some expressed the view that the sweeping, as it were, was done by John the Baptist, and those who received John the Baptist yet refused the Lord Jesus were like the man made empty by the one spirit and later entered by many.

Answer. —It is not always (if ever) necessary to fill in every detail of a parable with an exact counterpart in its application. The parable is concerning a man in whom an evil spirit had its home. The evil spirit for some reason chooses to leave the man, and seeks another place of rest, but finds none. It decides to return and finds its house in the man, empty, swept and garnished. Then he taketh seven other worse spirits than himself and they enter the man; the effect of this is that the man's last state is worse than the first. Note that this is not the casting out of a demon, for the unclean spirit goes out of its own will. Where the man failed was that he did not welcome the presence and power of the Divine Spirit, hence there was nothing to combat the re-entrance and re-occupation of the man by the unclean spirit. He had left himself open to grave possibility, even though he was swept and garnished. So also would it be with the evil generation in Israel in the Lord's time. They had opportunity to welcome the Divine Visitor, but they would rather have Barabbas and the master of Barabbas than Christ, and their last state would in consequence be worse than the first—*J. M.*

BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
My Servant and the sign	49
Parables of the Kingdom of H e a v e n	50
Questions and A n s w e r s	56

MY SERVANT AND THE SIGN.

From Brantford, Ont. —God had supplied His Servant's credentials centuries before Messiah's birth. Isaiah recorded them (Isaiah 42.). It is interesting to compare the record of His service with the prophetic writings, *e. g.*,

" He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street" (Isaiah 42. 2).

" Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not " (1 Peter 2. 23).

⁴⁴ A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench " (Isaiah 42. 3).

" God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world " (John 3. 17).

" Neither do I condemn t h e . . . sin no more " (John 8. 11).

It was suggested that the bruised reed and smoking flax spoke of the condition of the people of Israel. No sweet notes of praise could a bruised reed produce; and there was no bright flame of testimony, but only smoking flax with its offensive odour. Yet so long as the elements were there to produce the praise and the testimony He would not destroy them. Rather would He bind up the broken, and revive the flame.

⁴⁴An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign. " Had they- examined the prophetic writings, and compared them with the fulfilment being unfolded before their eyes, no further sign would have been necessary. However, the Lord Jesus offers this one further prophetic sign of Jonah the prophet. Here was the type of His death, burial and resurrection. Jonah was sent to the Gentiles with a message of judgment. God's servant too, says Isaiah, shall declare judgment to the Gentiles. Before he delivers his message Jonah passes through a form of death, burial and resurrection. So the Lord Jesus, being rejected by those to whom He came, passed through death, and has brought light to the Gentiles (c. f. Ephesians 2. 12, 13). *A⁷. Sproul.*

From Hamilton, Ont. —As the Servant of God, our Lord took the form of a bond-servant. He was not a hired servant, for the hireling leaveth the sheep (John 10. 12). He was dedicated to the service of God of His own will (Psalm 40. 7; Hebrews 10. 7), for His greatest pleasure was always His Father's business. We find in Joshua, the servant of Moses (Exodus 33. 11), a fitting example of the servant character of Christ. As Joshua was the servant of Moses the leader of Israel, so Christ was the sent Servant of God, both to His own people and to the Gentiles, to lead them back to God.

That the servant character or work of our Lord should be presented in Matthew, the kingly Gospel, is also very fitting. For we find from Zechariah 3. 8 that the Servant of God was to be the Branch of the royal house of David.

In Isaiah 53. 11 we find that He is described as ⁴⁴ my righteous Servant, " and that His mission was to work out the divine plan of redemption. In fulfilling this mission, He became the One who was humble and obedient unto death. We considered that the servant work of Christ was limited to this earth. Isaian,

49. 6 shows out how great was the scope of His work, including Jew and Gentile. He was God's salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.

In the "servant Gospel," the Gospel of Mark (chapter 10. 45), Christ says that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. Acts 3. 26 presents Christ raised for the purpose of turning His people from their sins; and in Acts 4. 27 it is against God's Servant that both Jew and Gentile were gathered.

His servant work we considered to be completed as it affects man's redemption, but in the light of Isaiah 52. 13-15 we are inclined to believe that He will again appear as God's Servant, this time being exalted and very high, meting out the judgment of God upon the nations.

The sign given by the Lord that He was to be three days and three nights in the earth, was given to that generation of the Jews then living, and was duly fulfilled. That generation therefore should have been watching for a fulfilment of His words. It seems evident, from Matthew 27. 62-66, that they fully understood and remembered them; also from Matthew 28. 11-15 that they recognised their fulfilment and so took steps to have His resurrection disproved.

From the words in Matthew 12. 39, 40, we concluded that Christ was crucified on a Wednesday. [Much has been written on the subject as to whether the Crucifixion was on a Thursday or a Friday (all ritualism holds a Friday Crucifixion), but few will contend for Wednesday as the day of the Lord's death. We may derive some help from Mark's Gospel. —

- I. After resting in Bethany on the Sabbath, the Lord entered Jerusalem on the first day of the week. "He entered into Jerusalem" (Mark 11. 11).
- II. On Monday "they come to Jerusalem" (Mark 11. 15).
- III. On Tuesday "they come again to Jerusalem" (Mark 11. 27).
- IV. "After two days was the feast of the passover"—Wednesday and Thursday. As the Lord died on the day of the passover He would, we are disposed to think, die on the Thursday. —J. M. J. *Jas. M. Weaver.*

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

From Atherton. —Although we readily concede that our knowledge of this subject is imperfect, yet we are thankful that the Spirit has helped us to see its distinctive, dispensational character. Further, its features vary from dispensation to dispensation, but although this is true, yet it is always heaven's rule on the earth. The term "kingdom of heaven" itself means the "rule of the heavens," and does not contemplate a kingdom with heaven as the sphere of rule. Whilst the Lord in Matthew 13. does not make specific reference to the existence of the kingdom of heaven prior to His coming, yet a comparison of Old Testament scriptures will help us to see that such did exist. Men such as Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, ruling as they did with despotic power and authority, were yet subservient to Him who doeth according to His will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth; God is the King of heaven (verse 37), and also the King of all the earth (Psalm 47. 7, 8).

This introduces the first phase of the kingdom of heaven, but in the coming of the King from heaven, we are brought to a special phase. For now He is upon the earth with a view to setting up His kingdom, but this is denied Him. He comes with a message, and doubtless the parables of the sower and the tares take us to that period when He commenced to preach the gospel of the kingdom. Here it was said that the parable of the sower has a general application, but the tares is more particular, and refers possibly to the time prior to the cross, and continues when the church is caught up. It cannot possibly refer to this dispensation. Against this it was said that although the primary application of the parable seems to be as indicated here, yet certainly some of the narration of the parable could have its application in the present day. The mustard seed and leaven parables would cover several dispensations, indicating expansion, as well as growth and development of the word of God in the hearts of men. The distinction between the treasure and the pearl of great price parable is seen in the terms used. The treasure, although valuable indeed, does not compare with the pearl of great price. Of both it says, "He sold all that he had," which speaks of the Lord's giving up all,

even to the death of the cross. We suggest that the treasure speaks of all the redeemed apart from the Church which is His Body, which stands unique in the pearl of great price.

It was noticed that we have seven parables in Matthew 13., seven speaking of perfection. The first is that of the sower which is the beginning of Christ's message regarding this special sphere of the kingdom of heaven, and the last is that of the drag net, speaking of judgment. Between the first and the last, five fit in, where we have many wonderful things brought before us, completely covering the time from when the Lord sowed the seed, to when He will sit in judgment. It was noticed too that the gospel or some message is always linked up with the kingdom of heaven. In the times of Abraham and David, there was a message to be listened to, but a special message was preached when Christ came. This gospel finished at the cross, only to give place to the gospel of the grace of God, associated with a new aspect of the kingdom.

As we think that the kingdom of heaven has a present aspect in the Church which is His Body, it is very suggestive that Matthew, who alone writes of the kingdom of heaven, is the only one to mention the term " My Church " (Matthew 16. 18, 19). Here they are linked up in an unmistakable way. It was also said that the expression kingdom of heaven only being found in Matthew's Gospel is due to its being in keeping with his message contained therein which has the Jewish people specially in view.

The kingdom of God is the rule of God in the hearts and in the midst of His people, requiring their obedience to His will and recognition of the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "All authority hath been given unto Me, in heaven and on earth " (Matthew 28. 18-20). In the gospel records, Nicodemus was the first man to hear from the Lord's lips the words " kingdom of God. " Although a leader and ruler of the Jews, he could never have a true conception of the rule of God unless he was born again (John 3. 3-7).

The kingdom of God is the realm or sphere in which the rule of God is exercised, finding present expression in the Fellowship of God's Son (see 1 Corinthians 1. 9). It is the kingdom where love wields the sceptre, and loyal hearts respond to the rule of God. The great principle of the kingdom of God in its spiritual character is obedience to the word of the Lord, through the power of divine love operating in the hearts of His redeemed, who conform to the precepts and principles of His written word. " If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments (John 14. 15).
G. Sankey, J. Lee.

From **Kilmarnock**. —By the term the " kingdom of heaven, " we understand is meant heaven's rule among the nations of the earth. When God chose the nation of Israel it was to be the " head and not the tail " among the nations (Deuteronomy 28. 13), and so long as they were subject to His rule He wrought through them, but when they forsook and disobeyed God He allowed them to be taken captive into Babylon. They thus lost their place as a nation, and were ever afterwards subject to Gentile rule. From Daniel 2. 37 we learn how God gave into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the power over all the kingdoms of the earth, but being lifted up with pride he was afterwards humbled until he had to acknowledge that the " Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will " (chapter 4. 32).

It was the Roman Empire that was in power when John the Baptist appeared, and God was about to *give* the nation of Israel the opportunity. The Baptist's message was a call to repentance, because there must be a right condition of heart if heaven's rule was to be carried out on earth. It was the gospel of the kingdom that the Lord at first proclaimed (also the apostles), but from the time mentioned in Matthew 16. 21 there seems to have been a change in His outlook. It was not the kingdom, but the cross, involving His death and resurrection. The apostles, however, never seem to have given up the thought of the kingdom until after the descent of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1. 6-8). With the pouring out of the Holy Spirit God's purpose was not now with any special nation, but calling out of all nations a people for Himself (see Peter's message to the Gentiles in Acts 10. 35),

The kingdom of God is the sphere where God's rule is carried out in the present dispensation, and before any can see or enter into it they must be born from above (John 3. 3, 5), and be subject to the Lord's will as revealed in the apostles' teaching (Acts 2. 41, 42). As the result of the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God persons were saved and baptized, added to churches of God, and collectively were known as the "Fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1. 9); also as the House of God (Hebrews 3. 6).

In Revelation 1. 6, John in his message to the churches of Asia says, "He made us to be a kingdom." In the Lord's message to some of these churches He said that they would cease to be in the kingdom of God unless they repented (Revelation 2. 5, 16; 3. 16). We note also that overcomers were promised a place of authority in His coming kingdom (chapter 2. 26, 27, and 3. 21).

How solemn to think that those who were once in the kingdom of God, may, owing to moral or doctrinal evil, lose their position now and suffer eternal loss! (1 Corinthians 5. 13; 3. 15; 2 Timothy 2. 17, 18, and 3. 10). A. G. S.

From **Glasgow**. —Our Lord in Matthew 13. revealed what the kingdom of heaven is likened unto. The seven parables illustrate truths relative thereto. The expression "kingdom of heaven" is plural, and has been rendered "the reign of the heavens." It implies the rule of heaven over men, and covers the dealings of God in that special way. The earth is the sphere of this divine rule. Adam was to rule for God, having delegated authority from God who is supreme. The earth is the Lord's, and the divine purpose was that earth should be subject to heaven's rule. Men sought to reverse this, as for example in Genesis 11. Again, Nebuchadnezzar had to learn this by bitter experience. Whether men recognise or acknowledge the "reign of the heavens," it still stands. God reigneth and is Governor of the Nations.

In connection with the mustard tree of Matthew 13. and Mark 4. will both the kingdom of heaven and of God have a fulfilment in the Millennium? [Yes, I understand so. —J. M.]. Again in the parable of the woman with the leaven as recorded in Matthew 13. and Mark 4, the former Gospel speaks of the kingdom of heaven, and the latter of the kingdom of God. Is the former to do with the preaching of the Lord and His disciples? Is the latter similar? [See answers to questions. J. McIlvenna,]

EXTRACTS.

From **Cardiff**. —In approaching this subject, one finds a difficulty in finding a clear cut between the "kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of God." Some scriptures seem interchangeable, others, distinct and separate. Let us then seek the help of the Holy Spirit rightly to divide the Word of Truth. (1) There is firstly the thought of God's absolute power among men, where God overrules (see Daniel 4. 26). Great men in the history of the nations experienced this, such as Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar; others as they sought to oppose God and upset His purposes. As we view the progress of God's ways with men we realise the truth contained in His word that He resisteth the proud and exalteth the humble. This kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and continueth in this sense from generation to generation.

(2) Matthew 3. 2; 4. 17; 10. 7. In these three scriptures we have the announcement by John the Baptist and our Lord, of the presence of the kingdom of heaven, with its King, the preaching being followed by signs. It was proclaimed firstly to the Jewish nation, repentance and obedience being needful to obtain an entrance (Matthew 7. 21) to the kingdom. According to Matthew 5. 19 it would appear that keeping the commandments has to do with the standing of the Jews in the kingdom.

Matthew 8. 11 is difficult to fit in with the thought that the kingdom of heaven is to the Jewish nation, * unless it has its fulfilment in a coming day, when again the blessing will come to the nations through the Jews. The parables of Matthew 13. concerning the kingdom of heaven seem to have an earthly fulfilment, pointing to the Lord as God's King for Israel, "Behold, thy King cometh, meek and lowly."

(3) The kingdom of God **is** set forth as a spiritual sphere **where** righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit prevail. Therefore the unrighteous **of** 1 Corinthians 6. 9 cannot inherit it. We read that it cometh not **with** observation, **but** that it **is** within you (Luke 17. 20, 21). John 3. 3 teaches that entrance to the kingdom **is** obtained by a new birth, **as** flesh **and** blood cannot enter the kingdom of God. [Entrance into the kingdom of God **is** not by birth, though birth **is** necessary to entrance. The kingdom of God was given to the little flock **and** we do not enter the flock by birth. Moreover Acts 14. 22, " Through **many** tribulations we (disciples) must enter into the kingdom of God. "—J. M.]. *C. Wilkinson.*

From Ilford. —Except for the broadest principles, more difficulty **is** always experienced in the establishment of comprehensive laws **and** definitions of the spiritual world than of the physical. Fundamental doctrines are always laid down clearly in Scripture, but in the consideration of the subtler principles, the dual aspect of truth, common to many metaphysical investigations, **is** encountered. This **is** found in the study of the kingdom of heaven and its relation to the kingdom of God. Certain facts, however, are exempt from this difficulty, and become quite apparent on reading the parables in Matthew 13, together with their counterparts in Mark and Luke. These are the things which the kingdoms of heaven and of God have in common. Since they are kingdoms they must both have kings—and their King **is** the same—Christ (although this may have to be modified later for the kingdom of God). Secondly, both kingdoms are composed only of human individuals; further than this, the analogy of a kingdom **is** not taken.

There are, too, certain fundamental distinctions which become clear. In these parables in Mark and Luke, where " kingdom of God " **is** used instead of the " kingdom of heaven " in Matthew, no account of evil **is** found, while those parables in Matthew which deal with evil (tares, drag-net, etc.) are not reproduced in the other Gospels as illustrations of the kingdom of God. Thus **it** may be established that evil **is** found in the kingdom of heaven, while it **is** quite absent from the kingdom of God; John 3. 3 proving that only saved ones shall see the kingdom of God, all saved ones being covered by the redemption work of Christ. Also, the evil found, **is** that which **is** rewarded with being cast " into the furnace of fire " where " there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. " This aspect of the kingdom of heaven, then, reveals it as being the whole world—in which there has always been evil mixed with the good, and in which the good (cp. the leaven) has spread to all parts. By this analogy the kingdom of God must be the Church the Body of Christ comprising all believers since, from the parable of the pearl, in particular, only this church can be that for which the merchant gave **His** all. [The kingdom of God would be taken from the Jewish nation and given to another nation (God's New Testament people) who should bring forth the fruits of the kingdom (see Matthew 21. 43). It was given to the little flock (see Luke 12. 32). Note that we are to seek God's kingdom and it is not necessary for **us** to seek the Body of Christ, we, **as** believers, being members of it. —J. M.]. Hence the kingdom of God is smaller than, and part of, the kingdom of heaven; and both are growing (*e. g.*, the parables of the Tares and the Leaven). [How can the kingdom of God be a part of the kingdom of heaven ? It is possible for people to be in two things at the same time, without the one thing being part of the other. For instance, a man may be a shareholder and also a director in two companies without the one company being part of the other. Indeed they may have no relationship to each other at all. —J. M.]. The kingdom of heaven must always, therefore, be universal, while both kingdoms will only be finally completed and integrated at the last day (Matthew 13. 41-43). Then it is, that the kingship of the kingdom of God will be modified **as** shown in 1 Corinthians 15. 24-28. [I do not understand what is meant by " modified. "].

There is, however, another, narrower aspect to the truths of the kingdoms of heaven and of God, which forbids the formulation of a concise definition of the kingdoms and their relation. John's proclamation in Matthew 3. 2 **seems** to be the first indication of the dual aspect, since it implies that the kingdom of heaven had not been in existence before his time, and Christ Himself adds to this in Matthew 7. 21 by showing that only " he that doeth the will of My Father which

is in heaven " shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. " [As the kingdom of **God** has past, present and future aspects, so also has the kingdom of heaven. Unless this **is** observed no correct exposition of these subjects is possible. The Lord, in Matthew 7. 21, refers to the future aspect of the kingdom of heaven, **as verses 22 and 23** plainly show. —J. M. J. In this respect, therefore, the kingdom of God **must be** the Church of God, since this is the only body within the larger church which may **be** considered free from erroneous doctrine [I do not understand the deduction here from Matthew 7. 21. What **can be meant** by the church of God being " the only body within the larger Church ? " By " the larger church " I presume the Church, the Body of Christ is meant. The church of God is not in the Church, the Body. The Church, the Body, is composed of members, not of corporate bodies of people, some of these, or all of them, in error doctrinally, and the church of God the only group **free** from doctrinal error. **Of** course many, who **assume** to teach others, talk of " the church " **as** including all professing Christians of all different persuasions, **but this is not a scriptural view at all. It is a view which has led God's children into a quagmire on what we may call church truth. A study, say with the help of a concordance, of the uses of the word "church" in the New Testament would prove a great benefit to many. —J. M. J. —which might be symbolised by the birds in the mustard tree, for birds usually speak of evil, in scripture. [Not all birds, surely. What about the dove ?—J. M. J.]**

This interpretation, on its own, obviously cannot **be** widely applied; nor is it compatible with all the parables of the kingdom of heaven given **in** Matthew 13., **since if it is** the evil works (which shall **be** burnt up **at** the judgment) which **are** implied in these parables **as** the evil which shall **be** cast into outer darkness, their personification **and** the " weeping **and** gnashing of teeth " would **seem to be quite** unwarranted. [**But** " the tares **are** the sons of the evil one. " The tares signify persons **and** not evil in **an** abstract sense. I cannot think of " weeping **and** gnashing of teeth, " **but in a** terribly real and awful sense. —J. M. J. Nevertheless, this interpretation would imply that only **at** the last day shall the kingdom of heaven **be** universal [What do our friends **mean** by the last day ?—J. M. J.], which is even more closely in **agreement** with 1 Corinthians 15. 24-28. Thus, this second **aspect** too, although not so generally applicable **as** the first, has **a** certain value, **and** deserves some consideration.

Eric Morgan.

From Hamilton, Ont. —In Matthew 13. 11, the kingdom of heaven is referred to **as** among the mysteries which were revealed to the disciples, **but** not to the multitude. Then in the following **verses** of chapter 13., the Lord is seeking to explain the kingdom by illustration. The first one is the sower **and** the **seed, and we see** from this parable that the kingdom is to **be** spread abroad in the earth **by** the word taking root **and** bearing fruit in the heart of man, much like **seed** falling upon good ground.

From verse 24-30 a further thought is brought in, in connection with sowing the seed. Tares are sown among the wheat **and** are allowed to grow until the time of harvest. As the Lord **states** in this parable that the harvest is the **end** of the world, it would appear that the kingdom of heaven is primarily associated with Israel. The **fact** that the Son of **Man** is the Sower also strengthens this thought for, **as He** said Himself, " I was not **sent but** unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel " (Matthew 15. 24). [If the kingdom of heaven is primarily associated with Israel, what about the Lord's words to Peter when **He** said, " I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, " etc. ? (Matthew 16. 19). Note how this verse follows the Lord's **statement** in the previous verse (verse 18), " I will build My Church. " ** I will give " cannot **be** divorced from " I will build. " This building **is a** universal **and** dispensational fact. Whilst the Lord **began** with Israel, it **was** clearly not His ^{'*} purpose to limit **His** work to Israel. **He** was to **be** "a Light for revelation to the Gentiles, " **as well as** " the Glory of Thy (God's) people Israel. " Now God **is** making no racial or national distinction **between men, and** the Lord is creating of **Jew and** Gentile one new man. —J. M. J.]

The parable of the hidden treasure **may** possibly refer to the Old Testament saints, one thought supporting it being that before the field **was** bought the treasure was hid, **and** we know that the **saints** of the past dispensation were **dead**

and actually **in the** lower parts of the earth before the great Buyer came down **and** purchased them with His own blood. The pearl of great price, on the other hand, would **speak** of that great jewel of the present dispensation, " the Church which **is His Body,** " which **He** will one day present in all its beauty to **His Father,** " not having spot or wrinkle. " It would **seem** also that this Church **is** the fullest expression of the kingdom of heaven in the present dispensation, for through the gospel it **is** bearing fruit in the hearts of men. [Hardly a correct way of putting the matter.—J. M.]

Perhaps the most outstanding parable of the kingdom of heaven **is** that of the drag-net, which brings **us** to the differences between the kingdoms. In this parable **it is** noticeable that both bad and good are taken in the net. **This is** not true of the kingdom of God. However, a time comes when the bad **are cast** out, and this points **us** forward to the end of the world when the sheep and goats are separated. Following this will be the millennial reign, which we **suggest is** the climax of the kingdom of heaven, for heaven's King will indeed reign in righteousness, and the glory of the Lord will cover the earth **as** the waters cover the sea. **We also see** in the parable of the tares the growth of evil, whereas in Mark 4. 26 the kingdom of God **is** likened unto the growth of seed, speaking no doubt **of** the growth of the gospel and revealed truth of God in this dispensation, but no appearance of evil such **as** tares **is** seen here.

While it has been suggested that the two kingdoms are like **a** circle within a circle, two lines of thought seemed to **emerge** from our discussions. One **is** that the outer circle **is** the kingdom of heaven, or rule of the heavens, which embraces in its widest scope the nations of this world; the inner circle being the kingdom of God, which **is** limited to those who have entered through the door of the new birth, and are consistently living up to the things concerning the kingdom of God. The other thought **is** that the smaller circle **is** the kingdom of heaven, which **is** confined to this earth and primarily to Israel, while the larger circle **is** the kingdom of God or rule of God, for **He** also rules in heaven over all created beings. **He** has done in **a** past eternity, and will also in a future eternal state, as the expression " Kingdom of their Father " in Matthew 13. 43 **seems** to suggest. [These kingdoms are two spheres of rule and it **is** not necessary to contemplate the one being within the other, **as** though the inner sphere were an integral part of the outer. The sphere or realm of the kingdom of heaven **is** the world—" the field **is** the world, " but the kingdom **of** God has to do with " the garden. " Note the contrast between Matthew 13. 31 and Luke 13. 19. In the former the grain of **mustard seed** was sown by a man " in his field, " but in the latter he " took, and **cast it** into his own garden. " Trace these lines of truth back through Scripture to the beginning and **we** get the field and the garden (see Genesis 3. 1). If the truths related to the field and the garden be observed, then help will be derived on the matter of the kingdoms of heaven and of God.—J. M.]

Another thought **is** that while the Lord was on earth, the two terms were synonymous [No, they are not synonymous.—J. M.], but whether this **is** so or not, the **fact** remains that many of the truths taught in the parables are true of both kingdoms, and **if** we are going to profit from our study of these things, it **is** only **as we seek** with the help of the Holy Spirit to carry out **in** our lives the laws of the kingdom; and the laws of **a** kingdom, whether it **is** a kingdom of men, the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, carry with them **a** reward for obedience and **a** penalty for disobedience.

N.

McKay.

From Edinburgh. —John the Baptist preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 3. 2). Righteousness **is** characteristic of the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God, **as** witnessed by the Lord's words when **He came to be baptised** of John: " It becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness. " After John's imprisonment, **Jesus** began to preach where John had left off, using the **same** message. It **is** noted that power was manifest at the commencement of John's preaching, and also **at** the commencement of the Lord's preaching. Some hold that with the appearing of the Lord on the banks of Jordan, the kingdom of heaven has its commencement [No, not **its** commencement.—J. M.], and from that **time** forward **it is** very hard to distinguish between the two kingdoms, so closely do they **seem to be side by side**. Matthew **uses** the expression " kingdom of heaven " where Mark, Luke, and John invariably **use** the expression " kingdom of God. " Luke 16. 16 reads, " * The law and the prophets were until John: from that **time** the

gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently (presseth) into it. " Whether kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven, there is one King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the subjects of the kingdom a condition of entrance is a new birth in every age. The adversary to all God's purposes is still the same, the devil.

From Yeovil.—The term " kingdom of heaven " seems to apply to a period in the world's history when righteousness will reign, and righteous people will shine forth and be had in esteem. [But there is a time when Satan sows tares also, a time when evil is tolerated. —J. M.]. Justice and judgment will be executed promptly and effectively. This apparently is the teaching of the parable of the tares. [Not promptly, for tares are allowed to grow till the harvest, which is at the end of the age. —J. M.]. It is also apparently a future time, for in Matthew 8. 11 we see others joined with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom, which places it after the resurrection of the Old Testament saints.

It is necessary to be born again before we can enter the kingdom of God. This was made quite clear by the Lord Himself when speaking to Nicodemus. We know also that once born again, and so becoming a member of the Body of Christ, one can never be lost.

On the other hand, we see that in the kingdom of heaven many are cast out into outer darkness when the Lord executes judgment. This is illustrated by the parable of the drag-net.

Also it was suggested that good works would gain entrance into the kingdom of heaven as seen in Matthew 25. [It should be clearly noted that the Lord teaches that it is a good tree that brings forth good fruit, and a good man brings forth good things. We must be careful lest we teach that a sinner can do good (see Matthew 12. 33, 35; Romans 3. 10-12). —J. M.], where those who sheltered God's people during the tribulation, and are judged with the living nations, are given a place in the kingdom. *Austin S. Glover.*

Questions and Answers.

Question from Hamilton.—Are we to understand that the men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba will literally condemn that generation, or has Matthew 12. 41, 42 a figurative meaning ?

Answer.—It is said that Noah condemned the world through his preparation of the ark. I understand that the men of Nineveh and Queen of Sheba will be at the same judgment as the generation who lived in the Lord's time, that is, at the judgment of the Great White Throne, and that those who repented, and she who came, will condemn those who both refused to repent and to come to the Lord, who was greater than Jonah and Solomon. —J. M.

Questions from Edinburgh.—(1) Is the kingdom of heaven in existence at the present time ?

(2) What are meant by the " birds " in verse 32 ? Does this refer to the Tribulation.

