

# Answers to Correspondents

by G. Davison

Extracted from "Precious Things" - Mar. 56 to Oct. 1964

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## NUMBERS 4: 16 MAR/APR 1956

Question: Numbers 4: 16. What do you make of the service of Eleazar in answer to this verse?

Answer: In regard to your enquiry about this verse I will do my best though I feel I have not much to say about it. This at least I have noticed, that, while Aaron the High Priest was anointed to approach the LORD as representing the people, his other two sons had an active part in the priesthood as well. Eleazar is mentioned about thirty-two times in the book of Numbers. This would indicate that he had a very active part to play while the tabernacle was pitched in the wilderness. His special charge seems to be to see that the oil, incense etc., was at hand to keep the tabernacle in function, v. 16. Under the hand of Aaron he would see to it that every need was supplied to keep the light burning, the holy incense ascending and the daily offerings ascending. What we may call the daily needs of the house so that the service of God would go on without interruption.

The work of Ithamar appears to be more connected with the building itself. In Exodus 38: 21, we see that he had charge of all the material which was collected for the construction of the tabernacle, and again in this chapter, vv. 28, 33, the materials which composed the building are seen under his charge — a responsible work for him. Again we read in 1 Chron. 24: 2, "therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office."

This brings to light another point of interest, the movement of the whole camp with Eleazar and Ithamar taking the oversight of the Levites. Aaron and his sons would see to the covering of the Holy vessels, then, as the Levites shouldered the burdens, they seemed to come under the hand of Aaron's sons on the march, v. 33. Eleazar seems more connected with the Kohathites, v. 16, while Ithamar seems to be connected with both Gershom and Merari, vv. 28, 33. Kohath had the carrying of the holy vessels which speak of Christ. Gershom had charge of the curtains which I think prefigures the house. Merari had charge of the boards with all the pillars which I think prefigures the kingdom — all that gives stability to the building. How close the work of the priests and the Levites are as seen together in this chapter and if we have rightly understood the answer to Levitical service to-day, it is the work of the ministry to promote priestly conditions amongst the saints of God. In Num. 8: 19 we read that the Levites were given (gifted, Young's Concordance) to the priestly family to assist Aaron and his sons.

Putting these thoughts together we may suggest that Merari indicates a practical ministry to-day. Gershom a doctrinal ministry and Kohath a devotional ministry, all under the hand of Aaron with a view to the service of God being carried on in the House of God. With a practical ministry allied with a doctrinal ministry and both allied with a devotional ministry going on to-day, right conditions will be produced and maintained in which priestly function will go on for the pleasure of God.

If we think then of Aaron as setting forth Christ in the presence of God, we see in Eleazar and Ithamar the priesthood of believers who have been sanctified to associate with him and to share in His priestly service for God, both holy and royal. "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother and his **sons with him**", Ex. 28. In answer to his sons, we are charged with the service of the house of God to-day to keep the spiritual system in movement in association with the Great High Priest over the house of God. This will involve priestly condition, allied with true Levitical service to produce and maintain what is **spiritual** in the saints. In the type, Eleazar saw that the necessary things were in good supply while Ithamar saw to it that the building was rightly handled whether carried or erected and so the service went on.

Our privilege to-day is to see that the oil, incense and offerings are all at hand — the answer to the work of Eleazar; and that the building is rightly handled and arranged according to Divine instructions — the answer to the work of Ithamar. Perhaps this works out to-day in the arrangement of our meetings according to Divine instructions and apart from human ideas. Along with this in the meetings, the continuance of a living ministry to instruct the saints, so providing spiritual material for the service of God in the sanctuary. This would lead to conscious association with Christ where He is in the presence of God and lead us in holy liberty into the presence of God within the veil. This in turn leads to giving to God the praise and worship of our souls, the acme of all exercise. Thus the heavenly system is in function to-day — the grand answer to all these types.

## **KINGDOM OF GOD & KINGDOM OF HEAVEN JULY/AUG 1956**

Question: Can you help me with a clear distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven? Are they different kingdoms as I have been informed?

Answer: No. There is only one kingdom for God is "the blessed and **only** Ruler," 1 Tim. 6: 15. New Tran. The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of God viewed dispensationally. There are in fact ten different titles used to describe the kingdom and a word on each of them may be of help to you. We will take them in the order in which they appear in the New Testament and this will facilitate a study of them.

### **THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN Matthew 3: 2**

This is the first title given to the kingdom in the NEW TESTAMENT and conveys the thought that the **heavens rule the earth**. The Anointed of God was here to establish this rule in the midst of Israel and would have done had they accepted Him. Matthew is the only writer who uses this title having for his theme the **dispensational** aspect of the kingdom. This can be seen **in type** in the book of Daniel where Nebuchadnezzar has to learn that God is the sovereign ruler in the universe. Though God gave to him rule over all the earth, heaven was still in control as we read, "the heavens do rule," 4: 26. Not that the kingdom of heaven as Matthew presents it was set up in those days but in type we see this feature that the heavens do rule and the proud king is made to own this.

### **THE KINGDOM OF GOD Matthew 6: 33**

The bearing of this title is — **the will of God is supreme**. It is the kingdom of God. He ordains the statutes of it and everyone in that kingdom must be subject to His rule and authority. To us to-day this kingdom is entirely spiritual as we read, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. 14: 17.

## **THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN Matthew 13: 41**

The **universal** aspect of the kingdom is in view here. The Son of Man will have all authority, all power, all rule and all judgment in His hands and will order the whole universe, heaven and earth in accord with the will of God. This is clearly seen in 1 Cor. 15: 24-26; John 5: 29.

## **THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER Matthew 13: 43**

This title carries us in thought to the kingdom established in the World to Come and the saints of this dispensation having their part on the **heavenly** side of it. Our Lord says they will shine forth as the **sun** pointing thus to heaven as the place from which they will shine.

## **MY FATHER'S KINGDOM Matthew 26: 29**

In using this title our Lord has in view His **return** to set up the kingdom but instead of those who enter it being there in the kingdom of Jehovah, they will know God as Father. The kingdom according to all the prophetic promises will surely come but much that has already come to light in Christianity will also be there, hence this title. God is known throughout the gospel of Matthew as "Heavenly Father" and this will yet shine out in public display with the remnant of Israel who will be there.