Answer (1)—Yes. Matthew 16. 19 shows that a binding and loosing goes on in connection with the use of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and such matters stand related to the building of the Church, the Body, by the Lord. Note, too, the force of " thou shalt bind " (Matthew 16. 19), in contrast to " ye shall bind " (Matthew 18. 18). In the one case it is " thou, " as applicable to Peter and all Peter-like ones who make use of the keys, but in the other case it is " Ye, " showing it is a collective act. Again, note the parable of the "Marriage Feast " in which we have not only the different sendings out of the servants with invitations, but also the manifest displeasure of the king who sends his armies to destroy the murderers of his servants and burn their city. The fulfilment to this was in the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A. D. No doubt God has also punished others who have persecuted His servants throughout this dispensation.

Answer (2).—Help will be derived by comparing Ezekiel 31. 6 and Daniel 4. 12. The picture of the beasts and birds finding shelter and dwelling in the great tree, showed the greatness of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings—all flesh was fed from such kingdoms and all nations dwelt within their widespread boundaries. Such also will be true of the kingdom of heaven. —J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Parables of the Kingdom of H e a v e n	57
The Change of the Dispensation.63
Questions and A n s w e r s	68

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

From Cowdenbeath. —The kingdom of heaven is **an** expression which is found exclusively in Matthew's Gospel. The term has been defined by some **as** the rule of the heavens. Like the kingdom of God, we believe that it is **seen** to exist in the past, present and future. The scope of this kingdom is world-wide (Matthew 13. 38), whereas the kingdom of God is circumscribed and limited. In the kingdom of heaven **we** find both good and evil, the good having been admitted and the evil being put there by Satan, whilst in the kingdom of God only those find **a** place who voluntarily bow to the will of God. There is no immediate effort made to separate the good from the evil, this being delayed until the Son of Man comes from heaven, but **in** connection with the kingdom of God we learn that one who conducts himself contrary to the will of God **is** to be put away, and **ceases** to have any inheritance in the kingdom (1 Corinthians 5. 13; 6. 9, 10).

In Matthew 16. the Lord said to Peter that **He** would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. These keys were used by Peter, he being the first to preach the gospel to the Jews and to the Gentiles, thus admitting believers on the Lord **Jesus** Christ into the kingdom. Such people are sons of the kingdom (verse 38), the good seed sown by the Son of Man. God is spoken of **in** verse 43 **as** being the Father of such persons. Thus we believe that the relationship which exists **in** the kingdom of heaven is that of children towards **a** father, whereas in the kingdom of God we have God and **His** people.

A comparison of Matthew 8. 11 and Luke 13. 29 shows that in the future expression of the kingdoms the **same** persons are spoken of **as** being in both. This **we** believe to be true of the present. The individual who **is** in the kingdom of God is also in the kingdom of heaven, but not vice versa.

The kingdom of God **is** defined for us in Matthew 6. 10: " Thy **will be** done, **as** in heaven, so on earth. " Matthew 21. 43 shows that the sphere of the kingdom of God in the past was the nation of Israel, who pledged themselves in obedience **as** God's people to do **all** that **He** had spoken (Exodus 24.). Yet although God chose Israel, **He** did not completely abandon the other nations, but His overruling purposes continued to advance among those who feared Him, and among those who feared Him not. God's original intention was that the rule of the heavens should operate among God fearing and obedient men, but the devil **as** the enemy of God sought to frustrate the divine purpose, and he **is** responsible for wicked men being in the kingdom. Judgment was not immediately pronounced to remove the wicked, but good and evil go on together. Some notable men outside of Israel feared God and taught and urged their fellows to do likewise (e. g., Daniel 4. and Daniel 6.); thus in **a** past dispensation many recognised the rule of the heavens.

In the kingdom of heaven in its present form there are both saved and unsaved, and oftimes it is difficult to **make the** distinction. The kingdom of God to-day finds its expression in baptised believers, in obedience to the Lordship of Christ, being found in the Churches of God to do the will of God.

In the future both kingdoms are again seen to exist concurrently during the Millennium. In close proximity to Himself will be those who shall form the kingdom of God, the willing subjects of the king. Yet even in that day the kingdom of God will not be world-wide, **as** there will be those who shall yield only feigned obedience. The wider sphere of rule will again comprise the kingdom of heaven. **We would judge** that the kingdom of God will go even beyond the millennial period, because following upon the dissolving of the heavens and the earth, new heavens and **a** new earth shall be brought into being, and therein the rule of God shall willingly and unceasingly be obeyed throughout **a** long eternal day.

James Bowman.

From Victoria, B. C. —In **Psalm** 104. we have **a** very wonderful description of the One who is over the kingdom of heaven, the mighty God of the universe, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the One to whom **all** creatures look for food: " These wait **all** upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season " (verse 27). Therein we **see** the widest sphere of the rule of the kingdom of heaven **as** associated with the earth.

In the parable of the sower is revealed the scope on earth of the kingdom of heaven. **We see** the word of God sown in the hearts of men; not any particular group, but all men, **as** in John 3. 16. Those that hear to-day or in **a** future day are called sons of the kingdom. They readily acknowledge God's dealings with men, and become His worshippers. It is not the purpose of God to take them from the world, but that **as** leaven they might be **a** blessing to the rest.

We see the conditions of entrance into the kingdom of heaven in such scriptures **as** Matthew 5. 3, 10; 7. 21. The kingdom of heaven is seen to be wide in its scope, covering the whole world. To-day throughout the earth, whether men bow down before an idol, adore **a** fetish, venerate **a** charm, or do reverence to the spirits of their ancestors, they, generally speaking, recognise God, the omnipotent Creator, and some are anxious for conciliation with Him, though they know not how till the gospel reaches them.

The kingdom of God **seems** to take in **a** much smaller sphere, and refers to those who are true worshippers collectively. In the time of Israel it was composed of those who were gathered in **a** collective capacity to worship Him. The kingdom of God is **a** kingdom of priests and **a** holy nation (Exodus 19. 6; 1 Peter 2. 5). In 1 Chronicles 29. 11 David says of the kingdom of God, " Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as Head above all. " *J. McLeman.*

From Brantford, Ont. —The Spirit of God singles out Matthew the publican to pen the illustrations showing what the kingdom of heaven may be likened unto. The **New** Testament revelation of this truth was commenced by John the Baptist and carried on by the Lord from the commencement of His public ministry, **as** shown in Matthew 3. 2 and 4. 17. These two scriptures would also indicate that despite anything which may have been known regarding this truth prior to John, there **was** about to appear One who would reveal what had previously been known to man in **a** very limited way.

The seven parables of Matthew 13. bring before **us** something having **a** varied nature. The parable of the sower indicates that God expects fruit, the extent of which will be governed by the extent of the reception of His word. **We suggest** that the aspect implied here is that in whatsoever dispensation the word of God is available to the sons of men, God will hold such responsible for their acceptance or rejection of Himself.

The extent of the parable of the mustard seed is wider, and presents God's claims over **all** His creatures **as** Creator. The words of the apostle are very fitting here: " **He** giveth to **all** life, and breath, and **all** things " (Acts 17.). Having **so**

abundantly provided for all, **He is** then entitled to **exercise His** sovereign will wherever **His** creative power **is** known. These two parables, **we** suggest, imply the extent of the kingdom of heaven, namely throughout God's whole creation, **a** special responsibility being placed upon those who are favoured with hearing **His** precious word.

The Lord Himself gives us an insight into the aspect implied **in** the parables of the tares and the drag-net. Throughout the whole creation of God there are those who, according to the light they have, feel after God **if** haply they might find Him. This condition of heart is pleasing to God, and **is** recorded by **Him** even though unobserved by the natural eye. At the consummation of the age God will bless and take to Himself all who have sought Him, and punish those who refused to have **Him in** their thoughts. We would observe here that **we** do not feel that the good seed and good fish of these parables include **His** Church of the **present** dispensation, **in** that even though we live **in a** world which lieth **in** the wicked one, **we** will not need to wait until the end of the age to be separated from the evil around us. [There **is a** long period between the sowing and the reaping **in** the parable of the tares during which the wheat and the tares grow together. During this period the Church has its place and during this time saved and **unsaved have** grown together, though, of course, the Church will have been **taken** from the **scene** ere the judgment of the world by the Son of Man takes place.—J. M.].

Even though there were millions of people upon the earth who were responsible to God as Creator, the heart of God yearned for something closer and more intimate. God's desire **in** this respect was eventually expressed **in** the words, " Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. " Thus **we** suggest the kingdom of God to be a redeemed obedient people whose heart condition may be expressed in the words, "All that the LORD hath spoken **we** will do. " Because of their failure to obey the desires of God, the kingdom of God was taken from those who claimed to be the disciples of Moses, and the great honour of being the kingdom of God **in** this present dispensation was given to those who sanctify **in** their hearts Christ as Lord, and obey whatsoever **He has** commanded.

James Bell, Oliver Burbridge.

From Matlock. —As Genesis has been called the seed-plot of the Bible, we may say that Matthew's Gospel **is** the Genesis of the New Testament. That Gospel lays **a** foundation for **an** understanding of God's work **in** this present **age**, with its complete line of kingdom parables, the sermon on the mount, **and the** only references to the Church—so much so, **in** fact, that we consider it, dispensationally, to be the Gospel for this present dispensation.

We find that the terms " kingdom of heaven " and " kingdom of God " generally **mean** the same thing **in** the New Testament. Statements **made in** Matthew concerning the kingdom of heaven are made **in** other Gospels concerning the kingdom of God. **We** must therefore conclude that the kingdom of heaven **is** the kingdom of God. **We** find, though, that the kingdom of God **is** not always the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God embraces the sphere of God's rule **in** any age—past, present and future. [Whilst we readily acknowledge that the subjects of the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God present difficulty to the searcher after truth, we cannot agree with the conclusion reached by our friends that the kingdom of heaven **is** the kingdom of God. If it be observed that the realm of the kingdom of heaven **is** the world **in** which there **is** the permission by God for the evil one to sow tares, this **in** itself should show that these kingdoms are not synonymous. As I pointed out last month, the mustard seed whilst sown **in** the field (and the field **is** the world) **in** the parable of the kingdom of heaven **in** Matthew 13., **in** Luke 13. we are told that " **a man** took, and **cast** it into his own garden. "We have here two spheres contemplated, even as we have **in** the **beginning** when God planted **a** garden eastward **in** Eden. There were then two spheres, the garden, the walled, or hedged **in** enclosure, in which Adam was placed to tend and keep it, and outside of that garden lay the field, the world. Adam had **a** twofold responsibility (1) to **tend** the garden, and (2) to rule over all fish, fowl **and** all living creatures, over every " beast of the field " (Genesis 3. 1). Unless these two

spheres be observed, the one much more limited than the other, no progress will ever be made in acquiring a knowledge of what is meant by these respective kingdoms. —J. M.]

We propose the following **as facts** concerning the kingdom of heaven:

(1) It was preached **from** John the Baptist (Matthew 3. 2; 11. 12).

(2) It was preached by the Lord (Matthew 4. 23; 9. 35).

(3) It is not the Millennium, for " the kingdom of heaven is **at hand**. " [But what of Matthew 8. 11 where many " shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven " ? surely this is in the Millennium. —J. M.]

(4) It began at Pentecost and will end at the Lord's coming for His Church [If it began at Pentecost how did men enter it prior to that time, **as see** Matthew 23. 13 ? Again, in the parables of the Tares and the Drag-net, **we see** the judgment which takes place **at** the coming of the Son of Man; how then can the kingdom of heaven end with the coming of the Lord for the Church ?—J. M.]

(5) The period of the Lord's ministry belongs to the era of the kingdom (Matthew 11. 12; 23. 13), though this **was** not fully inaugurated until Pentecost. [What do our friends mean by " fully inaugurated " ? **Was** it inaugurated at all in their **view** ? **Had it** occurred prior to Pentecost that the grain of **mustard seed** had been sown in the field ? If it had, surely it **was** inaugurated !—J. M.]

(6) The kingdom **was** part of God's eternal purposes, and not subject to Israel's acceptance of Christ **as** their king—not therefore an alternative. **He** never offered Himself to them **as** their King though **He** admitted it. [I **am** not certain what our friends mean here by the kingdom of heaven being part of God's eternal purpose, but when it **is** alleged that Christ " never offered Himself to them **as** their King though **He** admitted it, " one wonders whether our friends have ever read Zechariah 9. 9 and Matthew 12. 4, 5. Surely **if** there **is** one thing plainer than another in the Lord's life and ministry, it is that the Lord presented Himself to Israel **as** King-Messiah and **was** rejected. In consequence of their **act** Israel **was** rejected nationally and God's eternal purpose in the Church began to **be** fulfilled. —J. M.]

(7) The significance of the term " kingdom of heaven " lies in the **fact** that the Ruler **is** in heaven—" whom the heavens **must** receive until the **times** of restoration of all things. " [It lies in no such thing or event. —J. M.]

(8) A fulfilment of the promise to Peter of the keys of the kingdom of heaven (not of God, for his office **was** not so broad) was when he opened the door of the kingdom, **first** to the **Jews** and then to the Gentiles. [One wonders whether our friends have considered, in the light of what they write under (6) and what they write here under (8), Matthew 3. 1-12 and Matthew 16. 15-19. Surely John the Baptist had a **message** to Israel concerning Christ, their Messiah, and surely, also, **Peter** had a **message** for both **Jew** and **Gentile**; both **messages** were in association with the truth of the kingdom of heaven. To deny these **facts** is to deny what is clearly taught in Matthew and elsewhere. —J. M.]

The six parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13. are divided into two groups of three. The first three parables—the tares, mustard-seed, and leaven—were uttered in the hearing of the multitude, and show what the kingdom appears like to the multitude of men; the last three—the treasure, pearl and net—show not the **evident** things of the kingdom, **but** the **hidden**. [No such reason can **be** deduced from Matthew 13. **as** to why he spoke three parables to the multitude, then explained one of these and spoke other three to **His** disciples (see verses 34 and 35). Surely the parable of the drag-net **is** no more hidden than that of the tares of the field. —J. M.]

Let us take one example out of each section. **Of** the parable of the tares, **we see** something most extraordinary. The kingdom is not likened unto something uniformly good, with law, royalty, and so on, **as** expected in a kingdom, **but** to a disorderly field with two things growing; one that **is** profitable to the sower and the other unprofitable. The enemy, the devil, has **made** sure that the imitation

is a good one, but in process of time a difference will be seen. [Surely what our friends say here should convince them that what they say at (4) as to the kingdom of heaven beginning at Pentecost and ending with the Lord coming for the Church is all wrong. —J. M.]. In the early Church (which, of course, is not the kingdom, but its *instrument*) we see the devil's imitation with such as Ananias and Sapphira. To-day, the imitation is still more puzzling, for in the sects it is difficult to single out the true sons of the kingdom from the imitation ones. [The early church is not the instrument of the kingdom of heaven, whatever that may mean, nor do I regard Ananias and Sapphira to be tares. Were they the tares in the early Church? then the church and the world would be one and the same, for the tares were sown in the field, the world, where the good seed was also sown. —J. M.].

In the present phase of the kingdom of God there can be no tares—only those who are obedient to God's will constituting seed.

In the parable of the pearl, however, we see the hidden things concerning the kingdom; not a picture of *apparent* failure, but of great success. Something (the Church, we believe) is secured which God prizes above all others. We must note also the true relationship of Christ's death to the kingdom as portrayed in this parable.

K. G. Seedhouse.

From Vancouver, B. C. —It appears by the use of the word kingdoms (not kingdom) in the syllabus, that they are considered to be different kingdoms. Let us look at a few instances which seem rather to suggest that they are the same.

First of all one *glancing* at the two terms kingdom of heaven **and** kingdom of God would not think they were different in view of the heavens being the throne of God (Acts 7. 49). The same word for kingdom is used in both terms, so that the kingdom of heaven suggests a people under heaven's rule, and functioning in the laws of its King on the throne, even God.

John the Baptist preached that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and that repentance preceded it (Matthew 3. 2). One has suggested that heaven or heavens is mentioned because of the spiritual condition of the people directing their thoughts to the One who dwelt there. [Mere assertions without scriptural warrant are valueless. —J. M.].

We read that the Lord began to preach the kingdom from the time that John was delivered up. In Matthew 4. 17 the term kingdom of heaven is used, but in Mark 1. 15 the kingdom of God, and for both, repentance preceded acceptance. It seems unlikely[?] that two different kingdoms are referred to since the Lord commenced to proclaim them at the same time.

Again, when the Lord sends out the twelve, He refers to the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 10. 7, while in Luke 9. 2 they are to speak of the kingdom of God. Also the seventy in Luke 10. 9 have the kingdom of God to preach. Such use of the two names would suggest the same kingdom.

It does not seem likely that Matthew 4. 23 and Luke 4. 43 are different gospels. The glad tidings refer to the same kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar uses the singular in referring to (Sod's kingdom, and so throughout the Scriptures. There seems to be no such reference as the kingdoms of God. [It should be quite clearly seen that His kingdom (that of the Most High), in Daniel 4. 34, is the same as what is referred to in Daniel 4. 17—" to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. " The kingdom of men is in the world and the world is the sphere of the kingdom of heaven. This is something very different from " His (God's) rule in Israel" (Judges 5. 11); in connection with His rule in this much smaller sphere we read of "the leaders, " "the rulers" and "the governors" (Judges 5. 2, 7, 9). This kingdom of God in Israel His people commenced at Sinai (Exodus 19. 5, 6) and ended with the kingdom being taken from them (Matthew 21. 43) and given to another nation, the little flock (Luke 12. 32). Nebuchadnezzar knew nothing of this kingdom in Israel, but he learned from his long and bitter experience that there

was **One** infinitely higher than himself whose dominion **is** everlasting. **For** He who sat **as King at the Flood** and sits **as King** for ever (Psalm 29. 10), rules over and punishes men for their wickedness in time and in eternity. —J. M. J.

From Matthew 8. 11, 12 and Luke 13. 28-30 we would suggest that **the** scope and bounds, the within and without of the two terms refer to the **same** kingdom, and the condition of entering **is** the same.

John's comparison with the least **in** both terms of the kingdom **is** identical (Matthew 11. 11, Luke 7. 28). Matthew changes to the **name** kingdom of God in Matthew 12. 28 which corresponds with Luke 11. 20.

The teaching of the little child **is** used of both terms, shewing the condition of heart necessary to entering the kingdom (Matthew 19. 14, Luke 18. 17).

Even Matthew's Gospel refers to the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God in the **same** lesson of the rich man. In Matthew 19. 23 **is** written the kingdom of heaven, and in the next verse the kingdom of God, in a repeated sentence **which adds** emphasis.

In Matthew 13. 11 and Luke 8. 10 we have the "mysteries of the kingdom" referred to, although Matthew uses the term kingdom of heaven and Luke, kingdom of God. Mark 4. 11 uses the words, "mystery of the kingdom of God." The mysteries are illustrated in the parables, and it **is** in the interpretation of the parables that some suggest two different kingdoms.

One of the main reasons that **seems** to suggest that the kingdom of heaven **is** different, **is** the fact of evil being permitted to grow alongside the righteous. **But** does this conflict with our knowledge of the kingdom of God? **It is** certain indeed that evil **is** not permitted by the laws of the kingdom of God, whether in the past, present, or future. [We should hardly have thought that in a criticism of **this** matter of the kingdoms of heaven and of God our friends would have dealt with "evil" in the abstract, and we are far from asserting that evil may not be found in God's kingdom, but publicly known sin can be dealt with, for God's kingdom **is** not in word, but in power (1 Corinthians 4. 20). The most superficial reading of Matthew 13., in the parable of the tares, shows that the evil within the realm of the kingdom of heaven **is** not evil deeds, but evil men (and of course evil men will do evil deeds). Moreover, though a brother in Christ may become a "wicked" man (see 1 Corinthians 5. 13), he still remains a brother in Christ for all that, as 2 Corinthians 2. 5-11 shows. But be it noted that "the tares are sons of the evil one" and the sower of these **is** the Devil. These had known no regeneration. Saved persons in the kingdom of God who **became** "wicked," either morally or doctrinally, were to be excommunicated, but the tares were not to be allowed to be uprooted from the field in which they were sown, which **is** in the world and not in the Church of the living God. They were to be allowed to grow amongst the wheat till the harvest, which **is** at the end of the age, and describes the judgment of the Son of Man. Where in all this **is** the least resemblance to truths relative to the kingdom of God? Further, it **is** a basic principle in the kingdom of God proclaimed by the Lord, that the new birth **is** necessary before the kingdom of God can be seen, so that no unregenerated person can be in the kingdom of God from the Lord's time, consequently the thought of "the furnace of fire" or "eternal fire" never **arises** in connection with the kingdom of God, but it will be seen in Matthew 13. 42, 50, that eternal punishment (Matthew 25. 41, 46) **is** taught in connection with the kingdom of heaven. Within the sphere where the kingdom of God obtains (the world) there are both righteous and wicked. The last parable of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 25. 1-13) shows two classes, "possessors" and "professors." All the ten virgins had torches (external profession), but only five had oil in their vessels. These entered with the Bridegroom into the marriage feast, but the other five were shut out despite the fact that they said, "Lord, Lord," for, "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 7. 21). —J. M. J. But **as** was evident in the time of the Lord's ministry evil men permeated, may we say, that **which** was God's, so much so that the Lord said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken **away** from you!" **W. McLeman.**

THE CHANGE OF THE DISPENSATION.

From Cowdenbeath. —The word "dispensation" which is sometimes translated "stewardship," according to Dr. Strong, means "the administration of a household or estate." A dispensation, therefore, is not simply a period of time, but rather the particular mode which God chooses in which to conduct His affairs with men over a certain period. In the past this was done according to the law. Such a dispensation was introduced by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1. 17). The advent of the Son of God upon earth marks the introduction of a change in the manner of God's dealings with men. The change did not take place instantly, but we believe a transitional period elapsed during which there was a gradual merging of the one dispensation into the other. When the epistle to the Hebrews was written the change-over had well nigh become complete, as the words of chapter 8. 13 would indicate, "that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away." We would expect, therefore, to find foundational truths of the new dispensation being propounded by the Lord and being indicated in His dealings with men.

The law brought a man into bondage because he was under obligation to observe what was written therein. Grace gives a man liberty, the demands of the law having been met by the sacrifice of Christ. In His reply to the Pharisees in connection with the matter of the disciples eating with unwashed hands, the Lord not only condemns the observance of the traditions of the elders which were but the precepts of men, and which were in opposition to the perfect law of God, but also, as Mark 7. 19 shows, lifts one of the burdens imposed upon men in the dispensation of law. Hebrews 9. 10 tells us that meats and drinks and divers washings were only carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation. A change was in prospect, and the first indication was given by the Lord of these impositions being lifted. Acts 10. is in agreement with Mark 7. 19 although, no doubt, the deeper teaching behind the vision which was given to Peter was that he should learn that God had removed the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, extending to both the equal privilege to have the gospel preached to them. Nevertheless it is also the divine sanction for our guidance that the flesh of all animals may be eaten if so desired, and that the observance of the law in regard to meats was no longer binding. The liberating of men from the restrictions and impositions of the law is one of the outstanding characteristics of the present dispensation. Later, in Acts 15. it was agreed at a meeting of the apostles and elders that no greater burden be imposed than these necessary things, namely, abstinence from fornication, things strangled, things sacrificed to idols and from blood.

The next characteristic which presents itself to us is the matter of the Lord's mercy reaching out unto Gentiles. It was mercy the woman desired, and in recognition of the fact that Israel should be served first and that she craved but a crumb which would in no way deny any of Israel their portion she obtained the blessing on the ground of her faith. This was but a mercy drop indicative of a stream of rich blessing which would flow out to Gentiles and of which they might freely drink through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The most outstanding feature of the new dispensation is that a Church would be built composed of individuals who would make the same confession as Peter. The Lord Himself is the Builder, and as His words indicate He is also the Preserver and Protector as well as the Possessor. He says, "My Church," and in Ephesians 1. 22, 23, the name is given "the Church which is His Body." This is the first notification that is given of such a Church being built. The knowledge of this had been hidden from men in other generations, but a full revelation was given unto the holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit (Ephesians 3. 5).

Then follows the first announcement of the Lord to His disciples that He would go up to Jerusalem and be killed. How fitting that these words should be recorded at this point, for apart from the death of Christ no Church could ever be built, no stream of mercy could flow out from God from which both Jew and Gentile might drink with equal right and liberty, and no change in God's dealings with **men** could **take** place.

James Bowman.

From **Edinburgh.** —In Acts 10, it is clear that permission to eat all meat (except blood) is given, remembering that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking. As Peter was still seeking to distinguish between clean and unclean, the point had to be made clear to him to prepare him for his initial contact with the Gentiles. The sheet let down by the corners contained clean and unclean, so the gospel is to all the earth: "Go ye into *all* the world." In chapters 8., 9. and 10. of Acts we have accounts of the salvation of the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth, so that all nations and all peoples are included. It would seem that the figure three used in connection with Peter would forcibly carry his mind back as he remembered the night he denied his Lord thrice. Peter had learned by a bitter lesson to subdue his will to the will of God.

Looking at Matthew 15., one wonders if there was a deputation to trip up the Lord in His words, especially sent to find error and fault. They stood by tradition, but the Lord's answer is very strong. It is not clean appearances, but clean hearts that God requires to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Elijah was sent to one outside for sustenance. The Canaanitish woman asked help of the Son of David, but she received nothing, but when she accepted the place of a dog and called on her Master (Lord) a response was certain.

The loosing and binding would appear to refer to Church of God discipline, as the heart would be seen in heaven before it became manifest on earth. [Note that in Matthew 16. 19 it is "thou," singular, but in chapter 18. 18 it is "ye," plural. In the first it is Peter's action by the use of the keys, but in the second it is the church that binds and looses, according to heaven's binding and loosing. There is a binding and loosing in connection with the preaching of the gospel, as there is in connection with the church's responsibility in putting away or receiving. —J. M. J. The keys are the preaching of the gospel, and Peter did not use the keys on his own responsibility when they were first used at Pentecost, but spoke as one of the twelve, though at the same time he was the one chosen by the Lord.

J. Lang,

EXTRACTS.

From **Ilford.** —It is evident as we read the Gospels that the Jewish people, under the leadership of those who should have been spiritual leaders, had come to accept a code of living based not only on the Mosaic law, but also on the traditions of the elders which had been handed down from generation to generation. Israel, as a nation, had become lip-servers to the God of heaven. There was great striving to keep the letter of the law without an appreciation of the spirit thereof.

In the portion of Matthew under review the Lord makes it clear that the traditions of the elders had been allowed to interfere with the outworking of God's purposes, and He therefore here begins to shew that His coming was the precursor of a change of dispensation. Even the disciples themselves were so steeped in the traditions of the fathers that the Lord needed to enlighten them. He makes it clear that it is the heart condition rather than outward practice that is of value in God's sight. The Jews had always regarded themselves as the chosen people of God, but Christ now commences to teach that the Gentiles too were to have a place in God's scheme of things. At a later date God had to speak to Peter in a vision to cause him to understand that this was so. In God's sight nothing is common or unclean. It is faith that is necessary—not natural birth. The Jews had an inestimable advantage in that they had committed to them the oracles of God, but their Jewish parentage did not automatically entitle them to the blessings that be in Christ. New birth is the one essential.

The new dispensation ushers in also a call to repentance. Thus the foundation of the new dispensation stands on the basis of repentance towards God, and faith resulting in new birth. None are excluded. The Jew no longer holds the sole position of privilege—an era of grace to all men has been ushered in. The Church which is His Body has Christ as its foundation, its position unassailable and inviolate.

A. G. J.

From Yeovil.—In Matthew 11. 12, 18, the Lord Jesus Christ says, " From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence. . . . For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. " This gives us the clue that God started speaking to mankind in a different way and about different things at the time of John the Baptist.

God spoke to His people at Mount Sinai, and gave them a law which they were to keep. Thus by a divine pronouncement the lives **and** actions of God's people were governed by all the details found in the law. These are chiefly found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. They were established for " perpetual generations. " Thus by divine decree the law was established and perpetuated. This being so, nothing but a divine decree could alter it. This, then, is what we have to look for when the dispensation was to be changed from the law to something else.

The Lord Jesus says that *the law* prophesied *until* John, Also *from* the days of *John* until now *the kingdom of heaven* suffereth violence.

This seems to be the divine word required, giving us authority to say that the dispensation of the law was ending, and [a new phase of] the kingdom of heaven beginning. From this time onward we see how the Lord gradually introduces things of the new dispensation. Generally speaking, under the law God dealt exclusively with the Jew, but under the new dispensation God was going to deal more with the nations at large through grace.

This change we see gradually hinted at and introduced during the Lord's ministry and afterwards..

In the incident of the woman at Caesarea Philippi [rather parts of Tyre and Sidon], the Lord reminds the woman that He was only sent unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. She does, however, obtain blessing, in spite of this, showing that blessing would eventually flow outside the pale of Israel.

Later we see how Peter was to be used to speak this truth first to Jews, at Pentecost and later to Gentiles at Caesarea in the house of Cornelius.

These two occasions seem to have been the first public pronouncements of the gospel to the Jew and Gentile respectively, after the resurrection. They were both made by Peter, and he opened a door of faith to both Jew and Gentile. So it was fulfilled of him that he had the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Before doing this, however, we see that Peter had to be well instructed in the truth that the gospel was for Gentile as well as Jew. This was done by means of the vision shown him on the house top **at Joppa.** *Austin G. Glover.*

From Glasgow.—In studying this interesting subject—the change of the dispensation—we are firmly assured from the word of God that it in no wise affects the unchangeable character of God, of whom it is recorded in Malachi 3. 6, " I the LORD change not, " but rather speaks to us of His dealings with His creatures, even as it is written, " God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days, spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds " (Hebrews 1. 1-2). There were some outstanding points brought to our notice as we considered that whenever God brought about the change of a dispensation at various times, there was judgment prominent at the end of the previous time ere the new era commenced.

Now when we come to the end of the dispensation of the law and the prophets, which was until John the Baptist, we find that in the foreknowledge of God, knowing that Israel His people would reject His Son, God is about to bring in a new dispensation which had been hidden from all generations, as we read in Ephesians 3. 9: "To make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from all ages hath been hid in God, who created all things. " Although this dispensation, we believe, did not immediately start until finally the Lord Jesus was rejected by Israel as a nation and crucified, yet we see the typical change of the dispensation in the lifetime of the Lord Jesus from the fact that the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. This is seen in no unmistakable manner, for we find the Lord bestowing grace to such Gentile dogs as the Syrophenician woman and the centurion. So we see that * Christ hath

been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, that He might confirm the promises given unto the fathers, **And** that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy " (Romans 15. 8, 9). **Hence we see** that the word of God cannot be frustrated by Israel's rejection of their Messiah, **and** it is not void of power, **but** shall accomplish that whereunto **He** shall send it.

We see from the day of Pentecost the answer to the Lord's parable concerning the husbandmen, and His judgment being carried out, even as the Lord Jesus left Jerusalem saying, " Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. " **We** gather that God **was** giving the kingdom unto another nation, albeit there **were** Jews inside the kingdom, but **seen** in this new thing for God.

The rejection of Christ marked the end of Israel **as** a holy nation for that dispensation of the law, but **it** did not nullify the continuity of God's purpose to have a holy nation on the earth. We now refer to some further words of the Lord which establish the identity of the holy nation of this present dispensation of grace, " Fear not, little flock; for it **is** your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom " (Luke 12. 32). *Fred Harvey.*

From Atherton. —The faith of the Canaanitish woman would **be** the cause of joy to Christ **in** view of the sad rejection **He** had from **His** own people. Here **we** have a striking resemblance to Ruth **in an** earlier day, for she willingly **cast** her lot **in** with Israel to receive a blessing at the hand of God. Matthew's account seems to suggest no hope for her, but Mark's account suggests the turning to the Gentiles **in** the Lord's words, " Let the children *first* be filled. ".

Then the Lord makes definite reference to the Church which **is** **His** body, and to the keys of the kingdom of heaven. These truths are exclusive to this dispensation, for **as** to the Church which **is** **His** Body—this **is** composed of all born-again ones from Pentecost until the rapture, irrespective of their ever being **in** the House of God. As to the keys (verse 19), **it** is said that a key **was** given to a scribe when admitted to his office, **as** a symbol of his authority to open the treasury of divine oracles.

After Peter's declaration and the Lord's reply, the Lord continues to **give** a charge which to them had never **been** given before. To declare Him **as** the Christ **was** part of the kingdom message, **and** it is evident that the Lord and **His** disciples ceased to proclaim this **message** from this point on. The Lord's words to the Jews nationally from this stage were condemnatory.

It is significant that the Lord now turns to them with the story involving **His** death and resurrection, which truths are vital to this dispensation, for they **are** part and parcel of the gospel of the grace of God. How important are the words " *From that time* " (Matthew 16. 21)!

We would consider then that whilst in Matthew 15. and 16. **we** have strong indications of the change of the dispensation, yet such a change **was** not, **as** to point of time, effected until Pentecost. The gospel of the grace of God **was** preached from Pentecost onward.

It is apparent in most dispensations that there is **an** overlapping or transition period. Compare, for example, what the apostles did from time to time, **as** revealed in the Acts, *e. g.*, the conduct of Paul (Acts 21. 17-26).

The question was raised **as** to why the Lord rode into Jerusalem, if **He** had given them up, at least nationally ? In reply it **was** suggested: (1) that the Scripture might be fulfilled; (2) this was one of the last public opportunities of accepting **Him** **as** the Messiah. The Lord **was** very gracious, and bore with Israel up to the last, even to the cross, where they shewed their final and absolute rejection of **Him** who had come from God. *G. A. Jones, J. Bullock.*

From Kilmarnock. —The Pharisees and scribes professedly had a great regard for the law **and** statutes **as** given through Moses, but here the Lord exposes their hypocrisy **in** that they rejected the commandment of God that they might **keep** their tradition, such **as** the washing of hands before eating bread. From Leviticus 11. **we** find God had given **statutes** for **His** people Israel **as** to what they

should **eat and** what should not be eaten. Certain creatures **were** clean and others **were** unclean, but **we** gather this was now superseded, **and** the Lord shows **that** it **was** not **what** entered **the** stomach that defiled the **man**, but what came out of **the** evil heart within, **thus** showing that their spiritual condition **was** the most important matter.

The Lord and His disciples have journeyed to Caesarea Philippi, the furthest north of His recorded journeys in Palestine. **He** is away from the scribes and Pharisees and the multitude **and** is apparently alone with **His** disciples. **He** first questions them, " Who do **men** say that the Son of Man is ? " They give several opinions, but all fall short of the truth. Peter's reply, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, " revealed God the Spirit's work in His heart, for 1 John 5. 1 tells us that " whosoever believeth that **Jesus is** the Christ **is** begotten of God. " Blessed indeed **is** every one who can make this confession in truth and sincerity. The Lord then makes known for the first time God's purpose **in** the present dispensation: " Upon this Rock I will build My Church. " It would appear that the apostles did not fully grasp the meaning of this until it was revealed to Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles (see Ephesians 3. 8-10). **We** note that it **is** by means of the Church that God's manifold wisdom **is** made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. In Genesis 2. 21-23 we seem to have a figure of the Church. As the woman became the complement of the man, so the Church **is** the complement of the Christ (1 Corinthians 12. 12). In Colossians 1. 18 **He** **is** spoken of as the " Head of the Body, the Church "; for this He gave Himself, and will ultimately " present it (her) to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing " (Ephesians 5. 27). "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it " (Matthew 16. 18).
A. G. S.

From London, S. E. —The subject of discussion has at least two fundamental points:—

- (a) Firstly, the two dispensations may be compared one with the other.
- (b) Secondly, details of the actual transition period may be contemplated.

The cessation of the dispensation covering the Law and the prophets is clearly observed from the Scripture **in** Matthew 11. 13: " For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. "

The significance of the verse **in** John 1. 17 will now become obvious: " For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. "

So then, **if** the old dispensation of the law, ushered **in** by Moses, finishes with the eclipse of John, the new dispensation of grace and truth commences soon after the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Examination of other scriptures will show that the period from John until the Day of Pentecost **is** one of transition and that the new dispensation proper starts from there. This **is** quite reasonable, as most earthly adjustments and changes require time before they are completely adopted. Scriptural evidence of this is given by Isaiah 61. 2. **We** may now consider the changes.

(1) Mark 7. 19. This change indicates that all the meats **are** made clean. Under the law certain meats were prohibited, but now they are available. This perhaps may show that Christ came not to make the law of none effect, but to establish it (Romans 3. 31). The law in itself was a means to **an** end or, as Paul says, it was our tutor to bring us to Christ. The law **is** now superseded.

(2) Acts 10. shows that all meats, made clean, were not to be limited to animals, but testify to the fact that in addition to the Jew the Gentile **is** to be made the special object of God's love. The Canaanitish woman incident corroborates this. The Gentiles were not merely to be identified with the Jew, but were to become the head instead of the tail. The Lord Jesus predicts this **in** Matthew 21. 43: " The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. "

The apostle Paul gives the doctrine of this **in** Romans 11. where it **is** learnt that the branch of the Jew **is** cut off and the branch of the Gentile **is** grafted in. Here the phrase, the " fulness of the Gentiles " (verse 25) **is** mentioned, and in

verse 13 Paul calls himself the apostle of the Gentiles. These scriptures clearly indicate the fact that the new dispensation is mainly for the* Gentile; at first, in its initiation it was to the Jew first, but when the Jew so openly and generally opposed the gospel, the apostles turned freely to the Gentile.

Reginald D. Wood.

Questions and Answers.

Questions from Glasgow. —(1a)—The Son of Man is the Sower of the good seed. When does this sowing take place? Is it prior to the Millennium? (b) "The field is the world"; is this the extent of the kingdom of heaven? (Matthew 13. 36-43).

Answer. —(a) When the Lord was on earth He commenced the work of sowing the good seed, but that was but the beginning, as Acts 1. 1 shows, where we read of "all that Jesus began to do and to teach." He continues to sow the seed by such means as pleases Him, and this which began in His lifetime, continues now, and will go on in the time which will succeed the present dispensation of grace. (b) Yes, the world is the sphere or realm of this kingdom.

(2) In Matthew 13. we have the kingdom of heaven, but in a similar parable in Mark 4. 26-32 it is the kingdom of God. Why the difference?

Answer. —It is not in the similarity, but in the difference between things that we learn how different they are. Human beings have many points of similarity, but also many points of difference, by which they are distinguished. There are parables by which both the kingdoms of God and of heaven are illustrated, but there are parables exclusively used of the kingdom of heaven. Never in connection with the kingdom of God is there the thought of the toleration of evil, or of present punishment or future judgment. Such matters are associated with the kingdom of heaven. Of the parables of Matthew 13., which are seven, only three are used to illustrate the kingdom of God in Mark and Luke—1 the sower, 2 the mustard seed, and 3 the leaven. The tares of the field, the treasure, the pearl, and the drag-net have no equivalent. Even if we may think that the parable of Mark 4. 26-29 bears some likeness to that of the tares, the tares do not appear at all. The subject is a large one, but consider what we have elsewhere written of "the field" and "the garden."—J. M.

(3) Is the kingdom of God as wide as the world?

Answer. —No, but the kingdom of heaven is.—J. M.

(4) Would it be correct to say that the Lord preaches two gospels?

Answer. —No, no more than there are two gospels to-day. The Lord had truth for those "without" and those "within" (see Mark 4. 11). Note how "good things" or the "gospel" is used in Hebrews 4. 2; this is the gospel to the saint.—J. M.

Question from Brantford. —Please explain Matthew 9. 1.

Answer. —We presume our friends want to know what is meant by "His own city." This is explained in Matthew 4. 13: "He came and dwelt in Capernaum." Capernaum became His own city when the people of Nazareth, the city in which He had been brought up, rejected Him (Luke 4. 16-30).—J. M.

Question from Kilmarnock. —Comparing Acts 15. 20 with Paul's later writings in 1 Timothy 4. 4, could things strangled and blood be accounted as meats from God?

Answer. —No. In the days of Noah, long prior to the law, God said: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" (Genesis 9. 4). The prohibition of eating blood is for all the descendants of Noah, not simply for the Jews. Consequently flesh with the blood, as in strangled animals, and blood itself, are prohibited, as in Acts 15. 20. 1 Timothy 4. 4 deals with meats, but not with the eating of blood.—J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The Change of the Dispensation.	69
The Transfiguration and the coming Kingdom	73
Questions and Answers	78

THE CHANGE OF THE DISPENSATION.

From Vancouver.—In Romans 10. 4 we read that "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth." The thought here is not that **because** Christ had come the law no longer existed, **but** rather that the coming of Christ was the object of the law, or the end the law had in view (see Newberry margin, also Galatians 3. 22-24). [Whilst this is so, that Christ was spoken of and foreshadowed in the law of Moses, the matter under review is the righteousness of God, as seen in Christ, who is Jehovah-Tsidkenu, in contrast to the righteousness of the Jew in his seeking to comply with the righteousness of the law. The work of Christ has brought to an end man's works in law-keeping. The apostle is contrasting the righteousness of law and the righteousness of faith. AH law-keeping to attain to righteousness ended with Christ. Nevertheless, the statutes of the moral law are included in the Faith, with the exception of sabbath-keeping (see Romans 13. 8-10), for the guidance of those that are already justified by faith.—J. M. J. The law spoke of Christ, and everything answering to its demands was found in Him who was perfect. All was summed up in Him, so that, rather than abolish the law, He not only kept it, but He also "made the teaching great and glorious." He instructed the cleansed leper to shew himself to the priest and offer the gifts according to the law of Moses [and that, "for a testimony unto them"]. The Lord Jesus also kept the passover before He suffered. Yet over and above all these things we have the words of John, by the Spirit, that "the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ": and again, He was "the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." Never has grace been so perfectly manifested towards men as it was during the Lord's sojourn from Jordan to Calvary.

In consideration of this subject, the question which has occupied our attention is, When did the dispensation of grace really begin? Did it begin after the ascension of the Lord and the descent of the Holy Spirit, as is generally believed, or did it begin some three years earlier when the Lord Jesus went forth to His ministry?

We suggest that the old dispensation closed with John the Baptist's ministry, and that he, being the last of the prophets, "yea and much more than a prophet," not only announced the coming of the Christ, but was a witness to His manifestation as the sent One from the Father. "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Matthew 11. 13), and now He of whom they had all spoken was in the midst of His people. [A consideration of where the term "the dispensation of the grace of God" is found will be helpful in determining when this dispensation began. This dispensation is inseparably bound up with the "Mystery of Christ" and the Mystery of Christ is "the Church which is His Body." "When did Christ begin to build the Church? The answer is—at Pentecost. This therefore was the time that the dispensation of grace began. Please see Ephesians 3. 1-11.—J. M. J.]

We suggest also, that the commencement of the Lord's ministry **marked** the end of the old dispensation, [To point out **but** one thing that should **be** self-evident regarding the old dispensation (and which is the first of Israel's ceremonial commandments), if the old dispensation ended with the beginning of the Lord's ministry, why did the Lord keep the Passover with His disciples on the night of His betrayal?—J. M.] and that the **years** during which His wondrous ministry continued, instead of being a continuation of the old, **was** actually the ushering in of the dispensation of grace. [Our friends **seem** to fail to realise that there were two things going on during the Lord's ministry (1) the recognition of the old order, **as** embodied in the Temple service, and (2),* the proclamation of regeneration through faith in the Lord **Jesus**, and the commencement of gathering a **little** flock which **was** to **be** God's **New** Testament people after the Lord's ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit. —J. M.]. Surely it **was** given to the Lord Himself to open the new dispensation of God's dealings with men, and which **was** to **be** later carried on **by** the apostles !

In submitting this view **we remember** that the Lord's ministry, to begin with, **was** only towards the Jewish people, or, **as** the Lord spoke of them, " the lost sheep of the house of Israel " (Matthew 15. 24); **but** this **was** only the beginning, and **was** destined in God's purpose to widen out and embrace the Gentile nations within its scope. When the Lord **was** manifested, and pointed **out** at the Jordan **as** " the Lamb of God, " surely it **was** blessedly true that the grace of God had appeared, bringing salvation, and whether **we** speak of before or after **His** death, men received blessing through believing in **Him**. The Lord's **message**, pre-dating His sufferings, announced to Nicodemus that men would receive eternal life through believing in Him, and this **is** the **message** which **we** still preach (John 3.). So that **we** understand the change of the dispensation to mean **a stage** of development, or **a** widening of the scope of the dispensation which had already commenced with the Lord's ministry.

While it is true that the Lord preached concerning the kingdom of heaven with national repentance in view, **yet it was** only individuals who received it, and this method of proclaiming the **message** **was** still carried out **by** Peter in the **days** after Pentecost. With the keys of the kingdom in his hand, he appealed to the nation, to the men of Israel, who had so lately **rejected** and **crucified** their King, and even **embraced** the promise of the return of the Christ, **if** they would **but** repent (see Acts 3. 19-21). [**But** surely **we must** recognise **a** radical change had taken place **because** of Israel's rejection of Christ, **as** is indicated in the sending of the twelve, in Matthew 10., who were not to go into any **way** of the Gentiles (nations), **but** to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, **and** the sending of the eleven, in Matthew 28., to make disciples of all the nations. These are fundamental considerations in any exposition of so dispensational a Gospel **as** that of Matthew. Moreover what is involved in Matthew 28. is indicated in Acts 1. 8: "Ye shall **be** My witnesses in Jerusalem... Judaea... **Samaria**, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. " What happened in Jerusalem on Pentecost **was** the beginning of this witness-bearing. —J. M.]. This of course could not **be** **at** that **time**, for the Gentiles **must be** blessed in the purposes of love, and furthermore the Lord's statements in the parables **must be** fulfilled. As they rejected **Him**, the Anointed, so they rejected His messengers, and **as** in the days of the Lord's ministry, it **was** an individual acceptance of the Lord **Jesus** [and **besides**, their collective service **as** the people of God. —J. M.].

However, God did not limit His dealings through His Son to **His** ancient people, although **He** sent **Him** first to them, and even during **His** ministry **we see** the door of mercy opening to include the outcast. The words of Isaiah 49. 6 **we** suggest would cover the period of the Lord's ministry, **as well as** the present and future times. The blessing received by the Syrophenician woman **was** indeed **a** pledge of Gentile blessing to follow. There **was** **a** divine limit **set** to the Lord's words, " I **was** not sent **but** unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. " The branches of the true Joseph must " go over the wall, "

The expression, "purging all meats," found in Mark 7. 19 is a truth, the development of which we see in the sheet let down before Peter, in Acts 10., when a fuller revelation of God's purpose to bless the Gentiles was revealed through Peter's refusal to eat of the unclean beasts. "What God hath cleansed, **make** not thou common." Until this time even the apostles had not realised that God was really going to bless the Gentiles through the same gospel as the **Jews** heard, and yet even prior to the Lord's death, **He** had made reference to world wide blessing through the gospel, when speaking in parables. The apostles had to learn that the field was the world and not only Israel.

The change of the dispensation therefore would teach **us** that at least one of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven is seen in the purpose of God, not only to bless His own people through the appearing and sacrifice of His beloved Son, **but** that all nations should ultimately be blessed. The Lord **made** an early announcement of His purpose to build His Church, against which the gates of **Hades** could not prevail. This and other things, which He announced prior to His death, have reference to the dispensation of grace, which as we have suggested had its commencement, although not its fulness, before His death. [See note earlier that this is not so, re the commencement of the dispensation of grace.—J. M.]. However, the words "I will build," make it clear that the building of His church did not commence until after His death.

Some may say in view of our remarks concerning the dispensation of grace, that a different gospel was preached before the Lord's death, from that which the apostles preached afterwards. While this may be true, yet blessing in both could only be obtained by accepting the One of whom they spoke. And again what about those who received the message, either directly from the Lord, or through His disciples (Matthew 10.)? Were they not disciples of the new dispensation, and later were baptised in one Spirit into one Body? If not, what became of them? [It all depended whether those believers lived till the time of the descent of the Holy Spirit. If they did, they would find a place in the Body, and in the new nation which took the place of Israel, which had nationally been set aside till the fulness of the Gentiles had come in.—J. M.].

In submitting our considerations, we are seeking help and exchange of thought, and are not setting forth our views in a dogmatic way. Many questions have arisen as a result of this subject, particularly in reference to the period of the Lord's ministry, and the dispensation to which it belongs.

R. Armstrong.

From Brantford, Ont.—The matter of clean and unclean animals had a very early beginning. Noah was aware of the fact as he took the **animals** into the ark. It was under God's guidance that such a distinction was **made**, though perhaps this was known before. In the beginning everything God **made** was good and therefore clean, but when sin entered His fair creation then uncleanness **was** found, and we can feel that God began to teach men about things clean and unclean. [**But** Paul tells us that "every creature of God is good" (1 Tim. 4. 4), and this is so despite the fact that sin and all uncleanness is in the world still. Was it God's purpose that men should eat flesh in the beginning prior to the entrance of sin?—J. M.]. Later we learn of His instructions to His people in Leviticus concerning different animals.

The Lord's will for His people in Old Testament times **was** complete separation from all nations and peoples. These people were regarded **as** common or unclean in contrast to the holy nation of Israel. Therefore in the Lord's tune, though the Jew was the vassal, and "the dog" the master, the teaching **was** so strong that the Jews had no fellowship with their conquerors; indeed, to those who collected taxes for the Romans the opprobrious title of "publican" was given. Matthew draws attention to this in Matthew 10. 3, as indicative of his joy in being chosen in this low place.

Looking back, we can see that the Lord Jesus has much in view as He made all meats clean. This was the beginning of the removal of the wall of partition that held the Jew and Gentile apart. God's purposes needed them together. The particular object at the time when He made all meats clean was to show that the heart is the part that defiles, not the meats. Peter shows clearly in Acts 10, that even at that day he still observed the ritual of meats. Of course, even to-day we observe our own customs in regard to our eating meat, but nothing is unclean of itself.

Pursuing this theme we find that apostasy has as one of its marks the teaching of abstinence from certain meats. This, true in Paul's day, is true in ours. We think of John 8. 32, and "with freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

We can plainly see that in the portion under consideration the Gentile door was opening, but most suggested that the actual change of the dispensation did not begin until Pentecost. The great teaching of Jew and Gentile on one platform, sinner as well as saint, is very familiar to us, but perhaps we have much to realise as to its practical import. The vast gulf that existed in the Lord's day and afterwards between Jew and Gentile, and their eventual fusing together, caused much travail to the early churches. Indeed, it took time, and we believe that Paul was foremost in understanding and acting upon the revelation.

Matthew 16. 18, 19, gave a lot of thought, and mutual confessions of difficulty. It is certain the kingdom of heaven has a place in this dispensation. The keys of it were in Peter's hands. Did they "die" with him? Acts 2. and 10. were cited as evidences of "loosing" (rather than opening). Was Acts 5. 1-11 an evidence of "binding"? [Note what Peter said, as recorded in Acts 15. 7. This choice of Peter we believe is that referred to in Matthew 16. 18, 19. Note also the force of the words "Ye know"—it was a well known fact re the choice of Peter. If the use of the keys is the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, how could this die with him? The only thing that could die with him was that he was the first to preach the gospel to Gentiles. Others took up the same message and preached it to Gentiles, even as we do now. When the gospel is preached a binding and loosing takes place, those that believe are loosed from sin's bondage, and those that disbelieve are bound more truly than ever, having added the condemning sin of unbelief to their previous transgressions (see the force of John 16. 9—men are convicted of sin because they believe not on Christ. The issue now is not the keeping of the law, but belief in Christ). —J. M. J.]

Alex Sproul.

From Victoria, B. C. —In the days of Matthew's Gospel great and far-reaching events were transpiring, happenings that the aged Simeon foresaw, as he spake concerning the child Jesus, that He was "a Light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the Glory of Thy people Israel." Prophecy was being unfolded by startling revelation, in a manner which the Jew could not grasp. The then "modern Jew" was leaning on the "tradition of the elders," the sense and meaning of the law and the prophets having lost their effect. The words of Samuel once again could be used: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." The zeal which had once been for God was now transferred to the will of man. The Lord Jesus Christ brings home this truth in connection with the washing of hands and a son's responsibility to his parents. We are told to honour our father and mother, and this honour cannot be lightly transferred. Neither is the word of God to give place to the traditions of the elders.

The day of change had come, and we hear the Lord Jesus Christ instructing His disciples. The stress was no longer on what a man ate; he was defiled and condemned by a heart which was desperately wicked. It was such a heart that the law could not change, could not justify (Romans 3. 20). A Greater than Moses, a Greater than Solomon had come, and the time was fast approaching and even at hand, when the Jew would be justified by faith and the Gentile, through faith. They all alike would be treated on the broad base of sinnership.

In **His** sojourn amongst His ancient people, the Lord **Jesus** dispensed many a blessing, performed many a miracle; but the words of Isaiah still had force: "Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider." The leaders had become **as** a plant which **the** Father had not planted. They wanted another **sign**, a **sign** from heaven. Unbelief **is** not thus rewarded; only the **sign** of Jonah **was** to **be** given.

It **was** to His disciples that the purposes of God were revealed. Peter confessed **His** Lord **as** "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then **was** revealed the Lord's purpose concerning the church—"My church"; a new thing, **that** which **was** the mystery hid in the **ages** past. At this time too Peter had conferred upon him a great honour: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." This **is** associated with "My church." A new thing **was** to **be** built. At Pentecost and again in the case of the centurion, we **see** the plan of the kingdom unfolding, **as** mercy comes down from above, through the gospel to Jew and Gentile.

In the closing verses of chapter 16. the crucifixion **is** brought to light; the suffering, death and resurrection are clearly referred to. Peter makes a blunder, but nothing can turn aside the purposes of God. *A. McLeman.*

THE TRANSFIGURATION AND THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM.

From Vancouver. —"Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?" Here **was** the Messiah, and Elijah had not come! But the Lord answered, "Elijah **is** come already." Such **is** referred to by the angel **in** Luke I. 17. [**We** must, of course, observe the words of John the Baptist **in** John I. 21. —J. M. J. Who then **is** spoken of by the Lord when **He** says that Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things? Was this reaffirming the Malachi scripture, and then shewing its fulfilment in John the Baptist, or did the Lord refer to a yet future date with another coming, either Elijah in person, or a **man** of his type? "If ye are willing to receive it, this **is** Elijah, which **is** to come" (Matthew II. 14). The disciples seemed satisfied that the scripture was fulfilled **in** John the Baptist.

The suggestion that one of the two witnesses of Revelation 11. may be Elijah **is** interesting. Their ministry seems to be world-wide with Jerusalem **as** their headquarters. Their garments are to be sackcloth, which would suggest mourning, and the refusal of the many to accept their message from God. They **seem** to form part of the second Woe (verse 14): "These two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth" (verse 10). Even after they ascend to heaven we read that the "third Woe cometh quickly." Something more drastic was necessary. The two witnesses worked together, so it is hardly likely that one of them could be taken and say that he restored all things, **as** the work of the other must be recognised also. [Note what Malachi says: "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD come." That day **is** yet future, **as** **is** also Elijah's coming. We know of no other one than one of the two witnesses who fulfils Malachi's prophecy. —J. M. J. *W. McLeman.*

From Glasgow. —Few of God's people grasp **the** magnitude and glory of the coming kingdom when our Lord Jesus Christ will sit on **the** throne of **His** father David, and reign for a thousand years.

What did the Lord mean when **He** said, "Verily I say unto you, there be some of them that stand here, which shall in no **wise** taste of death, till they **see** the Son of Man coming in **His** kingdom" ? (Matthew 16. 28).

The answer to this we think **is** seen in the first eight verses of chapter 17. Peter, James and John were the privileged ones to **be** with the Lord on **the** mountain top when **He** **was** transfigured before them. **His** face did shine as the sun and His garments became white **as** the light, and behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking **with** Him. Here without a doubt **was** the majesty of **the**

coming kingdom displayed before their eyes, and to this Peter bears witness in 2 Peter 1. 16-18.