## **THE KINGDOM OF OUR FATHER DAVID Mark 11: 10**

This title is used by the disciples when our Lord rode into Jerusalem. They had in mind the glowing prophecies of the entry of the Son of David to His throne in Jerusalem; His law going forth from Jerusalem; the deliverance of Israel from all their enemies and God dwelling in their midst. Had the leaders accepted Him, all this would have been established. Psalm 72; Isaiah 11, and Zechariah 9 are in view in this title but as we know, He was rejected and these blessings for Israel are in abeyance.

## **THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST Ephesians 5: 5**

This title teaches us that when the kingdom is brought in by power, the **Anointed of God** will administer it and use it for the display of the glory of God. Headship with Lordship and Kingship are involved in this title, 2 Sam. 22: 44 and 1 Chron. 29: 11 have this in view.

## **THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON Colossians 1: 13**

This title speaks of the kingdom as embracing the children of the Father to-day and to **us** the rule of the kingdom of LOVE. We believe it involves that we are in the kingdom more as SONS than as servants hence this endearing title is used. Our hearts have been subdued by Divine love which has reached us through the Son of His love and as the result of being affected by this love, by love we serve, Gal. 5: 13.

## **HIS HEAVENLY KINGDOM 2 Timothy 4: 18**

This title presents the kingdom as standing in contrast to every earthly kingdom. The kingdoms of this earth have been marked by unrighteousness in the hands of fallen men but the heavenly kingdom will

be marked by light and righteousness and will bring blessing to men instead of woe. Paul knew that the Roman power was about to end his life here most unrighteously but he knew his place and reward were sure in that heavenly kingdom for which he had laboured all his apostolic life.

## **THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM 2 Peter 1: 11**

This title assures us that once the kingdom has been set up in power it will never be succeeded by another as it will last as long as time lasts. It does not mean that the kingdom will go on forever in the eternal state but rather that it will not have a successor. Kingdoms are established to keep adverse powers in subjection as well as to protect their subjects. Indeed one is the outcome of the other but as there are no adverse powers in the eternal state, the kingdom will not be needed. This is clear from 1 Cor. 15: 24-26.

This may not be a complete list of all the titles but will serve to show how vast the subject is and how much is said about it in the Scriptures.

### **"THE FIRST, OLD AND NEW MAN" NOV/DEC 1956**

Question 1: Will you please help me to distinguish between the following thoughts in Scripture? "The First Man;" "The Old Man;" "The New Man."

Answer: It may be as well to add to your enquiry a further New Testament definition, "The Second Man." These four are all used by the Spirit of God in the ministry of the apostle Paul.

Adam is the only person designated "The First Man," and Christ is the only Person designated "The Second Man." In coming into Manhood our Lord introduced a distinctly new order of Manhood, hence the statement that He is "The Second Man." This is outlined for us in 1 Cor. 15: 47-49. So far as we know, this is the only place where these two terms are used. Now while there are two men only of whom these statements are used, both are regarded as the head of a race and give character to the race of which they are head. Consider carefully these verses and you will find three things said of these two heads. In verse 47 — Origin; in verse 48 — Character; in verse 49 — Destiny. We see that all under the headship of Adam partake of his features and all under the Headship of Christ partake of His features and will ultimately be conformed to His image in glory. So emphasis is laid upon the fact that Adam was EARTHLY and the "Second Man" was and is HEAVENLY. This being so, the race of "The First Man" is characteristically earthly and the race of "The Second Man" is characteristically heavenly.

Then as to the terms "Old Man" and "New Man." We meet with the term "Old Man" three times, i.e. Rom. 6: 6, Eph. 4: 22, Col. 3: 9. In the latter passages we also read of the "New Man" and also in Eph. 2: 15. So we read of them both three times.

We understand the "Old Man" to be an abstract term describing all the evil propensities to which we are prone as the result of sin in the flesh; while the "New Man" is another abstract term to describe all the virtues we are capable of as "in the Spirit." We understand the term "Man" is used as a **complete** conception either of every wicked thing fallen man has ever perpetrated or every righteous and holy act we are now capable of as walking in the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Hence if we walk in the power of the "Old Man" we will only portray the features of the fallen "First Man," while if we walk in the power of the "New Man" we will portray the features of the "Second Man." Adam is never called the "Old Man" nor is Christ ever called the "New Man." If the "Old Man" dominates us Adam fallen will be seen, if the "New Man" dominates us, Christ the "Second Man" will be seen. That is why we are

said to have "put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him," Col 3: 9, 10. We also learn that the "New Man" is the fruit of the work of new creation in each one of our souls; it is by this new creation that we are capable of "good works," Eph. 2: 10.

Question 2: In relation to the "First Man" will there be any part of us in heaven that is not the product of the Holy Spirit? By that we mean, is there not some indelible mark of the Godhead in creation **now** as seen in the individuality of each man and woman and will still be there whether we spend eternity in heaven or hell.

Answer: That man has a link with God which the brute creature has not, is clearly seen in the first chapter of Genesis. Three times we read that "God created." The first time it was **matter**, v. 1. The second time it was **soul**, v. 21, and the third time it was **spirit**, v. 27.

Only man comes under the third operation and we judge only he has a spirit. Body, soul and spirit are thus brought into being with only man the recipient of a spirit. This puts him into relationship with God as a creature to his Creator, raising him above the level of the best (?beast), and giving him individuality as you state. One has well said of this tripartite condition — the body gives us **world** consciousness, the soul give us **self** consciousness; the spirit gives us **God** consciousness. Individuality is eternal and means persons will either be eternally blessed or eternally judged. This is the "part of us" to which you refer, we shall be in heaven but not without the rest of us for spirit and soul and body will be preserved until the coming of our Lord to take us there. Yet ere this can happen, we need to be changed in our bodies and here we touch what the Spirit calls a mystery, "we shall all be changed," 1 Cor. 15: 51. There is a relationship between the body sown and the body raised. "It is sown . . . it is raised," v. 42. Yet the resurrection body will be a body of glory (Phil. 3: 21); and a house which is "from heaven" (2 Cor. 5: 2), but how all this will be brought about we do not pretend to understand. We believe it though we cannot explain it. Should we attempt to do so, we may leave ourselves open to the charge of the Spirit — "Fool," v. 36. That every individual who has trusted Christ will be in heaven with a body of glory is crystal clear. More than this we are unable to say.