The words "His majesty," and "for He received from God the Father honour and glory" are worthy of note, for they attest the fact that the transfiguration on the mount was the kingdom of God come with power.

In regard to Moses and Elijah being seen with Him, we believe that these are the two witnesses who are yet to come. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands. They have the power to shut the heaven that it rain not during the days of their prophecy and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague as often as they shall desire (see Revelation 11. 3-6). Were these judgments not carried out in early times by the same Moses and Elijah?

As to Elijah being one of the two witnesses of the future, the Lord Himself puts this beyond all dispute when He says to His disciples, "Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things" (Matthew 17. 11). This is a fact we cannot alter, and concerns the future, whilst the following verse differs and relates to John the Baptist.

On the other hand, how did Moses appear with the Lord on the mount in person? Do we not read in the book of Deuteronomy concerning his death, and of how he was buried by God in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor, and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day? (see Deuteronomy 34.). Now let us compare the words of Jude 9: "But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." We would suggest in our comparison with Deuteronomy 34. and Jude 9 with Matthew 17., that Moses has been raised by God for the purpose before stated in this paper; or else did the devil dispute over a dead body? We think not. [We are not told when or why the devil disputed with Michael over Moses' body. What God has not revealed remains His own secret. —J. M.].

Principles of forgiveness should command the attention of God's people, that they may know how to conduct themselves in the matter of a brother sinning against a brother. This is an individual matter and if we do not treat the case according to the Word of God it may end in disaster.

Matthew 18. 15-20 teaches that the one who has been sinned against is responsible to go to his brother, and let us add, with grace in his heart and a readiness to forgive, for this is clearly seen in the following verses of the chapter, "If he hear thee," says the Lord, "thou hast gained thy brother."

Peter's question to the Lord greatly adds to the value of this all-important truth when he asks, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" Jesus replied, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." The answer to Peter's question is also illustrated in the parable which follows.

The Lord Jesus would teach us that we are like the man who owed a debt which he could never repay, but he received mercy. Should we in turn not imitate our Lord and be merciful to others, being ready to forgive our brother as he acknowledges his wrong? To have gained your brother is a very valuable prize indeed, so let us strive to this end, ever remembering the words of the Lord, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5. 7). To those who would be otherwise minded, the solemn words of Matthew 18. 35 apply, ** So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts. "

J. Rae.

EXTRACTS.

From Kilmarnock. —While the Lord said to the eleven apostles on the night of His betrayal, "I have chosen you," it would seem that Peter, James and John had a special place, and were more highly privileged than the others. No doubt it was to these three He referred in Matthew 16. 28, for He took them with **Him** up into a high mountain apart. "Luke 9. 29 says, "as He was praying, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and

dazzling. " In the light of verse 37 we think they were on the mount all night, and possibly were overcome with sleep and did not see the Lord's glory until they were fully awake. We take it that it was a glimpse of the glory and majesty of the coming kingdom which they saw, and Peter was so overawed that he spoke " without knowing what he said. "

In Moses and Elijah we seem to have the " law " and the " prophets " represented, but they were removed and the voice from heaven said, " This is My Son, My Chosen: hear ye Him " (verse 35). In the Lord's reply to the apostle's enquiry about Elijah's coming He made it plain that John the Baptist (as well as Elijah) was referred to in the prophecy of Malachi 3. 1, but the nation had rejected his message (see also Luke 1. 17).

Whether it was because of what the three apostles had been privileged to see on the mount we cannot say, but there arose a reasoning among themselves who should be the greatest. The Lord, who knew their hearts, showed by the example of the little child, that the way to become great was by becoming little, or by being humble. Where this humility obtains there will be the true spirit of forgiveness, while maintaining the principles of the faith. We understand that the offender must show signs of repentance before there can be real forgiveness (Luke 17. 3-4).

A. G. S.

From Atherton.—We cannot say what bearing the promise made to Peter in Matthew 16. had on the contention that arose amongst the disciples concerning the greatest in the kingdom, or whether it arose through the choice made by the Lord of Peter, James and John on so many notable occasions. The words of the Lord Jesus are quite marked in their teaching, and are not only words but deeds. " Except ye turn"—turn from what is the case with all humanity, self seeking ways—and serve others, as the Lord Jesus did. He who was the greatest became the servant of all, and is now the greatest in all things (Philippians 2. 5-11).

Peter, in the use of the divine number seven, seems to shew that however man may endeavour to imitate God, he can never forgive as God forgives in His Son. The words of the debtor, " I will pay thee all, " may be from the heart, but the action is impossible. The words " moved with compassion " (verse 27) bring us again to think of the good Samaritan, pity that forgives freely; notice also the great contrast between " forgave him the debt, " and " till he should pay all that was due, " and finally the injunction " from your hearts, " which involves more than a verbal forgiveness.

The question was raised, " What is the application of this story, in association with the kingdom of heaven " ? It was said that the conditional aspect of the kingdom of heaven here is very much like what is brought before us in Matthew 5., 6., and 7., where we have many exhortations brought before us as to proper conduct. The question was also raised, Is repentance a condition to forgiveness ? We were referred to Luke 17. 3, 4. " If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. " It was stated that a brother should repent for his sin against another brother, but that the brother sinned against need not necessarily wait for repentance, before he forgives. We should forgive each other, even as God also in Christ forgave us. It was considered that the teaching of Matthew 18. 21-35, has to do with us as servants, and not as sinners, and that the enormous debt the servant owed his Lord, has to do with a debt that we continually owe to God because of our constant failure. *D. H. Butler, J. K. Southern.*

From Cowdenbeath.—As a result of seeing the wondrous sight of the Lord glorified, the three disciples experienced a fulfilment of the words of chapter 16. 28. Here we have a picture of the coming kingdom. The central figure is the Lord in glory, with Moses as typical of those who having died shall be resurrected, and with Elijah as typical of those who shall go to heaven without dying, the disciples speaking of those who shall enter the kingdom in mortal body. The sight which the disciples saw was a manifestation of the Lord's own inherent glory, which belonged

to Him as the eternal Son of God. This was not simply a reflection of divine glory, or some splendour which He had assumed for the occasion, but the glory which was His own, and which was veiled from mortal eyes by a body of blood and flesh. But here in the mount, to the wonder of His disciples, He underwent a change of appearance though not of form. His face shone like the sun, and the brilliance that radiated from His Person made His garments to appear white and dazzling, white as light.

In Luke's account of this same incident we read, " They saw His glory, " and we find that these are identical to the words in John 12. 41: " Isaiah... saw His glory. " The glory which belonged to the Lord in His pre-incarnate days, when He sat as the Enthroned in heaven, and which was seen by the prophet, was also seen by three disciples on this earth. It was of great importance that these three men, who should afterwards take the lead in witnessing for Him, should be unmistakably assured that He was the Son of God from heaven. It seems that the vision firmly established them in the belief that He was the true Messiah, and also filled them with expectations for the coming kingdom. The disciples had accepted the teaching of the scribes, which was correct, that Elijah should come first, but in view of the imminence of the kingdom, as they believed, how could this be so ? The Lord's answer showed that John the Baptist's coming would have been the fulfilment of such prophecy had the Lord been received, but in view of His rejection Elijah shall appear again on this earth in person, previous to His coming as Son of Man.

There is a close association between His death and this manifestation of His glory. He told them for the first time that He was going up to Jerusalem to die, and then six days later gave them the vision. The discourse between Himself and Moses and Elijah was in connection with this very matter. The greatest event in all God's dealings with men was about to transpire, that which was the fulfilment of all the teachings of the law and the prophets, even the death of Him who was the eternal Son of God, the possessor of divine glory. No other could have performed a work so vast or offered a sacrifice so precious.

James Bowman.

From Edinburgh. —Moses on the mount was privileged to see the great I AM as Emmanuel. The Lord was encouraged as He looked on the past in Moses, the present in His disciples, and the future in that they spake of His decease. Peter, as he viewed the marvellous sight, wanted to remain in the place of glory, but the shadow of the cross lay before.

Moses and Elijah were clothed in temporary bodies to meet the special circumstances. [Temporary is not a correct definition of the bodies of those prophets. —J. M.]. Elijah is still to come. Elijah will yet restore the hearts of Israel, and prepare them for the Lord's coming, but what strain and pain will be necessary before that will be accomplished!

The first mention of resurrection occurs in 18. 23, but it seems strange that no observations or comments by the disciples are made here. It is possible that they still viewed things from a natural standpoint, and were unable to read His purposes because of the absence of the Spirit. A stern warning is given in verses 6 to 10 regarding any who interfere with or hinder a young seeker after Christ. Let us mortify the body, that fleshly lusts may not lay hold and cause us to fall away from the Master's side. In verse 10 we see the provision that God has made for all who have not yet reached the age of understanding, but we have the Spirit which is very far better. The parable of the lost sheep is an excellent gospel illustration, but in this portion it is applied to the young in faith who have wandered away.

We have church discipline in Matthew 18. 15-20, though the disciples would not appreciate the full meaning until after the resurrection. The term church or congregation would not convey anything to them. It was thought that verse 16 should be read as covering primarily older brethren, if possible overseers, and if refusal continues, to become as one outside. [It is ever a difficult matter to say

how **much** those disciples took **in** and understood the Lord's words. But to say that the term church conveyed nothing to them **is** saying far too much, I feel sure. Moreover the witnesses, the "one or two more," are not necessarily overseers, but persons who could bear a true and valid testimony. —J. M. J. Taking the words of the Lord literally, to forgive a person even once a week for **70 x 7** would **take** approximately 10 years, and would result **in an** impossible situation. [Nothing the Lord said **is** impossible which He enjoined upon His disciples provided their condition **is** right. —J. M. J. If humility **is** the keynote of our life, forgiveness will come easily, **and** God will be glorified. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it **is** for brethren to dwell together **in** unity " !

From Yeovil. —In considering the transfiguration it **was** suggested that this **was** a glimpse of the divine glory that our Lord had with **His** Father before the world **was** [Please note where these words are used and their connection **in** John 17. In **view** of the Lord having glorified the Father, **He** says, "Glorify Thou **Me** with (*Para*, with dative = by or nigh **to**) Thine own self with the glory which I had with (*Para*) Thee before the world **was**." The reference here **is** to that of which the Lord emptied Himself when **He** took the form of a bond **servant** (Philippians 2. 6, 7), and now, **at** the completion of **His** work on earth, He seeks the restoration of this glory, with or beside the Father. That of which **we** read **at** the Transfiguration **is** the inherent glory of the Lord, of which **He** did not empty Himself, which **is** on that **unique** occasion **seen** beyond the veil of **His** flesh, so **it seems** to me. —J. M. J. and the disciples concerned received a strengthening by this event, they being eyewitnesses of the glory of the Lord.

Peter referred to this **in** his second epistle: "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord **Jesus** Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of **His** majesty. For **He** received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to **Him** from the excellent glory, This **is** My beloved Son, **in** whom I **am** well pleased. And this voice we ourselves heard come out of heaven, when **we** were **Him** in the holy mount " (*2 Peter* 1. 16-18). *Leonard Shore.*

From Birkenhead. —The words "from that time" (*Matthew* 16. 21) mark **an** important division of **time in** the Lord's ministry. **He** henceforth **is** revealed to **His** disciples as the **suffering** Messiah **as well as** the reigning Messiah. A foretaste of this **is** given to Peter, **James** and John **in** the holy mount **six** days **after, in** fulfilment of **His** promise **in** verse 28 that some of them should not **taste** of death till they **see** the Son of **Man** coming **in** **His** kingdom. The subject of their conversation **was** **His** **decease** which **He** **was** to accomplish. This theme **He** continues, coming down from the mountain, and **it** will be **seen** that all His subsequent teaching has the background of **His** death, with the kingdom deferred **in** relation to the nation of Israel.

Position and authority **in** the kingdom continued to occupy the minds of the disciples, and the Lord illustrates humility by a little child.

We would like further help on the particular application of the "binding," **as well as** the "loosing," **in** relation first to the kingdom of heaven (*Matthew* 16. 19), **and** then **in** the church (*Matthew* 18. 18). Does the Lord's word **in** *Matthew* 16. 19 apply to Peter only, or to the rest of the apostles also? [**We** pointed out recently the important distinction of the singular personal pronoun "thou," **in** *Matthew* 16. 19 and the plural pronoun "**Ye**," **in** *Matthew* 18. 18. In the **use** of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, **in** the preaching of the gospel, the preacher **binds and** looses. The gospel preached either justifies or condemns, either looses or binds. **But in** the **case** of *Matthew* 18. **it is** the church taking action to one of **its** number, who, having sinned, refuses to listen to entreaty and admonition **by** the church, **and is** excommunicated. The brother **against** whom the **sin** **was** committed may treat him **in** consequence **as** the Gentile and the publican, that is, **as** one outside, **because** he is outside, he having **been** bound by the church_____J. M. J. N. A.

From London, S. E. —The " some " mentioned in verse 28 are probably Peter, James and John, and the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom meant the Transfiguration.

Chapter 17. We see how the face and the garment of the Lord Jesus were illuminated by the glory that was in Him. In the case of Moses in Exodus 34. 30, his face shone as a result of his being in the presence of God on Mount Sinai.

Luke 9. 29 tells us that it was while the Lord was praying His countenance was altered. What wonderful transformations have taken place as the result of prayer !

Verse 7. The Lord Jesus says " Be not afraid. " Does this not show us the dispensation of grace in contrast to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai when Moses said, " I exceedingly fear and quake " ?

Verse 8. They saw no man save Jesus only—Moses and Elijah had given place to Christ.

The mountain top experience is followed by a conflict with the power of evil in the healing of the epileptic boy. Similarly, the man who was sick of the palsy, who was brought to Jesus by his friends, was healed as the result of faith in Him.

Verse 24. The tribute money seems to have been the half shekel piece collected for the tabernacle service, as stated in Exodus 30. 11-16. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that in his time it was paid annually by all above twenty years of age. The miracle of the shekel being found in the fish's mouth showed the Lord's omnipotence and His omniscience.

Chapter 18. The Lord teaches that the child-like spirit is the great qualification for entrance into the kingdom of heaven, showing that it is the child-like hearts that believe the gospel and accept the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. The Lord warns against causing little ones who believe on Him to stumble. Verses 15-20 refer to church discipline carried out according to divine rule. The chapter concludes with the parable of the unmerciful servant and teaches that we should forgive one another even as God also in Christ forgave us. *Wm, F. Shulver.*

Questions and Answers.

Question from Atherton. —Does the context of the clause "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure " (2 Peter 1. 19) relate to prophecy regarding the Lord Jesus coming as the Messiah, a Man of Nazareth, or to His second coming ?

Answer. —The word of prophecy here is in relation to the Person of Christ. The prophets spoke of the Messiah and the matter to be decided as the foundation of faith: Was Jesus of Nazareth the true Messiah ? This matter was made the more sure to those who were eye and ear witnesses of the events on the holy mount. What they saw, His glory, and what they heard, the Father's voice speaking of His Son, were to those men further proofs of the fact that He who was called the Nazarene was the Messiah. —J. M.

Question from Kilmarnock. —Does Revelation 11. not show that Moses and Elijah will again appear as God's witnesses during the Great Tribulation ?

Answer. —This is how I view this prophecy. —J. M.

Question from Edinburgh. —Difficulty was experienced in understanding the words " shall not taste of death. " What does this cover and how was this scripture fulfilled.

Answer. —To taste death is referred to in three places in the New Testament, Matthew 16. 28, John 8. 52, and Hebrews 2. 9. In the first two the reference is to natural death, and in the third, to the Lord's vicarious death in which He tasted death for every man. Note how the Jews altered what the Lord said in John 8. He said, " If a man keep My word, he shall never see death. " " Seeing death " the Jews altered to " tasting death " and illustrated their point by saying, "Abraham

is dead and the **prophets**. " When the Lord said that the **man** who kept His word would **never see** death, he **meant** the soul, not the body, **but** the **Jews** construed **His** meaning **as** applying to the body. Tasting death in Matthew 16. 28 means that there were those then present who would not die till they **saw** the Son of Man coming in His kingdom, which **was** foreshown **by** the events six days afterwards on the mount of Transfiguration. —J. M.]

Questions from Vancouver. (1). —Does not verse 3 of Matthew 5. exclude any such ones **as tares** would typify, entering the kingdom of heaven ?

Answer (1). —It is clear that the kingdom of heaven covers a long period of time, and also that **it is as** extensive **as** the world. Bearing in mind the **matter of time we can see**, say in the parable of the Tares of the field, that the **time** will come when evil men will not **be** allowed to find a place in the kingdom of the Son of Man. " They shall gather out of **His** kingdom all things that **cause** stumbling and them that do iniquity " (Matthew 13. 41). What had been allowed **at one time**, wheat and **tares** growing together, will not **be** allowed at another. Whilst the devil **was** allowed to sow tares in the field, such persons are not those who shall enter the kingdom of heaven when the Son of Man comes, their's **is** not the kingdom of heaven, nor yet shall they inherit the earth, **as** the meek will do (Matthew 5. 5). —J. M.

(2). —Will the holy city (Jerusalem) **be** trodden under foot (by the nations) forty-two months during the prophesying of the two **witnesses** ?

Answer (2). —I **am** disposed to this view. —J. M.

(3). —Why **is** the statement, " John the Baptist **as** the **greatest** in the kingdom of heaven, " written in the syllabus ? [A similar question **is** asked by Glasgow and Liverpool.]

Answer (3). —Words were omitted in the syllabus. —J. M.

(4). —In March Bible **Studies**, page 19, we read (1) " Them that are born of women, " and (2) " Those in the kingdom of heaven. The latter involves **a new birth**" Then in April Bible **Studies**, page 34, " The kingdom of heaven **is not** the kingdom of God. " Those in kingdom of God are deemed to **be** God's saints (see John 3). Since in point of **time** John 3. precedes the Lord's ministry in Galilee, **did He** tell Nicodemus how to **be** born into the kingdom of God, and later, tell others how to **be** born into a different kingdom ? This question arises from the further remark on page 34, " Eternal punishment **is a feature** connected with the kingdom of heaven (see Matthew 13., also 25.), where the door **is** shut on some. " Are not similar words **used** in connection with the kingdom of God in Luke 13. 18-30 ? The five virgins never were anything **but** foolish, or they would have been ready like the others. If the quoted remarks are scriptural, then the kingdom of Daniel 7. 14, 8. 22-27, will **be** the kingdom of God, and not the kingdom of heaven **as is** generally believed.

Answer (4). —No, the Lord did not tell Nicodemus how to **be** born into the kingdom of God, for the simple reason that persons **are** not born into the kingdom of God. What the Lord **did** say **was** that the new birth **was a** pre-requisite both to **seeing** and to entering God's kingdom. In a word no one can **be** in God's kingdom **as set** forth by the Lord and His apostles without being first born again. Let **me** try to explain in a very simple way what I have before many **times** sought to teach in Bible **Studies** and elsewhere, by allusion to the terms sheep and flock. In the **matter** of the new birth and the **gift** of eternal life, such a **gift is** given to the sheep, separately and individually, **but** in the matter of the kingdom, this was given to the little flock, to a collective people. In the one **case it is**, " I **give** unto them (My sheep) eternal life " (John 10. 28), **but** in the other **it is**, " Fear not, little flock; for **it is** your Father's good pleasure to **give** you the kingdom "

(Luke 12. 32). Great **indeed** would **be** our mistakes were we to read **these passages** as though they said, " I give unto **the** little flock eternal life " **and**, " Fear not, My sheep, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. " I gravely fear that many of God's dear children see no difference **between** the sheep **and** the flock **and** between eternal life **and** the kingdom. **One must be a sheep** before he is in the flock. The flock shows the sheep gathered together under the leadership **and** authority of the Lord, **and** such as **He** has appointed to shepherd His gathered together sheep (see Acts 20. 28; 1 Peter 5. 1-4). In such a realm **as** is contemplated in the term the " little flock, " there cannot **be** evil **men** and **saints** growing together. When **we remember** that the little flock **is seen** in the New Testament in the churches of God, **we see** in such a called-out **and** gathered-together people, a people who are, in a word, outside the camp, having gone forth to the Lord. In the kingdom of God there cannot be, by the Lord's command, evil **men**, unregenerate **men**, allowed to grow side by side with God's saints. Indeed, if saints were guilty of certain things they were to **be put** away from those together, and had no inheritance in the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6. 9, 10; Ephesians 5. 5).

But the kingdom of heaven **presents an** altogether different view from this. Here the view is of the world **and** not the church of the living God. In the world **we** have those **same** people (and all **saved** people) **seen** living amongst the ungodly, saints living with unsaved persons in their own homes and mingling with **men** of the world in the ordinary affairs of life. The devil has Christianised the world, for the tares (darnel, a spurious wheat, " which resembles wheat both in its stalk and grain, but which is worthless and deleterious ") **are** the devil's counterfeit of the real thing. The Lord refused the suggestion of **His** servants to pluck up the darnel and leave only the wheat. This would have made the time of judgment similar to that of the preaching of the gospel. The Lord's **command** was that the effects of **His** work and the devil's work were to go on side by side, right on to the end, in that saved and unsaved would live together **in** the world. **But** this state of things and this view of the kingdom of heaven would have an end. The time of the coming of the Son of **man** would come, and a complete change would take place, when all the unsaved would **be** removed and the righteous alone would remain.

Re the matter of Luke 13. 18-30 as to the question of eternal punishment, I drew attention last month to the distinction **between** " the field " in Matthew 13. 31 and " his own **garden** " in Luke 13. 19, which is, in my judgment, an important one. Notice that in Luke 13. 23 the matter is that of salvation—" Lord, are they **few** that **be** saved, ? " His reply is in keeping with the question, in which **He** exhorts His hearers " to enter in by the narrow door " (of salvation), **because** such a door and opportunity would not **be** always theirs. Even though they say after the door is shut, " Lord, open to **us**, " **He** shall say " Depart from **Me**, all ye workers of iniquity. " It will of course **be** true that Abraham, Isaac **and** Jacob will **be** in the kingdom of God (Luke 43. 28) as they will **be** in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 8. 11).

It of course follows, **as** is remarked **by** our Vancouver friends, that **in** regard to the foolish virgins they never were otherwise than foolish, yet they are **seen as an** integral part of a parable which is a picture of the kingdom of heaven at that particular time.

I do not follow our friends' deduction from what has **been** written, relative to Daniel 7. I should have thought verse 27 would **be** explicit enough: "And the kingdom and the dominion, and the **greatness** of the kingdoms (note the plural, which shows the administration of world affairs which is **given** to the saints) under the whole heaven, shall **be** given to the people of the **saints** of the Most High; **His** kingdom **is an** everlasting kingdom, **and** all dominions shall serve **and** obey Him. " Here **we see** the saints given world dominion under the Lord who shall receive the " dominion, **and** glory, **and** a^x kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him " (verse 14). This is something different from the **present** reception of the kingdom, as see Luke 12. 32 and **Hebrews** 12. 28, etc_J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The entrance as King into Jerusalem and the rejection by the Jewish nation	81
Wheat and Tares.	84
Questions and Answers	86

THE ENTRANCE AS KING INTO JERUSALEM AND THE REJECTION BY THE JEWISH NATION.

From Ilford. —In the first few verses of Matthew 21. we see yet another of the prophecies concerning Christ fulfilled. What a grand reception the multitude gave Him! Yet in a very brief time the multitude, spurred on by their leaders, cry, "Away with Him."

It was the hatred of the chief priests and scribes **which** turned the multitude. They could **see** that Christ had moved many (verse 15) **and** were filled "with indignation. From this point until well into the **23rd** chapter we **see** Christ foiling the Jewish leaders, which resulted in the leaders being so thoroughly shown to be **in** the wrong, that no **man** durst ask him any more questions. They were indeed speechless, **as all will** be in that great and terrible day which **is** coming.

Christ speaks much in parable form in these chapters, bringing out the truth of the bringing **in** of the Gentiles into the promises and purposes of God, and also to show to the multitude that although to the outward appearance the priests and scribes were fine men, yet at heart they were wicked and deceitful. **He** warns the people, "But do ye not after their works; for they say, and do not."

After Christ's discussion with the leaders **in** Matthew 22., when they continually try to trip **Him** up, **He** turns in chapter 23. to the ordinary people, as **if** realising that their leaders would later on try to incite them against Him. **He** puts the case clearly before them, with some very scathing remarks concerning the Pharisees, pronouncing judgment upon them. But **His** great love is still shown towards Israel **as** we **see** in the closing **verses** of chapter 23. How **He** had longed to **be** a Shepherd towards them. Yet they rejected **Him**, and through that rejection what a terrible curse befell Jerusalem!
E. H. Jarvis.

From Atherton. —Whenever an incident **in** the **life** of the Lord Jesus **is** mentioned by **all** four Gospel writers we may be assured that it **is** of great significance. Matthew writes of the King, who was also Jehovah's Servant (Mark), the Son of **Man** (Luke), and the Son of God (John).

Time and time again **had** the Lord, both by word and deed, indicated to the Jews **His** wondrous **Messiah** character, but **He** had found nothing but rejection **all** along the line, and so to them now **is** given the last public opportunity of accepting Him. Alas, yet once more do **we see** their refusal to acknowledge **Him** who was their rightful King. It **was** thought also that their **last** opportunity had gone before this time, since the Lord had already spoken to **His** disciples of the change in the dispensation (Matthew 16. 18, 19), and that **His** ride into Jerusalem was that the Scriptures (which could not be broken) might be fulfilled (Matthew 21. 4, 5).

That the leaders of the Jewish nation failed in this wondrous privilege of accepting Him as Israel's King is evident, and it is also clear that they were largely responsible for His final rejection by the Jewish nation.

It was thought that the attitude of the multitude as the Lord took His ride was genuine, and that possibly many of these were amongst that number to whom the apostle refers, "above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Corinthians 15. 6). Note the term as given in Luke 19. 37, "the whole multitude of the disciples." In contrast, it was stated that most of them knew not what they said, but merely followed those who commenced the praise, namely, the apostles and others who accompanied Him.

The use of the branches which were spread in the way was thought to be an eastern custom put into operation when receiving kings, and giving them honour.

The question was raised about the term "daughter of Zion," and it was thought that it referred to Jerusalem, which is invariably spoken of in the feminine gender.

The account of the fig tree tells us solemnly of Israel's failure, especially in view of the fact that the incident occurs just after the Lord's entry into Jerusalem, although the Lord's words, "Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for ever" (Matthew 21. 19), could not apply to Israel. For in a future day they shall yet take root downward, and bear fruit upward (Isaiah 37. 31).

So from the fig tree there is no fruit, and alike from the vineyard no fruit. How this reminds us of Isaiah 5., when the Lord looked for precious fruit from the vine, "He looked for grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes" (verses 1 and 2)!

The baptism of John: its mention just at this stage is doubtless significant, since the Lord's rejection by the nation began in their refusal to accept the testimony of John, and with it his baptism. They "rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7. 30). The baptism of John was fundamental in connection with the kingdom of heaven.

It was suggested that God's departure from His house would take place finally as a result of the failure of the Jews to receive Him when He entered Jerusalem. Doubtless the presence of God, as in Old Testament days, hovered about the temple, reluctant to depart, but at last He leaves His people: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Never had the Lord spoken to the Pharisees in the way that He does in Matthew 21. 43: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," but earlier He had made mention of this great change to His disciples: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12. 32).

The Lord's power as Creator is evidenced in that He rode an unbroken colt into Jerusalem. In His kindness and gentleness He would not take the young colt from its mother, and the two were brought, but, as Mark clearly indicates, He rode on the colt. The Lord used the colt "whereon no man ever yet sat" (Mark 11. 2), and "a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid" (John 19. 41).