## "THE LORD'S TABLE & THE LORD'S SUPPER" JAN. 1957

Question: What is the difference between the "Lord's Table" and the "Lord's Supper"? Why does the cup come first in 1 Corinthians chapter 10?

Answer: The "Lord's Table" is a moral term used by the Spirit to describe the whole circle of Christian fellowship into which God has called us, 1 Cor. 1: 9. The "Lord's Supper" is the greatest privilege connected with this circle, hence their close association in these two chapters, 1 Cor. 10 and 11. The "Table" is not what we **eat** but rather the circle **in** which we eat of the "Supper." It is somewhat misleading to say, We are always **at** the "Table." Rather, we are always in the fellowship of that "Table." The first table mentioned in Scripture is the Table of Showbread; it was always there with the bread upon it and represented the twelve tribes of Israel as sustained in fellowship with God. The priest ate that bread **weekly** and thus maintained that fellowship representatively.

Another helpful reference to this is found in the history of Mephibosheth. "He did eat **continually** at the king's table," 2 Sam. 9: 13. He did not **sit there** continually but was of the company who had the privilege of sitting there. It was his **position** in the kingdom, and we judge this is the point both in the Table of Showbread and the "Lord's Table." That is why the "Table" is contrasted with the table of demons. The "Supper" is not contrasted with anything. In 1 Cor. 11 we have the **privilege** of the

breaking of bread; in 1 Cor. 10 we have the **responsibility** of the bread breakers. That is why the cup comes first in chapter 10. By His precious blood, He has fitted us to share in all the blessings of that circle, but it has also cut us off from every other circle of fellowship whether it be Judaism or Idolatry, v. 32. We **cannot** share the blessings of that circle and the circle of demons, which to us is this world under the control of Satan. Cannot as a practical fact, for if we attempt it, the trial of jealousy will be our portion, and the Lord Who controls that circle will search us out in discipline for our unfaithfulness, vv. 21, 22.

Now the apostle is not giving the **order** of the "supper" in chapter 10 but rather the foundation of all Christian blessing based upon His precious blood, hence, as we have noticed, His blood is first mentioned. When, however, he does give the **order** of the "Supper" in chapter 11, the bread comes first for, historically, the Lord gave His body ere He shed His blood. So in the loaf we discern His body given in wonderful love for us and in the cup His blood poured out on our account. This is the supper — the greatest privilege given to those who have a place at that table, not however the table upon which the emblems are placed, which is **not** the "Lord's Table" but the table in the room in which we meet.

We also notice that after he has spoken of the bread which we break in chapter 10: 16, he goes on to say, "For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." This word "partakers" is the word "fellowship," that is, we break bread in fellowship one with another. It has sometimes been said that the loaf of the supper speaks of the saints in a secondary way but that is not so. The point is **we are** one body and we express this when we all partake of **one** bread. but the bread speaks of His Body, **not us**. The preposition "for" I think makes this clear; it is a unified action by those who are members of the mystical body of Christ. We are always in the fellowship of which the "Table" speaks but only weekly do we break bread — the greatest privilege of that circle when we call to mind the One Who died to bring us into it.

## **JUDGMENT OF SIN AND USE OF NATURAL GIFTS MARCH 1957**

Question: I understand that the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is the judgment of sin before God, and not only that, but the end of sinful man altogether. If that is so, can we use our natural gifts (now controlled by the Holy Spirit) for God's glory. Or, as part of the New Creation, is it only the gifts of the Spirit than can be used in the service of God?

Answer: In using the expression "the end of sinful man" we must remember to distinguish between the individuality of every person and the "old man" — sin in the flesh. It is the latter that has come under the judgment of God in the cross, and God no longer regards believers as standing in relation to it. It is not yet ended for us in fact, but we have deliverance from it as walking in the power of the Spirit. We need to reckon ourselves dead to it, but alive to God. By so walking we nullify the power of sin in us, and thus, in practice, we bring to an end that sinful man by not allowing him to come to light. Again, we must remember that new creation has not yet touched our **bodies**. It has been made effective in our souls by the Holy Spirit, but has not yet affected our bodies. There are two things said of us in 2 Cor. 5, "in the body" and "in Christ" (vv. 6, 17). One is the sphere of responsibility and the other the sphere of privilege. Only in our bodies can we serve God in the world to-day, and we do this by bringing the power of new creation into view, which is simply the life of Christ manifested in our bodies (2 Cor. 4: 10). We are exhorted in Rom. 12 to present our bodies to God with a view to serving Him. Then further down in this chapter we are assured that God gives some kind of gift to us in order that we might do this. It is never said that our bodies are sinful. If they were God could not use them in His service. We

may have used them in sinful practices, but now are exhorted to use the members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Compare Rom. 12: 1 with Heb. 10: 5-7 for the will of God and a body.

The human body plays a much greater part in the service of God than some believers seem to be aware. In Rom 12: 1 it is to be used for the accomplishment of the will of God; in Phil. 1: 20 for the display of Christ; while in 1 Cor. 6: 19 it is said to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Each Person in the Godhead is using that body. Carefully considering the teaching of Rom. 12 it appears that the human body plays a large part in relation to the various gifts given, see vv. 4, 8. It is the vessel through which that gift is displayed, and we are assured that God fits the vessel for the gift given. Many examples of this occur in Scripture. Moses was apprehended by God while leading the flock of his father-in-law, (Ex. 3: 1). Later he was used of God to lead Israel like a flock (Ps. 77: 20). David, in secret delivering the flock of his father, became in the hand of God the outstanding deliverer of the people of God from every enemy (1 Kings 5: 4). Paul, a Roman by birth, a Greek by education, and a Jew by religion, was being trained for the work for which he had been born into this world. He looks right back to his birth when considering the call of God (Gal. 1: 15). We are persuaded that as vessels, God has providentially cared for us, and formed us according to the gift He has ultimately given to us, so that now, in our bodies, whatever our capabilities may be He can use us by His Spirit for His glory. Men like J.N.D. laid their mighty intellects at the feet of the Lord, and he personally was used to translate the Bible into at least three languages. Can we doubt that God had watched over him as having this great service in view? All is right if we are moving in the power of the Holy Spirit. While saying this let us beware lest we confound human intellect with spiritual gift, or zeal with guidance. Only by walking in communion with God can we thus be used for His glory in blessing to His people.

## 1 TIMOTHY 1: 20 APRIL 1957

Question: I would like help on 1 Timothy 1: 20.

Answer: We feel we cannot do better than quote you the words of another which are so clear that no words of ours can improve on them. They are from the Synopsis of Mr. Darby, Vol. 5, pages 139, 140. Perhaps you do not possess a copy so we will quote the passages which bear directly upon your question.

"If we are not in communion with God, we cannot have the strength that would maintain us in the faith, that would enable us to persevere in the profession of the truth, as God gives it to us. . . . The loss of a good conscience opens the door to Satan because it deprives us of communion with God, and the active mind, under Satan's influence, invents ideas instead of confessing the truth of God. The apostle treats the fruit of this state as "blasphemies."

The apostle had delivered up two persons of this character to Satan, that is to say, outwardly. Though already deceived by him, they were not under his dominion as having power to torment them and make them suffer. In the assembly, Satan has no power of that kind. It is protected by God and by the power of Christ. Satan can tempt us individually; but he has no right over the members of the assembly as such. They are **within**, and, weak as they may be, Satan cannot enter there. They may be delivered to him for their good. God dwells in the assembly as His house, by the Spirit. **Without** is the world of which Satan is the prince. The apostle (by the power bestowed on him, for it is an act of positive power) delivered these two men into the power of the enemy — deprived them of the shelter they had enjoyed. They must be made to feel what he was to whom they had given ear. God thus made use of Satan himself as a rod for the good of His rebellious children. Satan should instruct them through the pains he would make them suffer — in order that their will might be broken and they brought into

subjection to God. The love of God can order all things for the purpose of delivering a soul and bringing it to Himself."

Note: The last paragraph is mainly a quotation from JND but it is somewhat paraphrased.

## GAMBLING JUNE 1957

*Question:* I feel sure in my own mind that the principle of gambling is wrong. What Scriptures would you quote to support that?

*Answer:* "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have," Heb. 13: 5.

"And covetousness, which is idolatry," Col. 3: 5.

There can be little doubt that all gambling is the outcome of the lust to possess, which is covetousness.

"But godliness with *contentment* is great gain," 1 Tim. 6: 6.

*Question:* Is God strictly impartial in His love? i.e. Does He love saint and sinner alike?

*Answer:* We ought, I think, to distinguish between the love of God to sinners and the love of God to saints. Often we speak of the **compassionate** love of God to the world. This is seen without partiality to all, male and female, in the greatest verse in the gospel, "For God so loved the world," John 3: 16. But there is also the love of the Father to His children. This is a love of relationship, known and enjoyed by every saint of God in a way which cannot be known by the world. "For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me." John 16: 27. This love is as impartial to the saints as the compassionate love of God is to sinners.

## LUCK OR CHANCE JULY 1957

Question: I am not clear as to the definition of luck or chance. I feel there should be no such element in a Christian's life, but could you please give me some light on the subject in view of the following Scriptures? "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD," Prov. 16: 33. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong . . . but time and chance happeneth to them all," Eccles. 9: 11.

"By chance there came down a certain priest that way," Luke 10: 31.

"And the lot fell upon Matthias," Acts 1: 26.

Answer: Proverbs 16: 33 and Acts 1: 26 are of the same character and can be answered together. By referring to Joshua 7: 14-18 you will see how the lot was used to discern the mind of the LORD among His people. Though not mentioned in terms, this would be the mode of discovery. Rather strikingly we have this mode of selection first used by the LORD in Leviticus 16: 8. It was the divine way of making a selection between the two goats. Numbers 26: 55, Joshua 13: 6 and many other places show this to be the meaning; hence your quoted verse in Proverbs where the LORD disposes of it, that is, uses it to guide.

Ecclesiastes has a slightly different meaning we think. There it seems to mean, with all man's efforts to effect something, it does not always depend on the strongest etc. God rules over all and does not always give returns by greatest efforts but according to His will. We have to labour and leave the result with God. A splendid preacher labours fervently in the gospel without result; then a simple man struggles

through an elementary discourse and someone confesses the Lord. We ought to do our best in all our service but, as Paul said, "God gave the increase."

The word translated "chance" in Luke 10 means a **coincidence** and this is the only occurrence of this particular word in the New Testament. It just happened that at that time the priest came along. He did not go there by any design to help the man, but just happened to be passing and left the man as he found him. "And a certain priest **happened** to go down that way," (N. Tr.).

## **MATTHEW 18: 10 AUG. 1957**

Question: Could you explain the following verse?

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven," Matt. 18: 10

Answer: The word used here for "little ones" is "mikroon," one who has not yet grown up and is not necessarily a child. It is the same word used of Zacchaeus, he was little, "mikroon," not grown as to his stature. In verse 6, where the word is used first, the Lord says of these, "which believe in Me." It refers to those who had believed on the Lord yet had not grown much in the truth, what we may call, new converts. The word of our Lord to Peter in John 21: 15, "Feed my lambs," we believe is akin to this passage.

Each of these little ones had an angel to represent them in the presence of the Father. Seeing His face means, they are ever in divine favour. Compare 2 Sam. 3: 13; 14: 24-33; Esther 1: 14; Rev. 22: 4. Seeing, then, that the Father looks upon these little ones with favour and that they are cared for by angels, it well becomes disciples to have an interest in them and to help them all they can. Angels are "ministering spirits" for "them who shall be heirs of salvation," Heb. 1: 14. "Are they not all ministering (leitourgika) spirits, sent forth to minister (diakonian) for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Hence these angelic beings who serve God in every part of the universe, serve or wait upon the heirs of salvation. The whole point in this passage seems to be that these little ones are of great value in the estimation of the Father; are angelically cared for and, as a consequence, ought to be highly esteemed by disciples. Let us take care, then, that we do not despise these lambs of the flock.

## **REVELATION 2: 17 SEPT. 1957**

Question: Will you please explain the following verse?

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2: 17).