How will the Lord enter Jerusalem again? It was suggested that the quotation from Zechariah 9. 9, 10 is primarily future, and the setting of the scripture bespeaks millennial glory, so that it may well be that the Lord may again come as before, and this time to be accepted by the Jews. [Zechariah 9. 9 has been fulfilled and will not be fulfilled again at the Lord's coming to earth. Never again will the Lord enter Jerusalem riding on an ass. Note Matthew 21. 4, "Now this came to pass that it might be fulfilled," etc. —J. M. J. The Zechariah scripture, as to its fulfilment, is like that cited from Joel (Acts 2. 16-21), which whilst employed by Peter in the Holy Spirit in connection with the day of Pentecost, yet it will know complete and final fulfilment in days to come. [Note carefully what Peter says in Acts 2. He does not say Joel was fulfilled, but says "This is that," etc. —J. M. J. It was also thought that the Zechariah scripture as to the Lord riding into Jerusalem on an ass was fulfilled then, and that when He comes again it will be not the ass—the lowly beast of burden—but a white horse upon which He will ride. We should value the thoughts of others on this question.

W. T. Moores, G. A. Jones.

From Cowdenbeath. —In the Old Testament Scriptures, **which were** read in the Jewish synagogues every sabbath, the prophecy **was** contained which **gave** promise of the manner in which the King whom they **expected** would present Himself for acceptance by the nation. The day **came** when in fulfilment of Zechariah's words the King entered the city **amid** the plaudits and the hosannas of the multitudes, and to outward appearance it **seemed** that the nation **was** fully aware of the greatness of the occasion, and **was** receiving **its** King with open arms. But **if** the common people were jubilant the leaders were not. As they witnessed the triumphant entry they stood in helpless and indignant wonderment, expressing themselves thus, "Behold how ye prevail nothing: lo, the world **is** gone after Him" (John 12. 19).

Previously these very men had made the decision that **He** must **be** put to death (John 11. 53), but between them and the execution of their plans stands the eager multitude. Twice in chapter 21. it **is** stated that they feared the multitude. Once in verse **26** **as** admitted by themselves, and again in verse **46** **as** the reason for their not laying hold upon the Lord. It **was** the builders and leaders of the nation who rejected the Lord, and on that notable day when the fateful decision **was** made it **is** recorded that the chief priests and scribes persuaded the multitudes to **ask** for Barabbas, and that **Jesus** should be crucified (Matthew 27. 20). The Lord showed by the parable which **He** told them how that He understood perfectly what their evil design was. Infuriated with rage they sought, **as** they thought, to show **His** fallibility before the eyes of the multitude. With carefully chosen questions they **came** to take hold of **His** speech, only to retire defeated, humiliated and silenced. The Lord then exposes them in all their hypocritical garb. Men who taught, but did not, who made life burdensome unto others, who were blind, and lastly, who were murderers. Woe to such men and woe to Israel that such **was** the character of her leaders !

Although the Lord did renounce the leaders with such strong, condemnatory words, yet **was** **His** heart tender towards the nation. Their past record had **been** *one* of hatred and murder towards those God-sent men and prophets who had preceded Him, yet in spite of it all He, the Sent-One from the Father, the well beloved Son, had so often been ready to receive them unto Himself, but they refused. The die **was** **cast**, the day of opportunity gone, and the divine presence **was** withdrawn. But still **He** speaks of a time of reconciliation, when the repentant nation shall acknowledge their Messiah and shall experience great blessings from **His** hand. God shall yet bestow upon **His** chosen, unworthy people the fulness of **His** blessings through Christ, their once rejected King. *James Bowman.*

From Glasgow. —The triumphal entry of the Lord into Jerusalem **is** related by all the four writers of the Gospels. Some differences would doubtless **be** accounted for **if** we knew accurately the real detail of the circumstances in chronological order. In John 12. **1** our Lord came **six** days before the passover to Bethany, where the anointing took place (c. f. Matthew 26. 6-13), and "on the morrow" the triumphal entry into Jerusalem **was** made. According to Mark 11. **11**, on the day of the triumphal entry **He** entered the city, went to the temple, and looked about on all things. Then, late in the evening, **He** returned to Bethany, and on the morrow the cleansing of the Temple took place. The account in Luke is the fullest and most graphic of the four.

I would venture to suggest that the supposition that the triumphal entry in Mark is related a day earlier will bring all into unison. If **this** **is** so, our Lord's first entry into Jerusalem **was** private; probably the journey **was** interrupted by a short stay at Bethany, so that He did not enter the city with the multitudes. That this **was** the fact, seems implied in Mark 11. **11**. He noticed the abuse in the temple which the next day He corrected, then in the evening He went back with the twelve to Bethany to the supper there. [Whatever difficulties there may be in reconciling the days and events connected with the Lord's repeated coming to Jerusalem on the days prior to His crucifixion, there can be no doubt that the entrance of Mark 11. **11** is the public entrance of the Lord as King Messiah, the events antecedent to which are recorded in Mark 11. **1-10**, and not a private entrance—J. M. J. Then on the morrow the multitudes **came** out to meet **Him**,

and the triumphal entry took place, the weeping over the city (Luke 19. 41), and the cleansing of the Temple. The cursing of the fig tree occurred early that morning as He was leaving Bethany with the twelve, and before the multitude met Him, or the asses were sent for. [I judge that the asses were sent for on the day before the sabbath, that is on our Friday, when he was on the way from Jericho to Bethany. —J. M.]

The King with His disciples draws near to Jerusalem to make His royal entrance into the city. It has been said that He was carried away by enthusiasm and expected that the people would now surely receive Him as King Messiah; while other critics explain His entry to the city as a kind of a concession to the Messianic expectations of His disciples. How dishonouring to Him are such foolish speculations ! The simple fact is that He is the King, and as such He had come to Jerusalem to fulfil that which had been predicted by Zechariah the prophet. What a sight it must have been!, Thousands came to meet Him with palm branches in their hands, waving them over their heads, while the multitudes which followed did the same, and they broke out in glad shouts using words from Psalm 118.

That this riding on the foal of an ass was intentional on the part of our Lord is clear, and also that He did not thereby mean to give any countenance to the temporal ideas of His Messiahship, but solemnly to fulfil the scriptures written concerning Himself and to prepare the way for His sufferings by a public avowal of His mission. The typical meaning also is not to be overlooked. In all probability the evening visit to the temple was on the very day when the paschal lamb was to be taken, *i. e.*, set apart for the sacrifice.

The King entered into Jerusalem, and in all He was undisturbed: others might have been swept away by this enthusiasm, but He is calm in all His Kingly majesty. Luke's Gospel tells us that when He was near He beheld the city and wept over it. At the grave of Lazarus it was a still, silent weeping, but before Jerusalem He wept copiously: this is clearly proved by the different words used in the original.

The King knew what was soon to be, and on yonder hill He saw looming up the cross. Truly they were crying " Son of David! " now, but the question, *' Who is this ? " is answered in terms of rejection. Instead of " the King Jehovah, Jesus the Messiah, " the multitude answers, " This is the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. "

Chapter 23. contains the woes of the King upon the Pharisees. It is one of the most solemn chapters in Matthew, a fearful uncovering of the heart of the Pharisees and their corruption. And thus He lays bare the hidden things. There are eight woes given in this chapter, though it is claimed that verse 14 does not belong to chapter 23. It is, however, found in both Mark and Luke, so that it is evident the Lord uttered these words.

We note His lamentation how He must leave their house desolate and turn away from His beloved city. The King is the King of Love, and His heart yearns over Jerusalem. But the discourse which has nothing but woes ends with a " Blessed. " Here comes in the bright ray of hope for Israel, " Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. " This is the promise of His second coming, and when He comes He will find a believing remnant of that very people, welcoming Him with the Messianic greeting of Psalm 118. Then the Shekinah glory will spread over Jerusalem, and Israel's land. He that scattered Israel will gather them from the four corners of the earth. It is a remnant that will behold the King coming out of the opened heavens in the day of His manifestation. This will bring the 70th week of David to a close.

W. R. Wallace.

WHEAT AND TARES.

From Vancouver. —As there seems to be misunderstanding in the minds of many regarding this parable, we suggest looking at the Lord's explanations of it. " He answered and said, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. The *field is the world*, the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed these is the devil" (Matthew 13. 37-39).

It is passing strange that ever **we should** think, in view of **such plainness of** speech that the tares here are in the kingdom of heaven.

Some of the seed (the word) of the first parable fell on good ground, and every receiver of the seed **became** a child, or son of the kingdom. These are spoken of as the good seed in the next parable, and are sown, **not in the kingdom** (they are already there), but in the **world** (see John 17. 14-18, specially verse 18).

They are in enemy's territory, so to speak, and while the devil **cannot hinder** their being sown **in the world**, he does the next best thing (more correctly, his worst) to choke and hinder the good seed from bearing fruit; **by** sowing tares among them, **in the world**. Surely language could not **be** plainer than the Lord uses. Let us understand then, that while the Son of Man can, and does sow the sons of the kingdom **in the world**, the devil **can not** sow **his** children **in the kingdom**.

An understanding of this plain truth will clear our vision somewhat as to the kingdom of heaven; for **if we** are "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven" **we** will have noticed chapter 18. 3, "Except **ye be converted**, and become as little children, **ye shall in no wise enter** into the kingdom of heaven." Can the devil take his tares past this?

Is the best that John, then the Lord Himself, had to announce, something that is only partly good, and partly (if not mostly) evil as most of our theology indicates? Is this the better thing foreseen by God, or is there really something that can truly **be** spoken of as "The Kingdom of Heaven"? Many have the **idea** that we are told all about it in the Old Testament and that it has chiefly to do with Israel and the throne of David. **We** may look at this in the near **future if** the Lord will. Presently, let us state that the Old Testament **does not** tell us all about it, though it tells us much. Please notice Matthew 13. 35, "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been **kept secret from the foundation of the world**."

In this, as in all else, "Never man so spake."

We suggest "The mystery of His will" (Ephesians 1. 10) is closely associated with this, the kingdom of heaven being spoken of here in its completeness, while the mystery of the third chapter **is** in connection with only a part of it, yet **a** most important part. *Jas. Blair.*

We publish in full the communication of our esteemed correspondent in Vancouver, and **we** would say **at** once, far **be** it from us to assume that we have reached complete understanding of so profound **a** matter as the kingdom of heaven, which has engaged the minds of the deepest thinkers in divine things. **But we** would follow on in the study of this subject as those who are, or would seek to **be**, disciples to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13. 52).

No one can doubt that the true subjects of the kingdom of heaven are those who are "sons (not children) of the kingdom" (Matthew 13. 38). It is important to notice that exactly opposite kind of persons are in Matthew 8. 12 also called "sons of the kingdom"; the latter are cast forth into outer darkness, while the former, who are the righteous, shine forth in the kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13. 43). Despite the **fact** that **a** similar term is applied to righteous as well as to wicked people, **we** see quite clearly what the Lord is saying in each case.

If **it be** right to conclude that the kingdom of heaven (or "the heavens") in Matthew is the same as "the heavens do rule" in Daniel 4. 26, which means, **as** verse 25 shows, that the Most High ruleth in the "kingdom of men." **We see** how diverse is its manifestation in the time of Nebuchadnezzar and in the **time** of John the Baptist and that of our Lord.

Again, its manifestation changed as to God's purpose in the earth from the time of John the Baptist and our Lord (when they preached the truth relative to divine purpose to Israel, and not to the Gentiles), to the time when the keys of that kingdom were given to Peter and the message went forth to Jew and then to Gentile and the purpose of God in this dispensation relative to the Body of Christ began to **be** fulfilled.

Then again, God's purpose will again change when this dispensation is completed and Christ has come for the Church, which is His Body, and **He** will revert to dealing with Israel again and the message of "the kingdom of heaven is **at**

hand" will again be on the lips of the coming preachers of the gospel of the kingdom; but this time the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom will not be limited to Israel, but will be preached in the* whole inhabited earth and unto all nations (Matthew 24. 14).

And yet again, its manifestation will change with the imminence of Christ's coming and the coming of the Lord to earth, as shown in the parable of the ten virgins, and yet again in the parable of the drag net, when the Lord has come and the judgment will be set, and the wicked will be removed from the earth and the righteous will be seen and manifestly approved by the Lord, as Malachi 3. 18 and many other portions of the Word show.

I feel sure that unless the changes in the manifestation of the kingdom of heaven, in the development of the purposes of God in the earth, be observed, we shall completely fail to understand this important phase of kingdom truth.

Permit me to disagree with our friends in the view that they take of the field where the good seed was sown. The field which is the world is not the enemy's territory, as presented in the parable of the tares. This is quite a lawful view to take of the present age in another line of truth, but it is not the view presented in the parable of the tares. Note please what is said in Matthew 13. 24: " The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field. " Note the force of the words " HIS field. " The explanation of the parable in verses 37-39 is that " the man " who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man; the good seed are the sons of the kingdom, the righteous; and " His field " is the world, so that the world belongs to the Son of Man. The world is His by right of Creatorship (Psalm 24. 1, 2), and it is His by right of purchase also (Matthew 13. 44). Note, too, that " the servants, " of verse 27, acknowledge the field to be their master's. They call it " thy field. " Now please note also that the field, which is the world, where the tares grow is said in verse 41 to be the kingdom of the Son of Man, that is, I judge, in the sense of His realm. " The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, " for then shall be fulfilled the word of Revelation 11. 15: " The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever. "

It should be quite evident, I think, that whilst in this world since the time in which the Lord sowed good seed in His field (the world) the enemy has counterfeited His work and with His satanic doctrine produced counterfeit Christians, and these are growing with the good seed in the world. This the Son of Man permits at present and will do so till the time when He will judge the world in righteousness. Then the wicked will be removed and then those who have been converted and become as little children will enter the kingdom at that time manifested, for they have been and will ever be the true subjects of the kingdom.

We might ask in connection with the truth of the kingdom of heaven, Why did the Lord not cut down every tree that brought not forth good fruit and cast it into the fire, as John the Baptist said in Matthew 3. 10 concerning Christ's coming? The answer is plain that He could not baptise in the Holy Spirit and in fire at one and the same time (verse 11). The day of mercy must precede the day of judgment. In the day of the preaching of God's message God does not stop Satan in His activity in preaching a spurious doctrine. The divine doctrine and the devil's message have their results. But in the time of judgment the devil will be cast into the abyss and his evil work will cease, and at that time the wicked will be removed from the earth and the righteous will shine forth in and inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

I judge that " the mystery of His will " in the " dispensation of the fulness of the times " (or seasons) relates to the Millennium when all things will be summed, or headed up, in Christ (Ephesians 1. 9, 10). J. M.

Question and Answer.

Question from Glasgow. —Will the temple in which the antichrist sits be the one the Lord will cleanse when He comes as Son of Man, or will another be built?

Answer. —As Solomon in the beginning of his reign built the house of Jehovah according to the pattern that his father David gave him—a house for the kingdom, so it seems clear that the Man whose name is " the Branch, " *i. e.*, Messiah, " shall build the temple of the LORD " (Zechariah 6. 12, 13). There He shall sit as a Priest upon His throne. It seems clear that the house in which antichrist shall sit will not be used by the Lord. —J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The entrance as King into Jerusalem and the rejection by the Jewish nation	87
Facts relative to the Coming of the Son of Man and the End of the age.	90
Questions and Answers	98

THE ENTRANCE AS KING INTO JERUSALEM AND THE REJECTION BY THE JEWISH NATION (Matthew 21. —23.).

From London, S. E. —In these three chapters, not only do we see prophecy being fulfilled, but prophecy being made concerning the future. The old dispensation is drawing to a close (that of the law), and the new is about to begin (that of grace).

That most blessed of all nations, the Jews, though still professing to worship God, had departed in heart from Him. Though many of the common people were ready to receive the Lord Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees, the rulers of the people, definitely rejected Him. It is therefore safe to say that as a nation the Jews rejected Him.

However, there were many who had received blessing from the Lord, and had beheld His mighty works of healing, and when He appeared riding on a colt on His way to Jerusalem, as predicted by Zechariah the prophet, they went before Him crying, " Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. "

The question was asked as to what extent the Lord used force in cleansing the temple, and it was generally agreed that His demonstration of righteous anger was accompanied with such power that none could withstand Him.

The people might well cry " Hosanna, " which means " O save, " for they had leaders who were blind.

In chapter 23. 13 Jesus said, " Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter. " This chapter is a terrible indictment from beginning to end of the actions of the leaders of the nation. Woe after woe is pronounced upon them, but, alas, they repented not. Under the old covenant they had rejected God. Samuel prayed to the Lord, and the Lord said, " They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not be King over them. " Such words were reiterated when Jesus was brought before Pilate: " We will not have this Man to reign over us. " At a later date, when Stephen was speaking before the Sanhedrin, he said, " Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit. " Thus we see the threefold rejection of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, although **as a nation the Jew** has **rejected** Christ, many individuals have received Him, and with Gentile believers of all nations form the Church which is His Body. **A day** is coming when the Lord shall **be King** over all the earth: in that **day** shall there **be one LORD** and His **Name** one (Zechariah 14. 9).

From Vancouver. —The Lord's entrance into Jerusalem, **as King**, marked another **step** in the fulfilment of all that the prophets had written concerning **Him**. This action of the Lord should have spoken loudly to the religious leaders, who were well acquainted with Zechariah's prophecy. Its fulfilment **was** quickly recognized **by** many, making it **a day** of great rejoicing in Jerusalem amongst the common people. "Rejoice greatly, **O** daughter of Zion; shout, **O** daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: **He** is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an **ass**, even upon **a colt** the foal of an **ass** " (Zechariah 9. 9).

There could not **be any** doubt that this indeed **was** the Man of whom the prophet wrote, for every holy characteristic mentioned in prophecy had fully shone forth in the years **He** had moved in and out amongst them. The Pharisees could in no wise fail to recognise Him **as** the heaven-sent Messiah, and therefore were inexcusable in their failing to receive Him.

The Lord's riding into the city, to the Mount Zion **He** loved, borne **by** the lowly colt, the foal of an **ass**, bespoke the purpose of His coming. The city spoke of **peace**, and nought **but** thoughts of **peace** and love flowed in His great heart of compassion towards both the place and its favoured inhabitants that day.

When the Lord **was** in the temple that **day**, it **was** children who uttered words of truth, and revealed the identity of the One who graced its courts. "Hosanna to the Son of David," **was** their cry (Matthew 21. 15, 16), and thus from the mouths of **babes** and sucklings **was** truth established, while the religious and worldly-wise men of the **day** looked on, with indignation reflected in their countenances and murder in their hearts.

The incident of the fig tree occurring when it did **was** not without its significance, for when the Lord found nothing but leaves thereon, it portrayed the real condition of Israel nationally at that time (Matthew 21. 19).

The parable of the householder and the vineyard (Matthew 21. 33-36) is plainly recognised **as** the teaching of Isaiah 5., where God used the vineyard **to set** forth the purpose **He** had in **His** chosen people.

The parable of Matthew 21. gives **us a** full view of what Isaiah wrote, for **we** are taken right up until the time when the Husbandman sent **His** Son, saying, "They will reverence My Son." But did they? **Nay**, verily, and their guilt **is** for ever inscribed upon the sacred page, "They took Him, and cast **Him** forth out of the vineyard, and slew **Him** " (verse 39).

Their rejection of the Son of God laid **bare** their evil hearts of unbelief, and in so doing, closed the kingdom of heaven against themselves, thus forfeiting the rich blessings of God who had stretched out **His** hands of love and **mercy** towards them through **His** beloved Son.

Viewed dispensationally, the rejection of the Lord **Jesus** Christ **by** His own people **was** the means God used to extend the blessings of obedience to Gentile nations. **As we see** the wondrous development of God's present purpose through the death of His Son, we are assured that the "determinate counsel and fore-knowledge" of God over-ruled the dark counsels of those who encompassed His death.

R. Armstrong.

From Brantford, Ontario. —As the Lord **Jesus** entered into Jerusalem in the manner prophesied by Zechariah, we thought it to be strange that anyone seeing the fulfilment should fail to recognise **Him as** the Messiah. It is quite apparent in the gospel record that the multitudes in general acclaimed **Him as He** entered into the city.

The opposition came from the chief priests and the scribes (Matthew 21. 15). They were moved with indignation, and would have restrained those who gave honour and praise to the Lord **Jesus**. With regard to this incident we noted the account in John 12. 12-19. Particular note was made of the **fact** that even the disciples did not understand these things at the first, but when the Lord **Jesus** was glorified then they remembered that these things were written of Him.

The parable concerning the vineyard and the incident concerning the fruitless fig tree afforded us some interesting thoughts. As far as God was concerned, the nation was like unto the fruitless fig tree, with leaves in abundance, but no fruit, i. e., profession in plenty, but nothing for God. Then the parable of the vineyard reminds us that they had been the people of God's own choice, **His** tilled land, so aptly referred to and described in Isaiah 5. Truly in the days of the Lord **Jesus**, as **He** was amongst men, the nation of Israel brought forth a heavy crop of wild grapes. How such recompense must have pained "the Householder," the Lord of the vineyard! The Lord **Jesus** went on to prophesy how they would take Him, the Heir of the vineyard, and kill **Him** too. Had they been in the mind of the Lord they would have readily recognised **Him as** the Heir, also that He was the Stone set at nought by themselves the builders.

Then those heavy tidings fell upon their dull ears: "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This was literally fulfilled when they rejected **Him**.

Now God has entrusted to us, as the Holy Nation referred to by Peter, the privileges and responsibilities of the kingdom of God.

Our position of trust in the economy of God is a tremendous privilege. So much so, that we surely require a special dispensation of God's grace as a counter-balance, lest haply we should become exalted overmuch. Let us always remember that we as those who were Gentiles are included in Romans 11., where we are referred to as "a wild olive." The severity of God towards the "natural branches," the Israel nation, is on record for our instruction. Because of their failure as the custodians of **His** trust (they were an expression of the kingdom of God in former days), they were broken off. In humility may we ever remember that we have only been grafted in. [The subject of Romans 11. is not that of the kingdom of God, but rather God's governmental dealings with Israel and the Gentiles according to divine purpose, and also, in part, the truth of divine election of a remnant of the nation of Israel, during the period that they nationally are set aside. This day is the "riches" and "fulness" of the Gentiles, but such terms do not mean that the Gentiles are brought into the kingdom of God, nor yet does "the reconciling of the world" (Romans 11. 15) mean that the world is reconciled to God by the death of **His** Son, as in Romans 5. 10. The latter reconciliation is true only in the case of believers. —J. M. J.]

Arthur Walker. Wm. Walker.

From Hamilton, Ontario. —If we were to read in Matthew 21. only about the triumphant entry of the Lord **Jesus** into Jerusalem, we would be caused to think that the **Jews** were truly in a spiritual condition to receive **Him as** their King. The wonderful words of praise and the open confession that **He was** the "Son of David," and that **He came** "in the name of the Lord," would all lead us to think that it was quite possible that they were ready to have the kingdom of

God set up amongst them. But how true are the words in 1 Samuel 16. 7! " Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. " The Lord Himself was not deceived; He knew that He would be rejected by the Jews.

We see a type of these Israelites in the fig tree, of verse 19. Looking at the fig tree covered with leaves from a distance would cause them to think that it bore much fruit, but what a disappointment when no fruit is to be seen ! That is what these people were like. From the way they received Him we would think they were ready to have Him reigning over them, but they were not in the condition to have Him as king, or the scribes and Pharisees would not have so easily turned them against Him.

In Isaiah 5. we read about Israel as the vineyard of Jehovah, The vineyard was planted in a very fruitful hill, where there should have been no difficulty in bearing good fruit. Israel was led into the " land flowing with milk and honey. " All their temporal needs were taken care of, and they could have gone on serving God. But what happened ? They turned away from God and they bore wild fruit. Israel had every encouragement to bear fruit: " He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein " (Isaiah 5. 2). Yet after all His care, Israel still was not what it should have been. He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. What a disappointment Israel was to God! He says, " What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it ? " Israel rejected its God, but what is the result ? God also rejected Israel, as is revealed in this same portion: " I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the fence thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed, but there shall come up briars and thorns. " Truly this prophecy is being fulfilled even to-day !

In the parable of the two sons, the son who said, " I go, sir, " and went not, seems to point to Israel. We remember that when Moses, in Exodus 24. 7, read the book of the covenant in the midst of the people, they said, " All that the LORD hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. " Yet it is only a short time later that we find these **same** people worshipping a golden calf. *R. Dryburgh (Jr.).*

FACTS RELATIVE TO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN AND THE END OF THE AGE (Matthew 24., 25.).

From London, S. E. —In his chapter entitled, " The Lord's Second Coming in Two Aspects " in " Spiritual Growth, " Mr. Frederick A. Banks gives the key to this month's subject. " In verses 37-39 of chapter 23. you really have the basis upon which the two next chapters are built, and unless this be seen, confusion must arise. The Son of Man is here viewing retrospectively the treatment he has received from the Jews, and breaks forth into tones of lamentation as He considers it. In consequence of their rejection of Him as " Son of David, " and " Son of Abraham, " He declares their house shall be left unto them desolate, and that they shall not see Him till they should say, " Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. " . . v Then in chapter 24., the Lord having foretold the destruction of the temple, His disciples come to Him privately, and inquire of Him in regard to three distinct points.

1. When shall these things be ? (that is, the temple destroyed).
 2. What shall be the sign of Thy coming ? (that is, the coming of chapter 23. 39).
 3. And of the end of the world ? (that is, the end of the age).
- That which follows is the Lord's complete answer to this threefold interrogation. "

Time and space will not permit of a detailed discussion of the complete reply, but the following facts relative to the coming of the Son of Man are pertinent to our subject.

1. It is as the Son of Man (in the third person) that the Lord speaks of His coming again to this earth. He does not use this title when He speaks of His relations with " His own, " and it is in marked contrast to the intensely personal character of His words (in the first person) on the following evening as recorded in John 14.

2. In describing **His** coming, the Lord uses the word "*parousia*" which is stated to involve duration, a period of time, rather than an event: Liddell and Scott define it as " a being present, presence. " [There are two words generally used in the New Testament for coming, *Erkomai* and *Parousia*. The former conveys the thought of " movement towards, " and the latter that of "arrival, " hence the use of the word "Presence. "—J. M.]. In each of the 24 occurrences in the New Testament where it is translated "coming" the Revised Version has " Gk. presence " in the margin.

3. Before the sign of His coming appears the most dreadful things must come to pass and His elect (the Jewish people back in their own land) must go through unprecedented trial [Not all the Jewish people in their own land are the elect, but the faithful remnant. Note the words of the Lord in John 5. 43 relative to many Jews who will receive the antichrist. —J. M.] That these trials confront the Jewish people rather than the Church is proved by a comparison of Matthew 24. 20 and Colossians 2. 15, 16. From the latter we perceive that the keeping of the sabbath does not concern us (being a shadow of the good things to come), whereas the former refers to the resumption of their ancient ordinances by the Jews.

4. The coming of the Son of Man will be seen universally (verse 27) as the lightning is seen from east to west. *All* the tribes of the earth will mourn and they shall see Him. See also Revelation 1. 7.

5. He will come " on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory " (verse 30) sitting at the right hand of power (Mark 14. 62). It will be a day of vengeance, solemnity and terror to the ungodly (2 Thessalonians 1. 8).

6. There will be signs prior to His appearing with His saints on earth; reference is made to the days of Noah (verse 37-39). The characteristics of life upon the earth during the *Parousia* [I do not understand the word *Parousia* to signify the **time** of the great tribulation. Indeed " the coming (*Parousia*) of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4. 15) for His Church, when He is present with His saints—all who are in Christ, and " the coming (*Parousia*) of the Son of Man, " are quite distinct. If our friends mean here and in their previous explanation of the word *Parousia*, that this coming covers the Lord's coming, as in 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18, and all the intervening period, however long it may be, but definitely including the " one week " of Daniel 9. 24-27, right down to the arrival of the Son of Man on earth, then I must disagree. —J. M.] are clearly described:—eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. These signs precede the time when the *Parousia* becomes visible to mankind at the manifestation or revelation (2 Thessalonians 1. 7, Matthew 25. 31).