Answer: "The hidden manna" is undoubtedly a reference to the pot of manna which was laid up before Jehovah as a memorial, Ex. 16: 33. It speaks to us of God's appreciation of that pathway of holy separation and obedience to His will, which ever marked our Lord in His service here for the glory of God. The overcomer in Pergamos was one who had also walked a pathway of subjection to God, and separation from the worldliness which invaded the Church at that time. As a special reward, he was to share in the appreciation of the Father of His well-beloved Son. It is well to remember that faithfulness down here develops in us a capacity to enjoy certain things in a fuller way when we are in heaven above. Such is the reward for one who seeks to imitate the pathway of separation walked by our Lord.

The "white stone" also carries the thought of approval. Voting in those days was carried out by putting

either a white stone or a black stone into an urn. It is from this we have the phrase "black-balling" — that is, against a person. We seldom, if ever, hear of "white-balling," but that is the other side. Black-balling would be a vote against one, and white-balling a vote in one's favour. It is probable that many of the saints in those days were haled before ecclesiastical courts, and that black balls were placed in the urn against them. But they would have this assurance; if they were condemned by men because they would not co-operate in the worldly practices of the Church, they would have the approbation of the Lord for Whose glory they had walked in holy separation from these things.

The "name written" is an added reward. Not only would those who proved themselves worthy of this approbation receive it, they would have a secret understanding of how much the Lord **did** appreciate what they had done for Him; something known only to the Lord and the one who obtained the name. Names in Scripture are not given merely for identification, but to describe some virtue or character in the one who receives the name. Samuel and Peter are examples of this and, above all, Jesus. It may be the name is given, not for the action only, but for the motive behind the action, which the Lord alone can fully know. He will show in that day that He did know the motive, and assure the one that the secret, not known by his fellow believers, was known to Him and has its suitable reward.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 3: 17 OCT 1957

Question: Could you explain the following verse?

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. 3: 17.

Answer: The assembly in Corinth is looked at in these verses in its responsible character. Paul had laid a firm, sure foundation which had secured this company as the local representatives of God in that city. Now, they were to take great heed as to how they attempted to further this work. Two thoughts are connected with the House of God, approach and display. The first is seen in the Tabernacle and the second in the Temple of Solomon. So far as we know, the term "House of God" is never used of any local company of saints, but the temple is, as we have it here. It regards the saints in Corinth as the shrine from which God was being displayed. Two words are used for "temple" in the New Testament, Hieron and Naos. The first takes in all the temple buildings; the second only the sanctuary or inner shrine. It is Naos here for the temple, and views the saints as those who were in the light and favour of God, and in living touch with Him by the Spirit. Only as being such could they rightly display the character of God in Corinth. But this raised a great responsibility that they should **rightly** represent God.

To understand this verse you have called attention to, we must take the whole passage from v. 9 to v. 17. The building is in view right through. Three kinds of builders may be operating there. A **good** builder, building **good** material, v. 14. A **good** builder, building **bad** material, v. 15. A **bad** builder who can only build **bad** material, v. 17. "Defile" and "destroy" in this verse are the same word and give the warning that just retribution would be meted out to any who defiled this temple. It would be one who had not the knowledge of God (ch. 15: 34), and whose presence in that company was spoiling the pure display of the nature and character of God either by bad doctrine or bad practice. A person in that company who could only corrupt by his teaching and his practice would eventually be corrupted by God. Such an one would be like a tare amongst the wheat.

## HEBREWS 10: 12 NOV. 1957

Question: In Hebrews 10: 12, I read, "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." The New Translation reads, "sat down in perpetuity." In view of the great prospect of our Lord's return, is it correct to read of Him as having "for ever sat down," or rather that He has "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever"?

Answer: The statement that our Lord has sat down has no reference at all to His return for His saints. It is to assure us that what He set Himself to do He has done, and has sat down in perpetuity, that is, in relation to the work, not in relation to His return. That He will return is clearly stated in chap. 9: 28.

As to the much disputed comma in this verse, it is well to remember, as often pointed out, that the Greek language from which the New Testament was translated has no punctuation marks whatever. It is left to the translator to judge where and what should be added to give the sense in English. It raises the question as to whether the work, or the result of the work, is in view. In v. 11, we read of two things. First, the priest in the Tabernacle was ever **standing** — his work was never done. Then, he offered **oftentimes**, for there was no sacrifice offered in that day which dealt so effectively with sin that no other sacrifice was needed. "Standing" and "oftentimes" are the two characteristic words in this verse. Now the comma after "one sacrifice for sins" would refer to the "oftentimes;" the comma after "sat down" would refer to the "standing." Both are true and we judge that wherever it is inserted is right. He has "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever," and, so far as the work being done, never needing to be repeated, He has "for ever sat down." Hence we do not insist on where the comma should be; we are assured that both are right. Perhaps the best thing would have been to insert both commas and the sense may have been more clear.

We say again, it has no reference whatever to our Lord's return for His saints. We often have the statement that He has sat down, but we must keep each reference in its own setting. In Mark 16: 19, we read the Lord "sat on the right hand of God," in Acts 7: 55, Stephen says he saw "Jesus standing." Keep each passage in its own setting and there is no difficulty whatever.

## ROMANS 7: 4 DEC. 1957

Question: Will you please explain this verse?

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Answer: The teaching of this part of the epistle to the Romans from ch. 5: 12 to the end of ch. 7, is **transfer**; then in ch. 8 we have the result described for us in a new generation who come under the Headship of Christ and, by the Spirit, are marked by His features. In ch. 5, where our **standing** is in view, we are seen as transferred from Adam to Christ the new Head. This is the work of God **for** us based upon the work of Christ. In ch. 6, where our state is in view, we are delivered from the old master sin, and righteousness takes control, the new master. This we understand is the work of the Spirit **in** us. In ch. 7, where our practice is in view, we are delivered from the bondage of the law by being united to Christ in resurrection and are thus transferred from law to grace. The word "practise" you will find, occurs more than once in ch. 7, according to the New Translation. We have long understood then that ch. 5 is what God has done for us; ch. 6, what association with Christ in resurrection has brought us into that we may bring forth fruit unto God. It has been pointed out that ch. 8: 1 is the answer to the experience of ch. 5; v. 2 is the answer to the experience of ch. 6; and v. 3 is the

answer to the experience of ch. 7. All is needed if we are to walk in newness of life and bring forth fruit, which is really the reproduction of Christ in each one of us.

In the verse you refer to, the figure of a marriage is used to show this transfer. A woman may lose her husband by death and so be free to marry another. The point being, death dissolves the bond and leaves the person free to marry another. However, the simile is turned round in this verse; it is not the husband who dies — the law — but the one under the law. yet the fact remains that death has dissolved the bond and leaves us free to be attached to another, "ye . . . are become dead." The result is we are united to Christ in a new bond, His death having freed us from the old one, so that now, under grace and no longer under law, we bring forth fruit unto God. The law gave neither life nor power to keep its demands, but our new union brings us into life as associated with Christ Who is raised from the dead, and it is in the power of this new life — the reproduction of the features of Christ — that we bring forth fruit unto God.

### **REV. 22: 11 JAN. 1958**

Question: Could you explain the following verse?

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Rev. 22: 11.

Answer: This verse refers to the fixed, eternal condition of all, whether blessed or unblessed. It is preceded by "the time is at hand," and followed by "And, behold I come quickly." When the time comes to which these events refer, and the Lord comes for His own, the time to change one's condition will have gone, for the day of grace will be closed. Those who were once unjust and filthy but who believed in Christ as their Saviour, will be found at His coming righteous and holy, and will abide so for ever. Others who are found at that time unjust and filthy will be so for ever, for the opportunity to have their condition changed will have passed for ever. Emphasis in this verse should be placed on the word, "**still**"; that is, they remain so. Here is a helpful quotation by another:

"When this time comes, the condition of every one will be fixed. The unjust will be unjust **still**; the filthy will be filthy **still**; the righteous will be righteous **still**; the holy will be holy **still**. The filthy will never become holy; the holy will never become filthy. Now, indeed, it is the day of grace when the filthy can have their filthiness washed away; but here we look into eternity where the condition of all will be fixed." (H. Smith)

This is how we understand the verse, and we think this quotation concisely explains it.

### **JOHN 16: 8 & ACTS 24: 25 MAR 1958**

Question: What would be the distinction between the witness of the Spirit as recorded in John 16: 8 — "sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," and that of Paul to Felix as recorded in Acts 24: 25 — "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come"?

Answer: It is well to note first of all that the witness of the Spirit is to the whole world as such, while that of Paul is to one individual in that world. The witness of the Spirit is unchanging and is there at all times during the absence of Christ. The witness to different individuals may vary in its terms according to the condition of that individual. This is clearly seen in the book of Acts where many distinctive accounts of presenting the gospel are recorded.

In the first Scripture to which you call attention, the very presence of the Spirit in this world as dwelling in the hearts of believers brings "demonstration" (New Translation) of three things. "Sin" — for the world had not believed on the Son. "Righteousness" — in the fact that the Father had taken Him out of the world and taken Him to glory. He came on behalf of the Father and it was only right that, if they would not have Him, the Father should take away the only One Who could save this world. "Judgment" — in that the prince of this world who led them to reject Christ was himself brought into judgment. Note, not here "judgment to come." The judgment on the prince of this world has come already. He is judged in the cross of Christ. Had this world received the Son, the Spirit would not have been here in His present testimony dwelling in our hearts. I do not doubt the demonstration is first to us, then through us to this world as we seek to bear witness to the Son and to the sin of this world in rejecting Him. But it is the presence of the Spirit which brings this demonstration, not so much what the Spirit has to say.

As Paul stood before Felix he would have some idea of the character of this man, and led by the Spirit would seek to convict him of his individual sins in the sight of God. This word "reason" is the word from which we derive the word dialogue — persons discussing a matter. The word translated "temperance" means self-control. We can see how the apostle reasoned with this man as to what is right in the sight of God, which meant that he stood in great need of self-control if he wished to escape the ultimate judgment of God. Little wonder Felix trembled as Paul pressed upon him the need of repentance by forsaking his sins and thus escaping the ultimate judgment of God. Here the judgment upon **man** is still future as God is offering to him the forgiveness of sins; hence the term "judgment to come;" while the **prince** of this world is already judged without any hope of forgiveness.

As we said, individual testimony to men may vary according to their particular condition, while the testimony of the Spirit is unvarying to this world that has crucified the Son of God and cast Him out. Nevertheless, it is by the Spirit dwelling in our hearts that we are led to attempt to convict men in this world in view of bringing them to a state of repentance.

## **JUDAS AND THE LORD'S SUPPER APRIL 1958**

Question: Did Judas break bread?

Answer: No. It may appear so in the record of Luke, but a comparison with the other gospels will clearly prove he had gone out ere the supper was introduced. It is well known to Bible students that Luke groups events together in a moral sequence; Matthew groups them in a dispensational way. It would appear from John 13, that Judas left between the eating of the passover and the introduction of the supper. John of course does not give the account of the supper but leaves no doubt as to when he left the room. Both Matthew and Mark in their record make it abundantly clear he was exposed, and with the account of John that he immediately left the room, it is clear that he was not there when our Lord took the bread and instituted the supper. Luke would seem to suggest that the supper is eaten by those who are associated with Christ in His rejection consequent upon His being delivered up, While Matthew and Mark so record it as having displaced the passover, Judas having departed. All the same, if Judas had, it would not have perturbed us, for he had before exercised all the powers of the kingdom, even with power to raise the dead; nor do we doubt that many more since that day have participated in this wonderful feast who had no more right to do so than he. Still, we do not think he was there.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER — MATT. 6 MAY 1958

Question: Why do we not repeat the Lord's prayer in our meetings?