7. The use of the second person in these chapters suggests that what the Lord foretold was to be the experience of those to whom it was spoken, but this is not necessarily implied. The disciples addressed in John 16. 33 and Matthew 28. 19, 20, have long since passed away, but the end of the age is not yet and His word is fulfilled to their successors. Also, the words " ye shall be hated *of all nations* " could not have been fulfilled before the fall of Jerusalem, but it has been true of many since. However, " the calamity that overtook Jerusalem was an event prophetic of another of like character in the future, as Titus may be a prophetic person foreshadowing the Lawless Man of 2 Thessalonians 2. "

8. After the events and signs of chapter 24, we have the parable of the **ten virgins** in chapter 25. " **Then** shall the bridegroom... " In the gloom of the night of darkness and tribulation a cry is made, " Behold, the Bridegroom ! " answering the prediction of verse 39 of chapter 23. The Lord does not come to the air in Matthew 25., but to the scene of earth itself. The **wise virgins** no doubt refer to the watching Jews who expect " the Sun of righteousness to **arise**, " and possibly they answer to the 144, 000 of Revelation 14. 1-4. They go **in** with **Him** to the Marriage Feast (not the marriage, R. V.). [But these 144, 000 sing before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, whereas those who go in to the marriage feast are quite clearly persons on earth. —J. M.].

9. After having dealt with the Jews **He** sits **as** King upon the Throne, and judges the nations of the earth concerning their treatment of **His** Jewish brethren (verses 31-46).

10. Then cometh 1; he end of the age, or the consummation of the aeon. The aeon **is** a definite period of time. [If our friends will consult Liddell and Scott, to whose work they have already alluded, they will see **that** no such single definition of the Greek word **Aion** is possible. Indeed these authorities show that **this** word was used by the Greeks much like the various **uses** of the English word " age. " Liddell and Scott say of one of **its uses**—" In prose writers, " a long space of time, eternity,... for ever. "—J. M.]. 1 Corinthians 2. 7 speaks of **a time** " before the aeons. " 1 Corinthians 10. 11 speaks of the " ends of the aeons. " Therefore the aeons were not eternal in the past nor will they be eternal in the future. [This **is** a most astounding statement in the light of the fact that the adjective **Aionios** is derived from the noun **Aion**, and that this adjective, according to a Greek lexicon which I now quote, means, " unlimited **as** to duration, eternal, everlasting, " and this **is** the word which is used to describe the " eternal " God, the " eternal " Spirit, " eternal " life, " eternal " salvation, etc., etc. Perhaps our friends will consider what other word describes limitless duration. —J. M.]. The aeon in which we live will be consummated **at** the manifestation of **His** Presence.

" All the pain of Calvary's story
Told in answering glory now ! "

From Yeovil. —In this discourse to **His** disciples the Lord **was** speaking to them **as** Jews and **as** being representative of **the** Jewish nation, rather than to disciples and Christians of this dispensation who form part of the Body of Christ. [Whilst we readily agree that the Lord **was** not speaking to such **as** were members of the Body of Christ, for the simple reason **that** the Lord had not commenced to build **His** Church, we do not agree **that** the Lord was **speaking** to Jews **as** representatives of the Jewish nation. **He** was speaking to men who were **His** disciples, and we judge that just **as** the Lord had disciples prior to the commencement of this dispensation of grace, so the Lord will have disciples after this dispensation **is** finished, in the **time** that lies between **the** rapture of the Church and the coming of the Son of Man to the earth. See Isaiah 8. 16, 17; Matthew 10. 1, 23, 42, which though applicable **in** the past will have a future application also. —J. M.]. This becomes apparent when we consider **the** facts related in the chapter. It **is** largely concerned with visible signs. It **is** recorded the Jews look for a sign, but we (Christians of this dispensation) walk by faith and not by sight.

We read of **the** abomination of desolation in **the** holy place and of flight on the sabbath. All these **terms** relate only to the Jews. These facts all lead us to the conclusion that the Lord **is** here talking to Jews about the **time** when once again God will take them up and prepare them for the coming of their long-awaited Messiah.

It is sad reading to see that in order to do this God has to bring His earthly people through such a terrible time of tribulation. But the Lord's discourse here reveals that this will be so. We see that as the end of the age draws near, iniquity of every kind increases. With this the travail and suffering of God's people increases.

We see that false prophets increase in number and success. This means that their delusion and apostasy increase. This again leads on to further judgment, travail and suffering, consummating in the extreme tribulation referred to as the day of Jacob's trouble.

When this time of tribulation is over, immediately there follows a series of physical disturbances in the heavens, ending in the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.

He then appears on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

In view of this coming His people are exhorted to prepare and be ready to receive their King, and the various aspects of preparation and watchfulness are brought before us in the parables that the Lord uses here. There is most valuable teaching for us too in these parables, although they seem to apply primarily to the Jews.

When the Lord shall have come and He sits on the throne of His glory, we see that His first act in His office as King is to execute judgment and to purge out from his kingdom all opposition.

We read elsewhere that the foundations of God's throne are righteousness and judgment. We see these being carried out when He rewards the righteous and condemns the evil. His throne is thus well established in this first recorded act of the earth's new King, and we believe is but typical of what His reign will be like as it runs its course in the years that follow on.

Austin L. Glover.

From Kilmarnock. —According to verses 38 and 39 of Matthew 23, this is the last time we read of the Lord visiting the temple, and it is noteworthy that the disciples drew His attention to the buildings of the temple. This gave the Lord an opportunity to make known to them the destruction of the temple which we understand took place in A. D. 70.

Mark 13. 3 tells us that, "Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him privately " concerning these things, and in reply the Lord foretells the signs and happenings ere His coming as Son of Man, and the completion of the age. It is important to note that it was not until the night of His betrayal that He told them of His going away and His coming to receive them, as there are no signs ere this takes place (John 14. 2, 3).

What we have in Matthew 24, and 25, no doubt is for the guidance and instruction of those who will be living after the Church is caught up, although it may be even now the condition of the Jewish nation is causing exercise of mind to a faithful remnant of that nation. It will be a time of " wars and rumours of wars, " and there shall be famines, pestilence and earthquakes; it will also be a time of persecution and unfaithfulness towards friends, and lawlessness shall abound (verse 12). A special sign for the people is when they shall see the " abomination of desolation " standing in the Holy Place; we judge, this is what the apostle refers to in 2 Thessalonians 2. 3-4 as the " man of sin " or the " anti-christ [rather the image of the beast, I would think. The beast sits in the temple (Naos), but this abomination can be seen by men standing in a (not "the") holy place. —J. M.]. The time during which he is in power will be one of great distress for those who refuse to acknowledge him and refuse his mark. We understand it will be during the tribulation that the " seven seals " and the " woes " of Revelation will take place, prior to the coming of the Son of Man.

Zechariah 14. 4 foretells the time when the Lord shall stand on the Mount of Olives, not as the despised and rejected One, but as Son of Man to execute judgment on the man of sin, and on those who believed not the truth, but had

pleasure **in** unrighteousness " (2 Thessalonians 2. 8-12). For faithful **ones** who will receive " **the** spirit of grace **and** supplication," it will **be** a time of mourning, when " they shall look on Him whom they have **pierced** " (Zechariah 12. 10). Comparing the prophecy of Joel 3. 9 with Revelation 19. 11, **we** understand that the Lord is executing **judgment** on all that would oppose **His** authority ere the peaceful reign of the Millennium is ushered in. Matthew 25. 31 gives the **judgment** of the nations, **as** to how they **treated** the brethren of the Lord during the tribulation. The righteous shall " inherit the kingdom " **and** reign with Christ on earth. Thus, **we** understand, will **be** fulfilled the times of the Gentiles, and the completion of the **age**.
A. G. S.

EXTRACTS.

From Cowdenbeath. —The coming of the Son of **Man** to this earth to crush Gentile power **and** to **set up** His kingdom, so ushering in a period of **peace**, plenty **and** prosperity for mankind the world over, will **be preceded** by a **time** of unprecedented tribulation for those who choose to **be** faithful unto Him **pending** His appearance. Such persecution it would **seem** from Daniel 9. 27 shall continue for three-and-a-half years. The Jewish nation **being** back in their own land with the temple **again in being** will, according to a covenant which they will make, receive permission to continue their national worship in keeping with the traditions of their fathers. This religious liberty will **be granted** to them for seven years by the world ruler of that day, **but**, having **supreme** power he will, **at** the end of three-and-a-half years, destroy every form of religion, **and** shall **cause to be set up** in the holy place of the temple **an** image of himself before which **men and** women the world over shall **be** commanded to bow down and worship. This will **be** the signal for the elect to flee **because** the days which follow shall **be** days of fierce tribulation for those who **refuse** to worship the **beast**, and **against** them shall **be** directed the unleashed fury of the **man** of **sin**. It will **be** a dark day indeed for those who profess Christ, **and** many, not accounting their lives dear unto themselves, will choose death rather than **be** found unfaithful.

The word of God has **been written** for **men in** all dispensations, and Matthew 24. contains God's **message** for the **persecuted** of that day. The oft occurrence of the pronouns " ye " **and** " you " throughout the chapter shows that the **message** is specially directed unto His own of those times. How comforting to the persecuted followers to read the Word of God, to **see** the fulfilment of the Lord's words **in** the things that are happening around them, **and** so to have their hope sustained **in** the expectation of the early return of their Deliverer! Truly these shall **experience** " the comfort of the Scriptures. "

Many **times** shall their faith **be** tested **because** of **men** who shall arise claiming to **be** the Christ **and** seeking to **substantiate** their claims **by** showing their power to perform **signs** and wonders. **But** the Lord gives warning that **His** own **be** not led astray **because** **His** coming shall not **be** shrouded **in** secrecy. Every **man** alive on the earth on that day shall **witness** the wondrous sight. Immediately previous to **His** coming **certain** phenomenal sights shall **be** seen in the heavens **and** then the **sun**, moon and stars **ceasing** to give light the scene of **dense** darkness shall suddenly **be** illuminated with the blaze of glory which shall radiate from the person of the Son of **Man** as **He descends** from heaven. Every eye shall **see Him** **and** they which pierced Him. The brilliance of the manifestation of **His** coming shall bring to nought the lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2. 8).

Then shall **His** own experience their deliverance by the angels whom **He** shall **send** forth. These shall enter into **His** kingdom **and** others who, although not **His** **ardent** followers, **but** **because** they showed small **acts** of kindness unto the **persecuted** **saints** during the tribulation, shall follow them. The rest of mankind shall go away into eternal punishment.

The earth **being** thus purged **and** **Satan** **and** the **Beast** **being** taken out of the **way** the Lord shall commence **His** glorious **reign**, displaying unto **man** after his long, **sad** record of failure, **sin** **and** wickedness what a wonderful place this world **can be made** for **men** to live **in** !
James Bowman.

From Ilford. —A careful study of Matthew 24. seemed to show, **in** reply to the question put by the disciples, that Jesus, when speaking of " **the** end of the age," used the words " that " and " those " whereas the words " this " and " these " are used, when the things associated with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple are contemplated (cp. the question, " When shall these things be, " verse 3 with verse 8). Also, it was noted that in this connection in verse 33 we have the phrase " these things, " but in verse 36 the emphatic conjunction *' But, " with the phrase " that day, " seeming to show that Jesus was here speaking of the time of His coming.

Difficulty was found **in** arriving at the true meaning of verse 34, but applying the above use of words called attention to, would seem to indicate conclusively that a literal generation is meant (as we have it in Psalm 95. 10), which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem, and thus if this interpretation is correct Christ's prophecy was exactly fulfilled: " My words shall not pass away. " [What is meant here by—" a literal generation is meant which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem " ? How can it be said from Matthew 24. that a generation culminated (presumably ended) with the destruction of Jerusalem ? Indeed, where is the destruction of Jerusalem referred to in this chapter at all ? We have the destruction of the temple referred to in verses 1 and 2 by the Lord. Has the gospel of the kingdom been preached in the whole world ? Has the abomination that maketh desolate, as spoken of by Daniel, been set up ? Has the sun been darkened, and the moon not given her light, and the stars fallen from heaven ? and has the Son of Man come ? Many other questions might be asked. Note " this generation " stands related to " these things. " Which things ? They must be the things alluded to previously by the Lord, must they not ? " Christ's prophecy, " we are told, " was exactly fulfilled. " About what ? I think our friends should carefully read the chapter and note what has been fulfilled. Note please that what is referred to in Luke 21. 20-24 is not what is recorded in Matthew 24. 15-28. The Luke prophecy has been fulfilled, but Matthew's is still future. J. M.]

It was, therefore, suggested that verses 4 to 28 and verses 32 to 35 are connected with the Lord's answer to the disciples with reference to the " these things " and are associated with the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. [Do our friends seriously mean what they say ?—J. M.] But verses 29—31 and 36—51 are connected with the coming or presence of the Son of Man, which is still awaiting fulfilment. It was, however, felt that unless the coming of the Son of Man and " end of the age " coincide, little or no reference is made to the latter in the discourse given by the Lord. Assuming, therefore, this to be so, certain facts can be listed as associated with His coming as Son of Man.

(i) All the earth shall see the Son of Man coming (verse 30) from the east unto the west (verse 27).

(ii) Characteristics similar to the days of Noah will mark the condition of men prior to this coming (verses 37—38).

(iii) Men and women will be deceived and blinded right up to the actual appearance or presence of the Son of Man (verse 39).

Chapter 25., in the parables recorded in verses 1—30, suggests that all service should be viewed in the light of His coming. We [We here, we take it, does not literally apply to us, for the virgins of Matthew 25. do not represent any who are members of Christ, but is used simply in a sense as applicable to any who at any time would serve Christ in purity. —J. M.] are not only to be virgins, that is in purity of life with the Holy Spirit flowing through us, but responsible stewards of whatsoever is entrusted to us.

In verses 31—46 a further parable is brought before us, which illustrates the Lord's coming in holy and righteous judgment to judge the nations. It would seem, however, that election rather than faith is here especially emphasised (cp. verses 45 and 46). [But the work of faith is not absent, as seen **in** verse 40. —J. M.]

From **Atherton**. —The sequence of events as recorded in Matthew 24. 3-14, appears to indicate different stages and the problems that will face the whole world (and the people of Israel in a much more acute sense) during the period commencing with the coming of the Lord into the air for His saints [May some of these things not be fulfilled, in part at least, even prior to that coming?—J. M.] until the first [Why the first?] half of the last week of Daniel's prophecy has run its course (Daniel 9. 27). The temple worship will be in operation again, and the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, and the testimony of the two witnesses will take place during the same period of 1, 260 days (Revelation 11. 1-3). False Christs, wars and rumours of wars, famines, and earthquakes, fearful persecution and death, many caused to stumble, and the love of others waxing cold, will be characteristics of these coming days.

From verse 15 of Matthew 24. we observe that the covenant between the antichrist and the Jews has been broken, the temple worship and sacrifices have ceased, and in their place an image of the beast is set up, which speaks and gives commands. This is truly an object of disgust, a detestable thing, the worst form of idolatry the world has ever seen or known. Failure to bow down and worship this image will mean immediate death, and so the Lord very graciously instructs and forewarns His people of that day, as to their actions under these circumstances. Revelation 12. 13-14 indicates this same period of the last three-and-a-half years, when the woman, Israel, persecuted by the devil's man, flees into the wilderness, to be nourished and protected by God, for a time, and times and half a time. Israel here is not the whole race, many of which will receive the antichrist, but the holy people, the people that know their God, shall be strong and do exploits, and guided by God shall find safety in the lands of Edom, Moab, and Ammon (Daniel 11. 41). The shortening of the days (Matthew 24. 22) of the last three-and-a-half years, is [possibly] seen in the difference between the 1, 290 days of Daniel 12. 11, and the 1, 260 days of Revelation 12. 6; this curtailment of the time will be absolutely necessary for the salvation of the godly Jews, so that the adjustment necessary to rectify their calendar by adding thirty days will not take place because of the hand of God intervening.. [This may be a solution of the shortening of the days mentioned in Matthew 15. 22, but whether this is what is meant may be difficult to say dogmatically. —J. M.],

The end of this age is signified by the darkening of the heavenly orbs, and disturbances in the firmament, and the coming of the Redeemer to Israel, will then be very nigh, " even at the doors. " These signs in the heavens seem to be further outlined in the opening of the sixth seal of Revelation 6. 14, when the heaven was removed as a scroll, and every mountain and island moved out of their places, striking absolute terror to the hearts of the kings of the earth, but providing untold comfort and relief to the elect. The question was raised as to who are the elect of Matthew 24. 31, and where will they be taken? It was considered that the elect refer to Gentiles as well as Jews, but that the 144, 000 of Revelation 7. are representative of those that shall be gathered from the four winds. [The 144, 000 of Rev. 7. are of the 12 tribes of Israel and the 144, 000 seen in Revelation 14. are singing in heaven, before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and this is prior to the coming of the Son of Man; but those who are gathered from the four winds (Matthew 24. 31) are the elect, and this gathering takes place at the time of the coming of the Son of Man. The gathering is from all parts of the earth, and I would judge the gathering is to the Lord. Where will the Lord be but at Jerusalem? I judge it will be to that centre they will be gathered. This, I judge, is what is alluded to in Matthew 8. 11: " Many shall come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. "—J. M.]. It was suggested that they would be taken unto Jerusalem, but there was no scriptural evidence to prove this.

Matthew 25. seems to be a continuation of chapters 23. and 24., having its fulfilment at this period, the word " then " (verse 1) supporting this. In the parable of the ten virgins, the five wise would suggest that some will be found in a waiting and watchful attitude, a remnant ready for His appearing to acclaim Him as their King, possibly the five wise virgins would tell us of the 144, 000 of Revelation 7. who did not see death. In contrast it was said that the 144, 000 of Revelation 14. would refer to those who had forfeited their lives, through refusing to bow to the beast, and to the number of His Name; it was further suggested that those of Revelation 14. have to do with the Church of this dispensation, because they sing a " new song before the Throne " (see Revelation 5. 9); also they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. In contrast, we have the five foolish, the unwatchful, unfaithful, and unprepared; possibly they would speak of those who had associated themselves with the Beast, bearing his mark. [The above is all a matter of conjecture as to the wise virgins and others. Unless scriptural proof is forthcoming it is unsafe to allow opinions free play. I judge the Church is much more numerous than 144, 000. Moreover, I do not see the Church in Revelation 5. 9. —J. M.]«

From the parable of the talents we can derive some teaching beneficial to us to-day, but yet again its primary application is future, and takes us to that day when His servants shall proclaim the gospel of the kingdom; for, as in all dispensations, they shall be talented for this work.

The judgment of the nations reveals to us that there will be mercy shewn by the Lord to those who have exercised a measure of sympathy and care for God's people during the tribulation; even a cup of cold water shall have its reward. On the face of it, there seems to be a rich reward for a small service; but looking more deeply into it, we readily see that those who succour the faithful in that day will do so in peril of their lives, for sudden death will be the lot of those who are found giving such assistance. *E. Birchall, G. Sankey,*

From **Glasgow.** —In Matthew 24. 1, 2 we have Christ foretelling the destruction of the temple, an incident that has a past fulfilment, because of Israel's rejection of Christ and also their treatment of the prophets (see chapter 23. 37-39).

Verses 3-14 deal with the time preceding the end of the times of the Gentiles. We see in this 24th chapter that the Lord's discourse is divided into three parts—

1. The general condition of the disciples and of the world during the time of the testimony prior to " the end " spoken of in verse 14.

2. The period marked out by the fact that the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place (see verse 15).

3. The Lord's coming and the gathering together of the elect (verses 29-31).

It has also been suggested that from verses 15 to 28 the Lord is dealing with the commencement of the second half of Daniel's 70th week. In verses 29 to 31 He gives the signs preceding His coming as the Son of Man; and from verse 32 of chapter 24. to verse 46 of chapter 25. is self explanatory, as we will see further on.

The abomination of desolation is referred to in Daniel 12., and brings us definitely to the last days. Then Michael stands up as the great prince which standeth for the children of Daniel's people, and there shall be a time of trouble and tribulation. God's people are to pray that their flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath. Verses 21-22 tell us of the tribulations they will have to pass through, and except those days be shortened, no flesh would have been saved. We can see from scripture that the coming of the Son of Man will be universally seen; all shall see Him coming.

It seems to us that the fig tree is almost beginning to bud and bring forth its fruit.

In dealing with the separations that are going to take place (verses 37-42), there was a difference of opinion as to where the one who is taken away goes to. Some suggested that the one who was taken was taken in judgment, others suggested they were taken from judgment. [After all has been said there may still be two opinions, but I venture to express the view, which I have previously done when this subject was under consideration, that the one who is taken, of Matthew 24. 40, 41, is one of the elect of verse 31, who are gathered by the angels from all lands at the time of the descent of the Son of Man from heaven. These who are gathered then, and thus, are those who are referred to in Matthew 25. 41 by King-Messiah, as "these My brethren," the faithful, but sorely persecuted, people of God during the time of the great tribulation, who are quite evidently a different class from those who are called, "Ye blessed of My Father" (Matthew 25. 34), who are men of the nations who showed kindness to those whom the Lord calls "My brethren." If it is not the elect that are taken in Matthew 24. 40, 41, why the exhortation, "Watch, therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh"? Further, was it not Noah with the others with him who were taken from amongst the wicked ere the judgment fell? Noah and the rest were like the elect who will be gathered out at the Lord's coming to earth. This in brief is the view I take, though I know others have had an opposite mind.] J. M.]

"Verily I say unto you. This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished." Here He was referring to those to whom He was speaking, men of like character. Verse 38 gives us a description of the conditions prevailing on the earth at that time prior to His coming. *Henry McCubbin.*

Questions and Answers.

Questions from Ilford. —

1. What is the force of the word "immediately" in chapter 25. verse 29?

Answer. —I judge it should be Matthew 24. 29, not chapter 25., that is meant. The word here is the adverb *Eutheos*, which is translated variously, "immediately," "straightway," "forthwith." It shows how instantaneous will be the signs of the coming of the Son of Man in heaven when once the time allowed to the beast (forty-two months, Revelation 13. 5) for the "breaking in pieces the power of the holy people" (Daniel 12. 7) has run its course. No time will be lost to send deliverance to God's distressed people. —J. M.

2. How are we to understand verses 40-42? Would 1 Thessalonians 5. 1-7 refer to the same coming?

Answer. —See note in paper from Glasgow. 1 Thessalonians 5. 1-7 refers to the coming of the Son of Man to which Matthew 24. also refers.] J. M.

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BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Facts relative to the Coming of the Son of Man and the End of the age.	99
The Betrayal and Crucifixion and the Accusation in the Superscription on the Cross.. . . .	101
"The Eternal Fire".	109
Questions and A n s w e r s	110

FACTS RELATIVE TO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN AND THE **END OF THE AGE** (Matthew 24. 25).

From Brantford, Ont. —It is well to look back to Matthew 23. **37-39** to get a better understanding of what the Lord is about to reveal in chapter 24. **We** find Him lamenting over Jerusalem for their rejection of Himself, which **was** followed, by God's rejection of them as His people until the time when they would say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the LORD."

The disciples are prompted to ask Him two questions: "When shall these things be?" and "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?" When they spoke of "Thy coming," they had reference to His coming to the earth to restore the kingdom to Israel, and not to the coming which He promised in John 14. These are two phases of the coming of the Lord; each has a different purpose. John 14. and other passages speak of **His** coming to take to Himself the saints of this dispensation, the Church, which is His Body. That aspect of His coming is outside the scope of this study, but it will precede the coming of the Son of Man by at least seven years, as we shall see later.

Before answering them directly the Lord warns against being led astray. Many false signs will be presented, and while these have their place and may be used as fingerposts, **He** warns that "the end is not yet." He was speaking to the disciples then **as** representatives of those who would be used of God to **preach** the gospel of the kingdom in the future. So **we** suggest that the signs of His coming are given, not so much to the twelve disciples on the Mount of Olives, **as** to those who will be alive on the earth at the time when God begins to deal with His people Israel. Therefore we read: "Let him that readeth understand."

Daniel foretold seventy weeks for Israel **as a nation** and for the holy city. Sixty-nine of those weeks were fulfilled with the cutting off of the Messiah, so that Israel in Jerusalem will continue in that which **was** theirs under the Old Covenant for "one **week**" of seven years. During this time, worship will be connected with a material house or temple, so that from this fact, if from nothing **else**, we may be sure that **the functions of the spiritual House of God, as we know them** to-day, will have ceased. **We** learn from 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18 **that** the saints of this dispensation will **be** caught up to **meet** the Lord in the air. Chapter **5**, reveals that the day of the Lord (the coming of the **Son of Man** in judgment) will not overtake the sons of light and sons of the day. **We** conclude therefore that

the rapture of the Church is the first event in God's future plans. It will mark **the end of this dispensation** which comes between the sixty-ninth and seventieth **weeks** foretold by Daniel.

The man of sin, also known by other names, such as the beast, antichrist, and the son of perdition, will become manifest when the Church has been taken away. **He** will be exalted exceedingly by the aid of his agent the false prophet. At the beginning of the seventieth week we find him making a seven-year covenant with Israel. The beast repudiates this covenant at the end of three and a half years. **He** requires that he **be worshipped as God**. Reference is made to this time in Matthew 24. 15. Those who are faithful to God and refuse to comply with the command of the beast will suffer greatly during the latter half of the week. This is the great tribulation. For three days and a half the dead bodies of God's two servants will lie unburied in the streets of Jerusalem and it will appear that the beast has triumphed.

But, immediately after the tribulation of those days, the **sun** shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the **sign of the Son of Man in heaven**: and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn and they shall **see** the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Paul tells us that for those who know not God then, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus, this will be their time of judgment (2 Thessalonians 1. 7-9). But to the saints of this dispensation he writes: "When Christ, who **is** our Life, shall **be** manifested, then shall ye also with **Him** be manifested in glory" (Colossians 3. 4).

The beast and his mouthpiece, the false prophet, are taken alive shortly after the coming of the Son of Man, and are cast alive into the lake of fire, to be tormented day and night for ever. Satan **is** bound and cast into the abyss, there to **be** held captive for a thousand years.

During the Millennium, the faithful of the seventieth week who worshipped not the beast nor his **image**, who received not his mark upon their forehead **and** hand, together with the faithful saints of all dispensations, will live and reign with Him. The kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of **His** Christ, and **He** shall reign for ever and ever.

At the close of the thousand years Satan **is** loosed from the abyss, **and** is permitted to deceive the nations for a short time before **being** taken **again** and cast into the lake of fire to join the beast and the false prophet **in** eternal torment. Then the wicked dead are raised for judgment at the great white throne. This is the end of the world followed by the revelation of the **new** heaven and the **new** earth.

S. K. Seath,

From Vancouver, B. C.—The Lord **Jesus** spoke the words of Matthew 24. to a very small audience **as He sat** on the Mount of Olives. Mark states that four heard Him (Peter, James, John **and** Andrew), and that **He** spoke **in answer** to their questions asked privately. Matthew also reveals it **was a private talk**.

The Lord Jesus began to answer their questions with a warning that they **be** not led astray, the danger of which **is seen in** the rise of many false Christs. With **increasing** tribulation also there **is** greater danger of being led astray.

The Lord tells in a general way what things to look for **as His** coming draws near. The **Spirit in** the book of Revelation deals with them more specifically. False Christs and false prophets; tribulation for **His** disciples, and death for **many**; trouble among the disciples; iniquity greatly increased and the love of the **many waxing cold**; terrors and great signs from heaven immediately precede His coming. The preaching of "this gospel of the kingdom" unto all the nations (Matthew 24. 14) must **be** done prior to **His** appearing. Those glad tidings that *** came** from the lips of our blessed Master must be heard **in** all lands !