Answer: We need to learn that the prayer given by our Lord to His disciples while He was here in this world was only applicable to the time of His presentation to Israel as their Messiah. It has to be noted that the so-called sermon on the mount was given in view of His rejection, hence He prepares His disciples for persecution and being evil spoken of. This prayer was all part of this instruction. Afterwards our Lord was rejected, but having died and risen again and ascended to heaven, He has sent down the Holy Spirit, and thus opened up a completely new order of things which are **heavenly, spiritual** and **eternal**. The Holy Spirit has brought into being the assembly to which we belong. All connected with the assembly is centred in Christ in glory and not in the Messiah on earth. The teaching **of** and **for** the assembly is found in the Epistles, not in the Gospels, although we learn much of the glory of Christ in the Gospels. Now, nowhere in the Epistles are we instructed to use this prayer, while we do have ample references to prayer and many examples as well. A consideration of these will show at once the higher plane they are on. Eph. 1 and 3; Phil. 1; Col, 1 are a few examples ; and in Eph. 6: 18, 19; James 5: 16, we are told what to pray for. In all instruction by our Lord there are Divine principles which never alter, and all the things in this prayer in Matt. 6 are based upon unchanging principles, yet the grouping of them has in view a company of disciples on earth associated with Messiah and not a company of the members of the body of Christ attached to him in the glory; Our prayers then to-day are in relation to the assembly and those who compose the assembly, having the heavenly calling in view and not the kingdom on earth.

## EXODUS 12: 35, 36 JUNE 1958

Question: In Exodus 12: 35, 36 we read that the Israelites took gold, silver and jewels and raiment from the Egyptians. It looks as though it amounted to stealing, yet when the time came for the construction of the Tabernacle and Moses asked the people for gifts, these things were used for this work. This does not seem to be in accord with the New Testament where we are exhorted not to go to the world for anything, be it money or materials, in the service of the Lord. Or have I a wrong idea?

Answer: It may help first to point out that the word rendered "borrowed" is really to "ask," and the word rendered "lent" means "gave." The concordance will show that it really means "demanded." In view of the fact that the children of Israel had served the Egyptians for 400 years, building the treasure cities for Pharaoh (Ex. 1: 11), God had before said to Moses that they were to demand these things as payment for their labours, Ex. 3: 21, 22. It was not more than they had a right to, and it seems the Egyptians knew this, hence the eager way in which they seemed to answer this demand. It was "spoil" but spoil they richly deserved.

As to using this in the service of the Lord, we have long thought that much which we have handled while in this world, prior to the call of God, has in the providence of God formed us as vessels with a view to serving Him in this world. Moses in his day as reared in the house of the daughter of Pharaoh and Paul in his day reared in the tenets of Judaism, are both examples of this. Perhaps at a later date, Mr. Darby reared in the Irish Church and so well educated for this work, was to lay all this at the feet of the Lord; and how great has been the service he rendered as a consequence. So it was with the children of Israel. It was their wages, willingly given to God to form the Tabernacle.

## THE "SHEKINAH" GLORY OCT. 1958

Question: We often hear in our meetings of the "Shekinah" glory and some of us have been looking for this in the book of Numbers but have failed to find it. Is there such a word in Scripture?

Answer: No. The words from which the **term** is taken appear to be in Scripture but the word itself **as such** is not. We are all apt to pass on phrases we hear without ascertaining if these things are so. Some years ago two of us looked for this "Shekinah glory" and failing to find it got into touch with a Rabbi in Bradford who gave us the following note. Since receiving this note, we have hesitated to use the term as we do not need to fear using the name Jehovah.

"Shekina" (or "Sheckinah" or "Shekhinah" according to modes of transliteration) is the Hebrew word which means "Dwelling," and used for the theological conception usually termed "Immanence."

In Hebrew post biblical writings, this word is used among others as a **synonym** for Deity. The name of God was considered too holy to be used even for theological purposes and the Jews developed the habit of referring to Him by His attributes and things associated with Him in Scripture. e.g. They called Him "The Place" (on account of such passages as Ps. 24, "Who shall ascend . . . His holy place"); "Merciful;" "The Holy One;" "Blessed be He."

Now Exodus 25. 8 has, "And shall dwell" (or that may dwell) in the midst. The word for "Shall dwell" is from the Hebrew root "Shakan" (a shaken) and the noun from the root "Shekinah" was used to express the idea of "Immanence" of God and His nearness to men." (Signed J.E.)

## THE GOLDEN ALTAR AND THE GOLDEN CENSER NOV. 1958

Question: What distinction do you make between the golden altar and the golden censer?

Answer: The golden altar is typical of priestly intercession but the golden censer is typical of priestly worship. The altar belonged to the **holy** place but the censer to the **most holy** place. Incense was burned on the altar every morning and every evening when Aaron attended to the lampstand, but incense was burned on the censer only once every year on the great day of atonement. Aaron in his garments of glory and beauty burned incense upon the altar daily, an evident type of our Lord as the Great High Priest over the house of God who "ever liveth to make intercession" (Heb. 7: 25). When Aaron burned incense on the censer he was clad in his garments of linen. In his garments of glory and beauty he represented the people before God as seen in the shoulders and the breastplate; in the garments of linen he was doing a work whereby God could righteously to on with the people. That day was more for God than for the people, however much they may have been involved in it. The work of that day went beyond the people and, typically, has its reconciliation of all things in view, as we read in Lev. 16: 33. We believe the censer stayed in the Most Holy Place as its rightful place of service as we shall see, and it may be that it held the incense which was **always** in the presence of God; a fact very often overlooked (Ex. 30: 36).

In confirmation of this, see Heb. 9: 1-5. It is significant here that in the enumeration of the vessels of the tabernacle, the golden altar is omitted, but the golden censer included. Only here are we told that the censer was golden. Moreover, it says "the Holiest of all; which **had** the golden censer" (vv. 3, 4). We gather from this verse that the censer stayed in that place, the Holiest of all. Now why is there no mention of the golden altar? We believe it to be because we are as in the Holiest of all, beyond the need of priestly intercession, and are there to **worship** rather than to express need. We judge the answer to the golden altar is found in Hebrews chapters 2, 4 and 7. There, as the antitype of the altar we have;

succour, ch. 2; sympathy, ch. 4; and salvation, ch. 7. All these are in relation to need on the wilderness side of our relationship with God, but once we enter into the "Holiest of all" in the spirit of our souls, we are conscious of being in the presence of God, to intelligently offer to God the fragrance of Christ as typified in the incense. We are sure that if we do not avail ourselves of all the provision of the Great High Priest(ch. 4: 14) over the house of God, we shall not be in a fit state to enter the "Holiest" in the spirit of worship. We are there, not in the light only of what Christ has done for us, but in the light of what He has done for God, and to offer there what we have learned of His greatness and glory for the delight of the heart of God.