Warning is given regarding the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place (Matthew 24. 15; 2 Thessalonians 2. 4). Then they must without a moment to lose escape to the mountains, for it is the beginning of the greatest tribulation that the world has seen or will see. But God in His grace will shorten the days; otherwise no flesh had been saved (Matthew 24. 22), which seems to speak of the flesh or present life. [The Lord's words regarding no flesh being saved seems to me to indicate that had the antichrist had sufficient time for his evil deeds, he would have exterminated every vestige of a faithful remnant, and no righteous men would have been left alive on earth. Then if only wicked men were left, these would have to be removed in judgment by the Lord and where would the righteous be to repeople and replenish the earth? Satan had surely gained his end and aim, the frustration of divine purpose in the extermination of the race of mankind. But for the elect's sake the days shall be shortened. The reign of the beast will be brief—forty and two months, but in that short time his evil genius will have wrought such havoc as never before had been experienced in any previous persecution.—J. M.].

The enduring of verse 13 does not imply salvation by works. Works at their best can only be a " memorial " as in the case of Cornelius. What alone brings life is the death and resurrection of Christ. Jeremiah 30. 7: " It is the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it, " has a bearing on verse 13 of Matthew 24.

The tribulation stops; " immediately after " (Matthew 24. 29), God works in another way; the powers of the heavens are shaken, the sun is darkened, the moon gives no light, and stars fall from heaven. Then the grand and glorious appearing of the Son of Man takes place. It is evident that there are also many things normal at the Lord's coming. Eating, drinking, marrying, building and planting, etc., are going on as usual, which stresses the words of the Lord Jesus: " In an hour when ye think not the Son of Man cometh " (Matthew 24. 36-44). Hence the exhortation for all to watch. Signs pointing to the beginning of the fulfilment of Matthew 24. would cause us to rejoice at the soon coming advent of our Lord for His Church, with His coming to earth soon to follow. *W. McLeman.*

THE BETRAYAL AND CRUCIFIXION AND THE ACCUSATION IN THE SUPERScription ON THE CROSS.

From Cowdenbeath.—The betrayal of the Lord by Judas must rank as one of the most perfidious acts that has ever been perpetrated. Judas was not simply as an actor in a play performing the part assigned to him, but the full responsibility of the foul deed must rest upon the guilty son of Iscariot. He went to his suicidal death in the full knowledge that he had committed a dastardly crime. The Lord had said, " The Son of Man goeth, even as it is written of **Him**: but woe unto the man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed ! " Judas chose to do as he did, and in so doing he unconsciously fulfilled the scriptures concerning himself. He was not a true disciple, for whilst each of the eleven others could address their Lord on that very solemn occasion, saying, " Is it I, Lord ? " the guilty heart of Judas could but allow his lips to say, " Is it I, Rabbi ? "

He is not mentioned in connection with any other matter save the betrayal, and posterity shall ever associate his name with the traitorous deed. Yet, worse by far, Judas, we fear, is eternally lost. The Lord said, " Woe unto him, " and again in John, 17. He calls him the son of perdition, and speaks of him **as** being lost; and further in Acts 1. the significant words are recorded of Judas that he went " to his own place. "

Our Lord **is** spoken of in Revelation 13. as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The time, place and manner of **His** death had all been arranged according to eternal, divine counsel. Men in their hatred towards the well beloved Son whom God sent fulfilled the divine purpose, yet nevertheless they stand guilty of the awful crime of crucifying the Son of God.

When the chief priests and elders sat in council at Jerusalem, their design was to kill Him, and they would have arranged the time of His death as being after the feast. At the very same moment the Lord was sitting on the Mount of Olives with His disciples and, speaking with the complete knowledge of all things, He told them that His death would coincide with the passover. God's arranged time was recognised.

Attempts had been made during His public ministry to point out faults in His actions and to take hold of His speech, but His challenge remained unanswered, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" More concentrated efforts had been made during the days which followed His triumphant entry into the city, when He was daily in the temple, but the craft and cunning of all His enemies proved unavailing to cause Him to falter or sin. At last they had Him before their council, but even with the aid of false witnesses He still defied their efforts to condemn Him. Finally, their hitherto silent Prisoner, when placed on adjuration, admitted His claims to Deity. On this account He was condemned as worthy to die. Yet before Pilate they initially dropped this charge and presented Him as an impostor who claimed to be the King of the Jews. The governor reluctantly passed sentence, and the people accepted the full responsibility of the crime, little realising the terrible consequences of such a decision.

The inscription over His head as written by Pilate in three languages, and which he refused to alter, instead of being an accusation (because in reality there was none) was rather a declaration not only to Jews, but to all the world, that this nation had crucified its King. Thus He died with His rightful title over His head.

The strange happenings recorded by Matthew as taking place when He died, must surely have had a voice for men the world over that an event of outstanding importance had taken place, an event of no less consequence than that the Son of God had died. The Creator crucified by His creatures, the greatest dime of all time, and yet God, who had every reason to descend in fierce overwhelming judgment upon men, has turned it into the greatest blessing, for whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. *James Bowman.*

From Hamilton, Ont. —Not only is the cross the sinner's hope, but it is the culmination of the hopes of men in all dispensations. Viewing the Gospel by Matthew dispensationally, if we were asked which event marked more than any other, a change of dispensation, it would be the Cross of Calvary; for it is the dividing line between the day of the law and the day of grace. The **law came** by Moses, but grace **and** truth came by Jesus Christ, and that by **way** of the cross. [Grace and truth **came** (*Ginomai*, to become): *' grace **and** truth are presented under the aspect of their complete embodiment. "The law" was given, "but grace **and** truth" became. "God gave' the law to Moses to carry it to His people, but grace and truth were **seen** embodied in a Divine-human Person, in the Word who had become flesh, and who tabernacled amongst **men**, full of grace and truth. —J. M.],

The crucifixion has a definite place in prophecy in connection with dispensational truth. For example, we read in Daniel 9. 26, "And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed One be cut off." The cross marked the end of the sixty-ninth' week, following which comes the last, or seventieth week, the present dispensation having no place in the prophecy of seventy weeks. It is sometimes said in connexion with the day of grace that the prophetic clock has stopped.

Just prior to the great tragedy of Calvary, another drama was unfolding in the Garden of Gethsemane. Who would have thought that one of those who accompanied with Him throughout His earthly ministry could stoop so low as to betray His Master for a paltry thirty pieces of silver, "only the price of a slave" ? Yet, true to the prophetic word in Psalm 2. 2, Judas had taken counsel with the rulers of that day to come and take Him by force; the word in Psalm 41. 9 also being fulfilled at this time: "Mine own familiar friend... lifted up his heel

against Me. " Much has been said regarding the position of Judas, and whether he had to be the one to fulfil the scripture and betray the Lord, but whatever the reason, it is sad to think that he has gone to his own place. We are told that Judas repented of what he had done, but we believe his repentance had come too late; like Pilate later on, who after he had delivered Jesus up, washed his hands.

The Messiah had come, but instead of receiving Him as such, we read the words in Matthew 27. 87: " This is Jesus, the King of the Jews, " written not on His throne, but on His cross, and written in ridicule [?]. We noted that in the four Gospels the inscription is different, and that perhaps John's is the most nearly correct, " Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, " because John we know was standing at the cross. [A comparison of the four Gospels would suggest that the full title over the Lord's cross was: " This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. " None of the Gospel writers quotes the whole inscription in full, but that does not infer that any Gospel is " incorrect. "—Eds.].

Another way we viewed the crucifixion and events surrounding it was in connection with the new covenant. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that a covenant is only in force where there hath been death (Hebrews 9. 17); while the first covenant was dedicated with the blood of goats and calves, the death of the spotless Lamb of God ratified the new covenant, making it possible for us to enter in and enjoy all the eternal blessings connected therewith. *N. McKay.*

EXTRACTS.

From Melbourne, Australia. —It was remarked that the woman in Matthew 26. 7 must have had a very deep conception of what was to take place, which was displayed by her action in pouring expensive ointment over the head of the Lord Jesus (it was estimated that this ointment was worth £10 10s. 0d. according to present day Values), also by the fact that not even the disciples knew the reason within her heart, as illustrated by showing their indignation. What a contrast there is between this woman of whom the Lord says in verse 13. " Where-soever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her " and Judas of whom we read in verses 14-15 who betrayed the Lord of Life and Glory for 30 pieces of silver! **He** will ever be remembered by his cowardly act of betrayal (John 20.) How it must have grieved the Lord's heart to be betrayed by one whom He had treated so kindly and by one who was prophetically spoken of as " My familiar friend " (Psalm 55. 12, 13) !

The Lord **knew** what was in his heart, as indicated in John 13. 27, " That thou doest, do it quickly. " From John 13. 30 we learn that Judas went out before the institution of the feast of remembrance. By this time Satan had entered into him.

What a grievous experience too it must have been to the Lord when Peter, whom He loved so dearly, should deny **Him** three times, and when, as we afterwards read, the other disciples forsook **Him** and fled. We cannot fully comprehend the agony that had now overtaken Him as He was about to be crucified, when **He** had to endure not only the pain of the nails driven through His hands and feet, and mocking and scoffing of the crowds, but had to endure also the hiding of God's face from Him. All was turned against Him. How heavily He felt God's wrath upon Him when He cried out, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " On comparing the four different accounts of the inscriptions it is evident that there is nothing in the way of contradiction in the various accounts. It appears that the full superscription would be " This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. "

T. L. Fullerton.

[It is with great pleasure that we include this contribution from Australia. On one or two occasions we had the pleasure of receiving contributions from beloved brother Cowley, now with the Lord. He was a man learned in the Scriptures and it is our fervent hope that our friends will continue their studies, to be faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2. 2), and diligent to be approved unto God, workmen that know how to handle aright the word of truth (2 Timothy 2. 15). —A. T. D. J.]

From Edinburgh. —The breaking of the box of ointment (Matthew 26. 6-13) is a very precious thing, bringing a gleam to lighten the darkness that was on every hand. Mary's faith was strengthened as she sat at His feet, and she anointed Him against His burial. She did not go with the other women to the tomb; she had already done her part. Mark and John repeat this incident, stressing the words "against My burying." Psalm 133. refers to the anointing oil running down to the hem of the garment; consecrated from head to foot. How true was the prophecy that wherever the gospel is preached this story will be told! Sitting at the feet of Jesus had taught Mary many things.

After Judas had departed on his errand the loaf and the cup were partaken of. The old dispensation passing away, the new was being instituted. Can we assume that the washing of the feet took place between the feasts, or prior to the Passover? [John is the only one of the Gospel writers who tells us of the washing of the feet of the disciples. Mark and Luke, (Mark 14. 13; Luke 22. 10) tell us of the man with the pitcher of water, from which pitcher no doubt the Lord poured the water into the basin (John 13. 5). John 13. 2-4 tells us that the washing of the feet of the disciples took place during the passover supper, but from verse 8, in the words, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," we would understand that the feet washing was in view of the correcting effect it would have on the minds and hearts of the disciples in the light of the institution of the Remembrance about to be instituted by the Lord, when Judas had gone out into the dark night on his still darker mission. —J. M. J. The institution of the Remembrance would apparently take place on Thursday evening (between the evenings) [Which evening, seeing that the Jewish day began with an evening and ended with another?—J. M. J.], but it is held by us on Lord's day, the first day of the week. The outward show of the old dispensation was maintained by the Jews for another three days, until He rose again on the first day of the week. [Do not the Jews maintain, in part at least, the things of the old dispensation right down to the present time?—J. M. J. The institution pointed forward to His sacrifice on Calvary, and to His glorious resurrection to be anointed Great Priest over God's House. As God's House we seek to obey His commands, and on the first day of the week we gather together to break bread. This is our highest calling, gathered as a Holy Priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, to give to God that which we have first received from Him. We are, gathered in unity of heart for worship. It was pointed out that firstly we are apart to offer to God, not to offer to man. Holy priesthood service is incompatible with royal priesthood service, and in ministering to the saints we cause confusion. [I should not have thought that there was the slightest incompatibility between the service of a holy priesthood and that of a royal priesthood. Indeed I should say that they are so compatible that the one without the other will result in an effete and lifeless people. I am disposed to the view, bearing in mind how closely allied entrance into the Holies is with the typical entrance of the high priest of a past day into the Holy of holies, that Peter in writing of a holy priesthood and a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2.) had before his mind the two parts of divine service on the day of atonement of old (Leviticus 16.), that which was before God in the sanctuary, and that which was before men in the court of the tabernacle. In connection with the first the high priest wore the holy linen garments, and in connection with the latter he wore his garments which were for glory and beauty. Note how he put off the linen garments

and put on his garments, and came forth, " as seen in Leviticus 16. 23, 24. By all means let us have things done decently and in order, but I hope our friends are not here even making a suggestion, and I use the word " suggestion " advisedly, that there should be no ministry of the Word of God at that meeting where we are privileged to engage in holy priesthood service. If so, I must disagree most definitely, as there are few things as to divine service collectively taught more plainly than Spirit-given ministry of the word of God at the meeting for the breaking of the bread. —J. M. J. Irrespective of time, an orderly entrance to holy priesthood service and an orderly exit from this must be maintained. Only then are we free to minister to one another, and be certain that God is not robbed of His most precious portion, the thanksgiving of His people in worship. Unanimously it was agreed that the ministering of the word in John's gospel has no place in our Remembrance Feast to-day. [Really, what do our friends mean by such a statement—the ministering of the word in John's Gospel has no place in our Remembrance Feast to-day " ? I should be disposed in the light of what our friends write to put capitals here and write it " OUR Remembrance, " for sure am I, that the day that God's people condemn the Lord for ministering the word, after the institution of the Remembrance, and Paul in Acts 20. 7-12 for ministering the word, when they were together for the breaking of the bread, by refusing to allow the ministry of the word at such a meeting, then that Remembrance will not be the Lord's Remembrance but OUR Remembrance, something that our wills control and not God's word. If we cannot find in what the Lord did, and what the apostles did, a pattern for our service and conduct, then we are finding things not in the Bible, but in our own heads, with what results who of us can measure ? I am writing strongly, and I hope our friends will take what I say in the spirit in which I make these observations, as I judge such an unanimous agreement calls for definite correction, it being exactly opposite to the united mind of the elderhood of the Fellowship, which is, that ministry of the word of God may obtain on Lord's day morning in every assembly in the Fellowship, if the Lord gives such ministry. One might have deleted such uncalled for and unnecessary remarks by our friends, but I have taken the other course of appending these notes for their consideration. - . I. M. J.]

The Lord promises to eat and drink anew in His Father's kingdom; that day is rapidly drawing nearer. Regarding the bread and wine, it was pointed out that in the Passover what remained had to be destroyed, and so we should also break the loaf, pour out all the cup, and if any remain after all have partaken, this should be destroyed. [Our friends are on the high road to make the bread and wine a sacrifice, which they are not and never were intended to be. Note the words of Luke 22. 7—" And the day of unleavened bread came, on which the passover must be *sacrificed*. " This form of deduction, that because sacrifices were treated in a certain way calls for the remnants of the bread and wine to be treated similarly is most mischievous. —J. M. J. God should have the best of all, and His things should not become common. [I do not understand whether the sentence—" God should have the best of all, and His things should not become common " has to do with the previous sentence or the succeeding one. Suppose we conclude that it has to do with the destruction of the remnants of the loaf and the cup, what can be meant by " the best of all ? " What is " the best " and what is " nil " ? Does this mean that what is destroyed is the best, as it is the part that is, shall we say, sacrificed to God by being destroyed, and the portion that the saints have eaten is not so good as the destroyed remnant?—J. M. J. The precious body was broken and the blood poured out on Calvary and none was left. [Have our friends really considered the emptying of a body of blood ? They say " none was left. " They must know that the Lord had poured out His soul unto death (Isaiah 53. 12) while as yet the soldier had not pierced His side, when there came forth blood and water (John 19. 30, 34). In view of how the Lord died, was it a physical possibility that all the Lord's blood was poured out of His body ? Is not shedding blood equivalent to death ? See Genesis 9. 6 The Lord poured out His soul or life—all of it truly, but some care is needed in this literal treatment of the Lord's blood. —J. M. J. Note that the phrase is " A spirit hath not flesh and bones (not blood), as ye behold Me having. " *T. Hope.*

From Atherton.—In Matthew 26, we have two principal characters brought before us, namely Judas and Mary of Bethany. In these two we see a remarkable contrast, for whilst Mary reveals a heart of love and devotion to her Lord and Master, we see that Judas betrays Him into the hands of lawless men. Mary evidently had an insight into future events, and foresaw the Lord's death, for the Lord states regarding the anointing of His body, "She did it to prepare Me for burial."

A comparison of the four Gospels would prove that Judas, while taking part in the Passover, did not take part in the institution of the Remembrance Feast; for having received the sop, he went out (John 13. 30). In this we have indicated a fundamental principle, that no person unsaved, or even unbaptised, should participate in the Remembrance (Acts 2. 41, 42).

Some discussion arose as to the construction of the cross. It was said that all prophetic utterances as to their fulfilment refer to a tree, *i. e.*, in its crude state: "Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree"; and again, "for it is written. Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3. 13). Along with this suggestion it was thought that the arms of the Lord Jesus were nailed above His head; but in contrast, it was said, that the word itself defined what was its construction*, namely, a cross. This would suggest that the arms of the Lord Jesus were extended, and this seems to be borne out by the fact that the superscription was placed above the head (Matthew 27. 37). [The Greek word for cross is *Stauros* which means "a pointed stake." It is quite impossible now to be sure how the cross was constructed, whether it was a stake minus a cross piece, or whether it was a stake with a cross piece on which the Lord's hands were nailed. The manner of construction does not matter, but the manner of His death does. — J. M.]

It was suggested that the Lord Jesus was offered drink on three occasions while on the cross. [They gave Me all gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Psalm 69. 21). I have thought that they offered Him wine mingled with gall prior to His crucifixion (Matthew 27. 34), and "the" vinegar, of which Psalm 69. speaks, whilst on the cross (John 19. 28-30). Luke frequently does not follow the sequence of events and this may be true of Luke 23. 36. — J. M.]

Luke 23. 43 was quoted, it being said, that here we have a fulfilment of Isaiah 53. 10: "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed." Here we have the first fruit borne to the great work of the Lord Jesus at Golgotha.

Another query was as to the meaning of the rent veil in Matthew 27. 51. It was said, firstly, that here we have an indication of the presence of God being removed from the temple. God no longer dwelt in temples made with hands. Secondly, that the high priest could enter into the holy place without fear, for the glory had departed. [The rending of the veil was one of the miraculous events that took place when the Lord died. It was no doubt an evidence of the Divine displeasure on a house that had once been God's house, but was now without occupant. It was, as the Lord said to the Jews, "Your house."—J. M.]

James Lee, John K. Southern.

From Glasgow. —The knowledge which the Lord Jesus Christ had is surely presented to us in the matters relating to His betrayal. His own words were: "Two days the passover cometh, and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified" (Matthew 26. 2). Nothing was hid from His view; He knew that terror was on every side while they took counsel and devised to take away his life (Psalm 31. 13). The counsel of men was open to Him, for His words synchronised with their assembling to seek a way to kill Him. The adversary was not slow to give

the chief priests and scribes their pawn to fulfil their desire. Judas, whose heart was filled with covetousness, offered his services for gain. The Lord was delivered as it was written of Him. His own familiar friend, one with whom He took sweet counsel, who went up to the house of God with Him, this same one gave the enemies of the Lord their opening, and with the kiss of betrayal for ever sealed his own doom, not that of the blessed Master.

What an awakening it was for Judas as he realised his awful deed! The silver of deceit he cast into the sanctuary, confessing his action, and went out and hanged himself. Thus the curtain is drawn across one of the greatest tragedies of human experience: a man who ate, drank and spake with the Lord, one whose lot was cast with the men who ministered to the Master, and yet went to his own place of condemnation.

The dignity of the Lord in the hours of crucifixion was different. Behold Him as He is left alone, when friend and lover were far removed leaving Him solitary! Isaiah says, "It was exacted, and He became answerable" (Isaiah 53. 7. Newberry marg.).

The leaders of Israel took no part actively in the crucifying of the Lord; this they left to the soldiers of Caesar and to Pilate the governor. The Glory of * Israel was slain in the high-places, their King was rejected by them and they knew it not. In their hardness of heart and religious stupor they failed to discern the Anointed of the Lord. Thus it was left to a Gentile ruler to designate the despised and rejected of Israel to be their King. This was as salt in an open wound, and they hastened to correct the inscription. But it was too late; whether Pilate knew Him as such or not, divine intervention wrote upon the cross their humiliation.

Robt. Thomson, T. McIlreavy.

From London, S. E. —Man's condition as a sinner has now reached its climax. Lust when it has conceived brings forth sin, and sin when **it** is finished bringeth forth death. The first man betrayed his trust and brought sin into the world, and sin had now become full grown and was ripe for judgment. Instead of judgment from heaven, grace and truth came. Instead of judgment on *merit* grace came, **and** judgment **fell** on *one man*,

In the working out of God's eternal purposes **a man again** betrayed **his** trust, **and** betrayed the very **One** who **had** come to **save** him and others. " From Luke 22. 3 we learn that Satan entered into **Judas**, **and** then earth and hell are **united**. As the Lord **said in** Luke 22. 53, " This is your hour, and the power of darkness. "

Time and again the Lord had said, " Mine hour is not yet come. " Now it had come, and it is their hour and hell's hour. What an awful use man made of his hour of power, even to crucifying the Son of God !

Peter's effort at defence called forth from Jesus the reference to twelve legions of angels, and His last act of physical healing by stretching forth His hand and touching the ear of Malchus.

I judge Peter witnessed the Lord's experiences before Caiaphas as the Lord turned and looked at him. He speaks in his epistle of being an eye witness of His majesty (the transfiguration), but he could easily have applied it to this scene. Having no power of their own to carry out the death sentence they held a council, and binding Him took Him to Pilate. Pilate sought by every means to secure His release, even by sending Him to Herod. But he must stand or fall on his own

decision. His own words condemn Him. He knew that for envy they had delivered Him (Matthew 27. 18). He falls back on the expedient of offering a choice, no doubt feeling sure what their choice would be—a murderer or Christ, this good Man. Surely they would choose Christ! But man made his fatal choice, the rulers persuaded the people, and they chose Barabbas. His name means " Son of the father. " His father was the devil. Man has ever chosen wrongly. Pilate's cry seems. one of despair, " What then shall I do unto Jesus which is called Christ ? " The onus is placed on them, though it did not exculpate Pilate. Their fatal reply was, " His blood be on us, and on our children. " They later go beyond all bounds and place themselves under Rome's jurisdiction by saying: " We have no king but Caesar. "

Then the soldiers took Jesus and led **Him** away to Golgotha or Calvary. There they crucified Him. Here it was that His soul was made an offering for sin. God made Him to be sin, Him who knew no sin.

The superscription which Pilate set up in its entirety was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek; Hebrew for the religious Jew, Latin for the secular folk and Greek for the Cultural.

There followed the railing of chief priests, the scribes and the passers by; also the darkness when atonement was made for sin, and the requirements due to God's throne and holy character were exacted from Him who took man's place, and became answerable for him. Thus the dispensation of man under law ends. The era of grace is ushered in with the resurrection from the tomb, and the exaltation to God's throne where He has sat down, His work done. *H. J. Owles.*

From Kilmarnock.—From John 11. 53, it would appear that after the raising of Lazarus, the chief priests and Pharisees were determined to put Jesus to death, and verse 57 says that they gave commandment that if any knew where He was, he should shew it, that they might take Him. Possibly Judas, in his covetousness, saw a way of gaining money, and went to the chief priests and said, " What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver Him unto you ? " Thus the bargain was made, and the opportunity was sought to betray the Lord. In all the Gospels we have an account of the last Passover supper, and how the Lord indicated who would betray Him. Although He washed all their feet, yet He had to say, " Ye are not all clean. " Alas ! the heart of Judas was not cleansed, and although he said, " Is it I, Rabbi ? " he knew well what he purposed doing. It would appear from John 18. 3 that Judas went straight to the chief priests and got a band of men, and, perhaps a few hours later, appeared in the Garden of Gethsemane, and with hypocritical callousness " kissed Him much " (Mark 14. 45 R. V. M.).

It would seem he was not opposed to the Lord's teaching, like the priests, but it was the love of money that was the curse, and when he saw later on that Jesus was condemned, he repented, saying, " I have sinned... I betrayed innocent (or righteous) blood " (Matthew 27. 4). Judas had acted as guide to them that took Jesus, and now the Lord was in the hands of the priests. As He said, " This is your hour and the power of darkness " (Luke 22. 53).

It is interesting to note the various Old Testament scriptures that were fulfilled in connection with the crucifixion. We append a few: Psalm 2. 1, 2 fulfilled (partly at least) Acts 4. 27; Isaiah 50. 6 fulfilled Matthew 26. 67; Psalm 69. 21 fulfilled Matthew 27. 48; Isaiah 53. 12 fulfilled Mark 15. 27; Isaiah 53. 9 fulfilled Mark 15. 43-45; Psalm 22. 16-18 fulfilled Luke 23. 34.

A. G. S.

"The Eternal Fire. "

Question **from** Vancouver. —Is the " eternal fire, " the same as the " lake of fire, " and were they banished to it immediately ? (Matthew 25. 41).

Answer. —I would not at the present state of my knowledge care to say either no or yes to the question as to whether " the eternal fire " is the " lake of fire. " Perhaps it will be better if I point out one or two things which must be taken into consideration in seeking to arrive at a judgment on such a matter. Exactly the same description—" into the fire the eternal, " of Matthew 25. 41, is used by the Lord in Matthew 18. 8, and there seems no reason to doubt that " the fire the eternal " of Matthew 18. 8 is the same as " the Gehenna of the fire, " of verse 9 of this chapter. If we compare Matthew 10. 28, where we read, " Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna, " with Matthew 5. 29, where we again read, " It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into Gehenna " (somewhat similar words are used in verse 30 also), it would seem to indicate that Gehenna is a place where both soul and body are cast and destroyed (note, destroyed but not annihilated). Gehenna is called "the unquenchable fire" in Mark 10. 43. In this portion of Mark 10. similar words are used to those of Matthew 5. 30, and here we have the Lord quoting from Isaiah 66. 24. He shows that in Gehenna " their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched " (Mark 10. 47, 48).

Now if we turn to Isaiah 66. 24, we read "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. "

Gehenna, the place of torment so frequently referred to by the Lord in Matthew and also in Mark, we are told, came to represent amongst the later Jews the place of future punishment, the conception of which was based upon the Valley of Hinnom, which was first the place of the idolatrous worship of Molech, and later became the place of destruction of the sewage and offal of Jerusalem. This horrid place of destruction where fires were continually burning was a fit emblem of the place of eternal destruction.

Hell (Greek, Hades; Hebrew, Sheol) is the place to which the souls of the dead in a past wnt, and to which the souls of all who are not in Christ go now. It is the " unseen " abode of the dead. The bodies of the dead do not go to Hell, whereas it seems that Gehenna is the place of the destruction of body and soul. Moreover, at the resurrection of the dead at the time of the Great White Throne judgment, Hell gives up the dead which are in it, that is the dead, as to their souls, but there is no mention of Gehenna giving up its dead.

As far as I know the Scriptures none has yet been cast into Gehenna. Up till the present all the dead, save those who are redeemed and are with Christ in heaven, are in Hell. It seems to me that Gehenna comes into operation connected with the establishment of the Lord's kingdom on earth. There appears to be a definite connection between Gehenna in Mark 10. (and elsewhere) with Isaiah 66. 24. During the time of the Millennium the worshippers who go up to Jerusalem to worship Jehovah will be able to go forth and see the carcases (the dead, bodies) of transgressors, and the sight of Divine displeasure evident in these will have a fearful effect on those who see it, for it says " they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh, " for of these it is said that " their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched. "

Evidently the beast and the false prophet are cast, body and soul (for they are two men) into the lake of fire (Revelation 19. 20). The Devil is cast into the lake of fire, and he is a being who has no material body such as we have (Revelation 20. 10), and also all whose names are not written in the book of life are cast thereunto (persons in bodies raised from the dead).

In view of what I have said some might quickly conclude that Gehenna, the eternal fire, is the lake of fire; it may be so, but I could not with my present light be quite certain.

As to the second part of the question, I would understand that those who are cursed by the Lord, in the words, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, " go into eternal fire at that time. Note the last words in Matthew 25., "And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life. —J. M.

Questions and Answers.

Questions from Glasgow. —(1) Was Pilate's inscription "King of the Jews " his own conviction or of ribaldry ?

(2) " They made his grave with the wicked. " Is this fulfilled in the company of the thief or thieves or the digging of the grave at the cross ?

(3) Caiaphas' word of prophecy, was it of himself or spirit of prophecy ?

(4) Luke 22. 3; John 13. 27. " Satan entered into Judas. " Does this mean at different times or on separate occasions ?

(5) Matthew says a scarlet robe was put on the Lord and Mark says a purple robe. Has this any significance ?

Answers. (1) I would understand that in the superscription we have the identification of the Victim—Jesus of Nazareth, and the cause of His execution—the King of the Jews. The Jews condemned Him because He said He was the Son of God, but Pilate condemned Him who was King of the Jews, whom the Jews rejected, claiming that Caesar was their king. —J. M.

(2) They, made the Lord's grave with the wicked, *i. e.*, the two malefactors, but He was with the rich (man) in His death, for Joseph gave Him his own new tomb. —J. M.

(3) " Caiaphas, being high priest that year; " here was a wicked man in a divinely appointed office, and in his official capacity God used him to speak His word. " He prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation " of Israel. —J. M.

(4) Yes, twice over Satan entered into him, when he went to sell the Lord and when he went to betray Him. —J. M.

(5) The word *Kokkinos* may quite correctly be rendered crimson in Matthew 27. 28, and is thought to be probably a deep crimson colour equivalent to the purple of Mark and John. —J. M.

Questions from London. —(1) Was the sign of recognition used by Judas necessary apart from prophecy, since the Lord's face would be well known by some of His captors ?

Answer (1). It is to be remembered that it was night when the Lord was seized in Gethsemane, therefore it was left to Judas to identify the Lord and he gave them the sign of identification—a kiss. —J. M.

(2) Were the graves opened just after the Lord's death or after the resurrection, as the risen saints appeared to many *after* the resurrection ?

Answer (2). The tombs were opened at the time the Lord died, but the bodies of the saints that were raised at the Lord's death did not come forth from the tombs for three days thereafter, till the Lord was raised. —J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES.

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

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The Betrayal and Crucifixion and the Accusation in the Superscription on the C r o s s	111
The sending forth of the eleven in contrast to the sending forth of the twelve.	111
Questions and A n s w e r s	118

The Betrayal **and** Crucifixion **and** the Accusation in the Superscription on the Cross.

From Brantford, Ontario. —Judas came into the garden, and behind him was a multitude with weapons of violence. Why so many to take One who was meek and lowly, and who had showed Judas these traits? How surprised the disciples must have been to find one of themselves a betrayer! It **was** all completely premeditated. He said, " Hail; Rabbi, " and kissed Him, placing those vile lips upon the cheeks of the blessed Master. The Lord could have gone **His** way, but He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.

In the midst of the trials the Lord was majestic in speech and also majestic in silence. Such a prisoner had never previously been before Pilate. The people chose a murderer and said, " **His** blood be upon us "; to-day they are reaping the fruits of their choice.

The private charge was that He claimed to be the Son of God. Publicly, in the Roman court, it was the title " King of the Jews " that was prominent. Politically the Romans would not have such a thing. Religiously the Jews rejected His Messiahship.

Neil Sproul.

The sending forth of the eleven in contrast to the sending forth of the twelve.

From Edinburgh. —Israel was given the message, " The kingdom of heaven is at hand, " through the sending forth of the twelve. They had ears and heard not! The message was ignored nationally, resulting in the sad words of the Master, " Your house is left unto you desolate. "

But what a contrast now! All the world is embraced and the gospel has been spread far and wide as a result of the sending forth of the eleven. Yet they were instructed to begin at Jerusalem—the place of rejection and of sacrifice was to be the first to hear the great message. How true the words of the angels at His birth, " Goodwill to men " ! Those who crucified the Lord were the first to receive the message of forgiveness.

The Jews as a people had departed from their God. The Feasts of Jehovah had become mere formalities to many. Let us take heed lest the simple feast of bread and wine should ever become formal to us.

Peter, as spokesman, commenced the work, and Paul was raised to continue that work. Paul was taught by God in Arabia, and **as** Moses was a chosen vessel to follow the pattern shown in the mount, Paul was a chosen vessel to preach the message of life and to strengthen the hands of the children of God.

We succeeded in tracing 11 appearances of the Lord after His resurrection as follows: —(1) Mary Magdalene; (2) women who were returning; (3) Peter; (4) two on road to **Emmaus**; (5) that same evening to the ten apostles; (6) eight

days later, Thomas being present; (9) sea of Tiberias **as** they fished (Matt. 28.); (8) above **500** brethren **at** once (probably after **sea** of Tiberias, but still in Galilee); (9) near to Bethany; (10) **James**; (11) Paul, **as** one out of **due** season. Some difficulty was experienced in arranging the times, but generally it **was** thought that this represented the appearings in order, though no point of scripture **was** found **as** to where the **500** brethren were gathered. *J. Roberts.*

From Glasgow.—When the Lord Jesus looked on the multitudes in Matthew 9. **He** was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered **as** sheep not having **a** shepherd. **We** learn from John 1. 11 that **He** came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not.

There were those who looked for His **setting** up His kingdom on earth, and they were disappointed **as** we would judge from such scriptures **as** Luke 24. 21; Matthew 20. 21; Acts 1. 7. From Matthew 10. we would think of the **message**: how simple, yet it **meant** so much to Israel!

(1) " The kingdom of heaven is **at** hand "; for Israelites to accept Jesus **as** the Son of God, it meant they had also to acknowledge Him **as** King, and they would have to take **a** humble place.

(2) " Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. " To **a** people that was suffering in body and mind, to **be** healed of all their diseases would mean joy in Israel.

(3) They were not to make any provision for their journey, so far **as** temporal needs were concerned. If Israel accepted the message, they would supply them with all their needs, **as** in the past when Israel were in **a** right condition they accepted their responsibility toward those who had the charge of God's house.

(4) " Search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth. " The worthy ones were known by their actions toward the disciples. Should any not be worthy they were to be reprov'd and remind'd of their short-comings.

Had Israel accepted the message, it would have meant earthly blessing indeed, and among them would have been **a** dwelling place for God upon earth.

When we come to Matthew 28. where we **get** the commission to the eleven, we find **a** change, because this time the **message** is to all nations. The cross with all its sorrow is now behind the Lord, and His faithful witness-bearing for God on earth is almost past. **He** now tells them where His authority lies.

When we come to Acts 1., where we **get** this matter gone into, we **see** their time **was** fully occupied during the forty days **He** sojourn'd with them and we are remind'd of what the subject **was** during that time. **He** gave them instruction in His commandments, and things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and these things would be seen in power. So **He** charg'd them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said **He**, ye heard from Me. When we come to Acts 2., Christ has now gone away to heaven, and the disciples are still in Jerusalem **as** instructed. Suddenly there came from heaven **a** sound **as** of the rushing of **a** mighty wind, and it fill'd the whole house where they were sitting. And they were all fill'd with the Holy Spirit. This, we might say, was the beginning of **a** new thing for God upon the earth, where we **see** the principles of the kingdom of God being carried out. **We** have here **a** full manifestation of what Jesus meant when **He** command'd His disciples to go forth in Matthew 28. 20.

At present God is taking out **a** people from among the nations of the world. His day of grace will **cease** when the Lord Himself shall descend, and His saints are caught up to **meet** Him in the air.

So during the period between the rapture of the saints and their manifestation **in** glory, **a** fresh testimony, **a** **message** will go forth on earth. It will be the gospel of the kingdom to all nations. The **message** of the kingdom preach'd during that **time** will be that the kingdom **is** shortly to be openly established by the hand of Christ, whose rights are now refused by the world **at** large. *Jas. Gartshore.*

From Melbourne.—To compare the sending forth of the twelve with the sending forth of the eleven should be of particular interest to God's people to-day.

Whilst **it is** the Lord who does the sending **in** both instances, **it** appears

evident that there was a willingness to go forth at His bidding. It is willingness that **leads** on to **real** service for God and surely the willingness on their part **was** an indication of the love of their hearts for the Lord Jesus Christ who left heaven's glory aside to **come** forth at God's bidding and do His Father's will. "Nevertheless **not** My will, but Thine be done."

The sending of the twelve was restricted to His own people Israel. Notwithstanding their backslidings and their rebellion and disobedience to His voice, they were still, it seems, so heavily upon His heart **as** to be His foremost care.

(1) The twelve were sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

(2) Their message was the Gospel of the Kingdom (the kingdom of heaven is at hand).

(3) They were given power to heal the sick, raise the dead, etc.

(4) They were to take no gold... neither two coats, etc.

(5) For provision, "the labourer is worthy of his hire."

In the case of His sending the eleven theirs was a world-wide commission.

(1) The eleven were sent to **all** the nations.

(2) Their message was the Gospel of the **grace** of God.

(3) They were to make disciples to baptise them and teach them to observe **all** things.

(4) They were given the promise, "Lo, I **am** with you alway." In their case, "The labourer is worthy of his hire," is a principle annunciated later, when Churches of God were brought into existence. They were among those who **went** forth taking nothing of the Gentiles.

In contrast to the sending forth of the twelve to Israel before the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we have the eleven going forth clothed in resurrection power. What a wonderful power to uphold, and what a glorious message was theirs to preach amongst people who opposed them, oftentimes endangering their lives! What need they fear when Christ was with them!

In Matthew 28. there is a divine order to guide us to-day: Make disciples, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever the Lord commanded. Anything less than this is not in keeping with the will of our Blessed Lord and Master.

In both cases it seems as though the response on the part of the disciples to do the service of their Lord was due mainly to the fact that they had been with Jesus. They had had close personal dealings with Himself, having been much in His presence.

It is only here that we too can appreciate His desire that all **men** should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, and it is as we linger in His presence that our hearts will be warmed to say, "Here am I, send me." The Lord is still in a very special sense "with" all those who are obedient to His will.

As in the case of the seventy so in the case of the twelve, they were sent two by two. In the case of the sending of the eleven, two by two is not stipulated. Is the two by two principle **binding** upon us to-day? [Whilst it is not "binding," the principle of going forth two by two in this dispensation, one would seem to hear the echo of the disciples having been sent forth two by two in the enumeration of the names of the apostles in Acts 1. —Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew and so on. Then we see Peter and John linked together in Acts 3. 1, and in 4. 13, and again in 8. 4. Again Barnabas and Saul were sent forth by the Holy Spirit in Acts 13. 2. Where you have **men** going forth into new fields of labour the principle of two by two seems to be a necessity. But in contrast to this we have Philip going down to Samaria, and there is no fellow-worker mentioned as being with him (8. 5). Again in Acts 9. 32 we are told that Peter went "throughout all parts," and John is not mentioned **as** being with him. There seems to be no binding rule in this dispensation. —J. M. J.]

W. H. Fullerton.

EXTRACTS.

From Atherton. —It is highly significant that the same men, with the exception of Judas, who were sent on that first mission by the Lord, should be chosen again to proclaim the message indicated by the Lord in Matthew 28. In the history of God's revealed dealings with men, this fact is possibly unique,

that the same men should be chosen **in** one lifetime, and in this case within a period of several years, to preach messages somewhat distinct in character and scope. The question arises, "Did the apostles preach in two distinct dispensations?" It was thought that the period in which the gospel of the kingdom **was** preached might rightly be considered **as** a dispensation distinct both from the law and the present dispensation, for after the coming of the Lord into the air for His saints the gospel of the kingdom will again be preached. [The ministry of Christ and His apostles at the close of the dispensation of law, and also that of John the Baptist to a certain extent, was unique, in that it brought to a close the call of God to Israel with reference to national repentance, and was also introductory and preparatory to this dispensation of grace, which began with the sending forth of the Holy Spirit, **as** in Acts 2. The teaching of the Lord, **as** contained in the Gospels, cannot be torn from this dispensation **as** though we were in a time or dispensation to which this teaching did not belong. The dispensation of grace finds its base in the Lord's teaching, for His doctrine was God's doctrine (John 7. 16, 17), and the Lord's teaching, was the apostles' doctrine (John 17. 8; Acts 2. 42). So God gave this doctrine to Him and **He** in turn to the apostles and the apostles to the saints, and this is called "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" (James 2. 1) and "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). In the Lord's teaching there is also instruction to His disciples who shall keep "the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14. 12) after this church dispensation is past. —J. M. J. It will contain the same message **as** declared by the Lord and His apostles though greater in scope, for then it will be proclaimed unto all the nations and not to Israel only.

We made mention of the Lord's authority in connection with both messages, and it was thought, with reference to Matthew 10., that here we have authority delegated to Him by the Father. We noted the Lord's dependence upon God in the choice of these men, for before His choice of them He spent all night in prayer to God (Luke 6. 12-16). By contrast we observed that the authority of which He speaks in Matthew 28. was connected with His glorious victory upon the cross; in resurrection He became the exalted Lord, and truly now He could say, "All authority hath been given unto Me, in heaven and on earth."

The Lord's commission in Matthew 28. was carried out to a degree, though the apostles seemed slow to recognise their responsibilities to the Gentiles, for Peter required a further special revelation to indicate to him and to his brethren, that now had come God's time for the Gentiles to hear the message. Also it was observed that the apostles James, Cephas and John, are named to us by Paul, **as** the apostles of the circumcision, whilst Paul was himself the apostle to the Gentiles. Thus we have outlined their special sphere of responsibility to the Lord's charge (Galatians 2. 8, 9). We noted the fact that there is no mention of power over demons in Matthew 28., but we were taken to Mark 16, which gives help on this point: "These signs shall follow them that believe." The Lord's charge in Matthew 28. was evidently given quite early after His resurrection (see verses 7-10).

Reference was made to the power of the Holy Spirit in the outworking of these two messages through the apostles. Without doubt they knew His power **as** they preached the gospel of the kingdom, but they knew the Spirit's power in a special sense in Acts 2., even **as** the Lord had promised (see John 14. 12, 16 and 17). The question arose **as** to what the Lord did to His apostles in John 20. 22; **Was** the Holy Spirit given to them on that occasion? It was suggested that the Lord had power to give them the Holy Spirit, and that by action **as** well as words He imparted the Holy Spirit to them, but not in the special sense of Acts 2. What He did here was but an earnest of what was to follow. It was thought by others that the Holy Spirit was not then given in any way, but that His action and words were but preparatory to the great event which took place in Acts 2. [I judge the latter view is correct. The Holy Spirit was not given in stages or piecemeal. —J. M. J. G. A. Jones, G. Sankey.

From Ilford. —Perhaps the most striking contrast between the sending forth of the twelve and that of the eleven was in the scope of their missions. The former were told to go to the Jews only and were not even to attempt to reach

the Samaritans, whose cities were probably still largely occupied by Gentiles, as shown in 2 Kings 17. 24. The eleven, however, were to go to " all **the** nations, " and the reason for this change of scope becomes clear when the respective commissions are considered.

The twelve were to preach repentance towards God. The kingdom of heaven was at hand; that is to say that a new dispensation was **in** view. As, therefore, the children of Israel were the **only** people to whom the kingdom of heaven was proclaimed, preparation for a change of the dispensation would only be necessary for them.

When, however, Christ had died and risen, and entry into the kingdom of heaven was now possible by faith in Christ, the message of the new dispensation, viz., repentance towards God and faith in Christ, could be preached to all.

The secondary duty of the twelve was to " heal the sick, raise the dead, . . . " etc., but the mission of the eleven was much more complex. Their task had only begun when they had made believers and disciples: these were to be baptised, added, and taught. This commission was obviously necessary since this second sending in the new dispensation was to establish the kingdom of God amongst God's New Testament people. Both missions, of course, showed forth the power of Christ, which came from God the Father.

The powers which the two groups possessed were given in different ways. The twelve obtained their power from Christ at the time when they received their mission, and this enabled them to cure diseases and cast out demons. The power of the eleven, however, was from a triumphant Christ to whom had been given **all** authority. They could not have been sent forth on this mission unless Christ had gained power over death, for they had to proclaim the way of salvation.

It seems from Luke 24. 49, and Acts 1. 8, that Christ gave the eleven their mission first before **His** ascension; and their power did not come immediately from Christ alone [Christ never did anything alone, in the sense of being independent of the Trinity, nor yet does the Holy Spirit. —J. M.], but was transmitted by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Eric Morgan.

From Kilmarnock. —Matthew 9. 35 tells us that " Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching... preaching... and healing... But when **He** saw the multitudes, **He** was moved with compassion. " **He** saw the great need for more labourers, and so **He** called His twelve disciples and empowered them to work miracles, and charged them to preach, saying, " The kingdom of heaven is at hand " (or hath drawn nigh). John the Baptist had been delivering that message to the people of Israel, and many had been baptised, but now the King Himself sends forth His messengers with special instructions to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They were to get the opportunity to acknowledge Him as their King, and the Gentiles or the Samaritans had no claim on Him **as** such.

We note their instructions regarding money, apparel and food; they were to depend on God to supply their need through those who received their message. They were to note the people's attitude towards them, and to shake the dust off their feet at the house or city of those who would not hear their words, which was a sign of judgment to fall on such.

All this is in striking contrast to the sending forth of the eleven disciples after the Lord's resurrection. Israel as a nation had rejected Jesus as their King, and now God's purpose was to call out of all nations a people for Himself.

In Matthew 28. 18-20 the Lord **is** about to ascend to heaven, and as **One** who has received " all authority in heaven and on earth, " **He** now charges **His** disciples to " G o . . . and make disciples of **all** the nations. " We note there **is** no instruction here regarding their material welfare, as in Matthew 10., but **His** promise **is**, " I am with you alway. "

It would appear from Mark 16. 17, 18, that **He** empowered them to show signs of healing on those who believed their message, but we understand this power ended when the apostles passed away. Luke, in writing the Acts of the Apostles, gives an account of the Lord's appearances to **His** disciples after **His** resurrection, " speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. " It was not now the

kingdom restored to Israel, **but in the** power of the Holy Spirit they were to witness of God's grace " to the uttermost **part** of the earth. " This was the beginning of **a new dispensation, and the kingdom of God was** now composed of individuals who acknowledged God's rule in their hearts, then collectively **as** assemblies which formed the Community or Fellowship of **Jesus Christ our Lord, in every place** (1 Corinthians 1. 2, 9). This phase of the kingdom will continue till the Lord comes for His church, when His messengers shall **be** sent forth in view of **His** kingdom being set **up at** Jerusalem (Matthew 24. 31). A. G. S.

From Cowdenbeath. —The most outstanding difference between the sendings forth of the twelve and the eleven is that the former were expressly instructed to go to Israel only, whilst the latter were commissioned to go to the uttermost **part** of the earth, thus embracing all nations. **Yet** a period of only two or three years elapses between the two sendings forth and, in each instance, the Sender and the sent ones are, respectively, the **same** persons. A great event has taken place in the interval. The death of Christ, the **greatest** happening in all God's dealings with men, alters God's attitude [Not His attitude, but His dealings with men. —J. M.] to men. Previously God's blessings were for Jews [though of course strangers were not excluded. —J. M.] and this **was** even so during the sojourn of the Son of God on earth. **But** through crucifying their Messiah the nation of Israel forfeited their right to receive of God's goodness, and contrariwise their action exposed them to **His** wrath, yet the wonder is that God was willing, after such treatment being **meted** out to **His** Son, to extend mercy to man with equal opportunity being given to Jews and Gentiles to receive of it.

Matthew's Gospel closes without making any mention of the ascension of the Lord into heaven. This **is** in keeping with the presentation of Him **as** the King of the Jews, because the sphere of His Kingship **as** Israel's Messiah is earthly. **He** is presented **as a King, but a rejected One; at** His birth, during His public ministry and lastly **at** the cross, but in contrast the final scene presents **Him** as the One who is in possession of all authority in heaven and on earth. It is **as** such, and not **as** a rejected King speaking in weakness, that **He** commissioned His disciples to go forth.

No person has so great authority for doing anything **as** the disciple who **preaches** the gospel. **But He** authorised them to do more than that for **at** the same **time He** charged them to **baptise** believers and to instruct such baptised ones to observe ALL the things that **He** had commanded. Many would recognize His authority in connection with the preaching of the gospel yet slight His word though spoken **at the same time** and with equal authority concerning baptism and the instructing of disciplined ones in the way of the Lord. To these three services **He** not only sends **us** forth, but assures **us** of **His** never failing presence. How needful **it is** that **we** should realise this !

The words of the Lord, when **He** gave to the nation the sign of Jonah, **seem** to have remained in their memories. They took the precautions which they thought necessary to prevent **His** disciples stealing **His dead** body, but how startled they were when the soldiers returned to the city on the resurrection morn with their report of the earthquake and the angel and the opened tomb. Such a truth **must** never come to the knowledge of the people and so a lie was propagated and believed by many. **But** fifty days later the real truth was proclaimed in the very city of Jerusalem by the Spirit-filled disciples, who witnessed concerning the resurrection of their Lord with great boldness, and three thousand souls who possibly had believed the lie of the elders had their minds enlightened and their hearts opened to accept of the truth. Those who believed were baptised and continued in the apostles' teaching. Thus the eleven explicitly obeyed their Lord's command in connection with the three services unto which they were sent. *James Bowman.*

From Hamilton, Ont. —In all dispensations when God has had a message for His creature **man He** has **used** extensively human channels to proclaim His word.

When the time **was** fulfilled in the counsels of God that the Christ should come **into** the world, God desired that Israel should receive Him. At the com-

mentement of His ministry the Lord Jesus Christ chose twelve who **became** His disciples and these **He** sent forth with the gospel of the kingdom for verily the King was in their midst.

However we know Israel rejected Him as their King and crucified Him. After which the risen Lord commissioned the eleven to go forth with the gospel of the grace of God.

In their lifetime these men became the forerunners of those who would follow on with the preaching of these two different Gospels, and instructions given to them were for these also. Especially is this true of those who will preach the gospel of the kingdom prior to the coming of the Son of Man when they will know in reality the persecutions spoken of in Matthew 10. The gospel of the kingdom in the time when the Lord was on earth was exclusively for Israel, but during the tribulation it will be for all nations (Matthew 24. 14). The eleven were commissioned to carry the gospel of grace world wide to every nation.

As a proof of their apostleship they were endued with power to do signs and wonders in both instances. This power does not **seem** to go beyond the apostles in either dispensation. [What of the seventy of Luke 10. 9, 17, and of Philip, in Acts 8. 5-7?—J. M.]

Haste is necessary in proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom in preparing the people to receive the King as **He** was already in their midst. In the Tribulation the time for preaching would be only a few years till the appearance of the Son of Man.

The eleven were to preach the gospel of grace, making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them. To carry out this commission in one locality might take a period of years or even a life-time. The apostle Paul was two years in Ephesus. This dispensation of grace covers a far longer period than the few years of the preaching of the kingdom, close to two thousand years having already seen its course.

R. Thomas.

From Vancouver. —The sending forth of the twelve disciples by the Lord as recorded in Matthew 10., while having a definite purpose, had also a limited scope, as the Lord's specific instructions indicate.

There are both similarities and contrasts between the Lord's words to them concerning their service at that time and what obtained in the post-resurrection commission, which they received when sent to all the nations. Amongst the many things the Lord said, a few have claimed our attention. In connection with their dispensing blessing **He** said, "Freely ye received, freely give" (verse 8). Thus they were neither the givers nor the source of the gifts, but only prepared channels through which such could flow from the great Giver above.

He also said, "Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses... neither two coats... for the labourer is worthy of his food" (verses 9, 10). Also there would be certain and sure retribution upon the cities which refused to hear their message, or to use the messengers, kindly "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (verses 14, 15). We observe that cities and houses are mentioned rather than individuals as being responsible as a whole to hear the message. This bears out the national character of their preaching.

Then in verse 20 we have the Spirit of God mentioned as the One who would give them words to utter in their defence before kings and governors for the sake of the Name. The matter of dealing with cities and houses provides a contrast to what obtained in the commission of Matthew 28., where individual acceptance of a different message is anticipated, although a national offer was made at the commencement of the apostle's ministry.

Referring now to Matthew 10. 7 we suggest that while the reception of the King is not specifically mentioned in the passage, it is implied; for where there is a kingdom in the true sense, there must be a King. There is a sphere of authority and a sphere of subjection. There is also a people ruled.

They were to announce "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and the accompanying miracles which the disciples were given power to perform, were the divine credentials they carried for all who would question their authority. Such authority,

like that of the eleven at Pentecost, was from the **same** divine source from **Him** unto Whom all authority has been given, in heaven and on earth.

As to the limitation of the kingdom message in Matthew 10. to " the lost sheep of the house of Israel, " the question may be raised, " **Was** Israel all the Lord had in His mind when He thus spoke at that time ? " Surely not! We suggest that the Lord's mind was in harmony with what the purpose of God had **in** view when He began His dealings with the seed of Jacob, that through them **as His** covenant people blessing might extend throughout the whole world to all peoples.

In contrast to the sending forth of the twelve, the eleven apostles were commissioned to preach the gospel, not concerning a King, but concerning a Saviour (Acts 5. 31), One by the Jews rejected and crucified, but now raised again.

People of all nations are envisaged in Matthew 28. 18-20, **as** being the subjects of divine grace, yet even here we learn from Luke 24. 47 that they must first begin at Jerusalem, the place of the Lord's death (see also Acts 1. 8).

We marvel that Jerusalem was the first place to ring with the new message of life from the lips of **His** apostles. Since those soul-stirring days, the utmost bounds of the earth have been brought within the scope of God's gracious dealings. God's present purpose in **His** redeemed people **is** similar to that of a past dispensation, that they **in** their generations should hold aloft the lamp of life so that others will **be** reached and blessed. (R. Armstrong).

From Brantford, Ont. —After listing the names of the twelve apostles, Matthew **writes** and says—" These twelve Jesus sent forth. " These were sent with a special **message** to a specified group with certain limitations.

Their message had to do with the time then at hand, although in the instructions given **them** there **seems** to be something far beyond their day and time. Theirs **was** a message for Israel, direct from the Messiah, the Sent One from God, but their message was not received, and we know how Israel rejected the One who was their King and delivered **Him** up to be crucified.

However, the message of Matthew 28. **is** by far greater and much more precious to us to-day. To **His** eleven disciples **He** speaks (on the further side of the Cross) and says, " All authority hath been given unto Me. " This gives greater weight and power to the words of this great commission.

Between the two commissions referred to a great and marvellous event had taken place. **He** who sent the twelve forth in Matthew 10. had Himself fulfilled the work and mission which **He** came to perform, for He came not to do **His** own will, but the will of **Him** that sent Him. The outcome of this work was the theme of the mission of the disciples of Matthew 28. 19. It was the glorious gospel concerning our Lord Jesus Christ that was going to win the hearts of men from whom disciples were to be made.

This message given to disciples was for the making of disciples, followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence to us to-day the commission has not lost its importance, and **is** for us to carry on in the furtherance of the gospel. There were many injunctions given to the twelve when the Lord sent them to the lost sheep of Israel that can be very encouraging to us, but when we compare the commission of Matthew 28. we have this more blessed portion, for He who has all authority says, " Lo, I **am** with you alway. " J. J. Thomas.

Questions from Hamilton (Ontario). —(1) Is the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2 Thessalonians 1. 7, 8) the **same** ?

Answer (1)—Bearing in mind that the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20. 24) **is** also called " the gospel of Christ " (1 Thessalonians 3. 2) **as** to its subject, so I would be disposed to think that the gospel of our Lord Jesus **is** the gospel of the kingdom. —J. M.

(2) To whom do the words " he that endureth to the end shall be saved " refer to, the preachers or the hearers ?

Answer (2). —The words apply to all such **as** will come within the compass of the Lord's exhortation, " Take heed that no **man** lead you astray " (Matthew 24. 4). The " you " of these words signify those who have believed in Christ **in** that time to **come**, whether they be preachers or hearers. —J. M.