These are very brief remarks concerning a vast subject, but we hope they are clear enough to show why we said at the beginning that the golden altar is typical of priestly intercession, and the golden censer typical of priestly worship.

## 1 COR. 14: 30 FEB. 1959

Question: "If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace." (1 Cor. 14: 30).

What is the meaning of this verse, and has it any instruction for us today?

Answer: We must bear in mind that at the time this epistle was written very little, if indeed any, of the New Testament was available to the saints at Corinth. Certainly none other of the Epistles of Paul. It was still the manifest work of the Holy Spirit to give revelations for the guidance of the saints, as chapter 12 of this epistle would show. We gather that the prophets would derive much help from the Old Testament Scriptures, and it may have been the custom for the saints when gathered together for some with the gift of a prophet to expound what they had of the Word of God. At such a time the Spirit may have seen the need of a revelation of something not to be found in the Old Testament, and would give an indication of this to one sitting by and listening to the prophet who was speaking. The prophet in such a case was to cease speaking so that the revelation could be passed on to the saints. This is again referred to in verse 26, "a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation." It is evident that all these were in exercise when the saints were gathered, and the apostle was showing which was the more important by instructing that a prophet should give way to one who had a revelation which would be some needed word for the moment.

As the word of God has been completed by the revelation given to Paul, we do not have further revelations to-day. We are bound to the written word, where all that is needed in our service for God is clearly stated. Beware of anyone who would tell you he has a revelation of something not found in the word of God.

## 1 COR. 15: 22 JUNE 1959

Question: What is your judgment of 1 Cor. 15: 22? Do you think "all" in both cases is coextensive?

Answer: We do. The previous verse makes this quite clear. There we see that death by one man and resurrection by another are clearly coextensive. "For since by man (came) death, by man also resurrection of (those that are) dead" (New Translation). That is, **physically** dead, not **spiritually** dead. It is not a question only of the resurrection of believers, but of resurrection as a power, and that power in the hands of Christ. Resurrection does not apply to **souls** but to **bodies**. Through losing sight of this fact some limit the term here "in Christ" to believers. "Made alive" indicates a dead body brought to

life again in resurrection. That believers have life in their souls is quite clearly taught in many parts of the New Testament, but it is not the subject here. Further, this verse is quite in line with another on the same subject. "Wonder not at this, for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall go forth" (John 5: 28 N. Tr.). This, as you will see by reading carefully the whole of the passage from verse 24 to 29, is additional to the Son speaking in quickening power in the hearts of those who believe in Him. Such will not come into judgment, but all, saint and sinner, who have come under the power of death will be released from that power eventually. Saints of course at His coming; sinners at the great white throne; but the fact remains that a moment is coming when not one individual, saint or sinner, will be under the power of death, and Christ is He Who will end that power for all. Keep in mind that it is the death of the body here and not dead souls, and the matter resolves itself.

One more interesting fact in relation to this subject is found in chapter 11 of this same epistle. "Christ is the head of **every** man" (v. 3 N. Tr.). This refers to creation, not to redemption. All, saint and sinner, have to say to Him whether for blessing or judgment.

### **JOHN 10: 17, 18 AUG. 1959**

Question: "I lay down My life, that I might take *it* again. I have power to lay *it* down, and I have power to take *it* again," John 5: 17, 18.

If the first "it" speaks of the life (the blood) laid down never to be taken up again, to what life does the second *it* refer?

Answer: The "it" is the same in each case. The life He *gave* never to be taken up again is referred to in such passages as John 6: 51. "And the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." This life was given as the basis of propitiation, and is the life of responsible Manhood which our Lord came into in order that He might go to the cross and deal with the question of sin. That life, given up as an offering for sin, He never took again; this is witnessed to when the soldier pierced His side and forthwith came there out blood and water. Hence in resurrection our Lord said, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones (not blood), as ye see Me have," Luke 24: 39. This was the life of responsible Manhood into which our Lord came, and in which in subjection and obedience He ever walked to the glory and pleasure of the Father. Hence at the close of His pathway He could offer Himself, "through the eternal Spirit . . . without spot to God," Heb. 9: 14.

The verses you quote refer to Himself in His own life as the Son, Divine life in a Divine Person. The laying down of this life has reference to the condition of subject, responsible Manhood; in resurrection He takes it again but apart from the responsible condition which He assumed in order to die. He, a Divine Person, co-equal with the Father and the Spirit in Deity, could never give up *that* life; but having come into a life of responsibility, laid down His life as of Deity when He gave up His life of responsible Manhood in dying upon the cross. In resurrection He takes again the life which was essentially and eternally His, having given up for ever His responsible life when He died upon the cross.

The question you raise is one of the most difficult to understand, and needs very careful consideration if we are to grasp its bearing. Few seem able to understand it, and lest our remarks are not as clear as they ought to be we subjoin a quotation on this matter from the pen of J.N.D. He had been pressed upon the subject by someone who had failed to grasp the bearing of what is admittedly a difficult matter to understand.

"Christ took human life in grace and sinless; and as alive in this life He took sin upon Him. Sin belongs, so to speak, to this life in which Christ knew no sin, but was made sin for us. But He dies — He quits this life. He is dead to sin; He has done with sin in having done with the life to which sin belonged, not in Him indeed but in us, and alive in which He was made sin for us. Raised up again by the power of God, He lives in a new condition into which sin cannot enter, being left behind with the life that He left. Faith brings us into it by grace.

"It has been pretended that these thoughts affect the Divine and eternal life which was in Christ. But this is all idle and evil cavil. Even in an unconverted sinner, dying or laying down life has nothing to do with ceasing to exist as to the life of the man within. All live to God, and Divine life in Christ never could cease or be changed."

A careful consideration of these words will amply repay your trouble, and, we hope, answer the question you have raised.

## 2 COR. 5: 10 OCT. 1959

Question: Who are the "we" and "all" in 2 Cor. 5: 10? Is it correct to say the great white throne is another aspect of the judgment seat of Christ?

Answer: We may add another Scripture to your enquiry to complete this matter. "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14: 11, 12).

In both Romans and 2 Corinthians the whole human family is in view, although in their setting the apostle applies the passages primarily to the saints. Every human responsible creature will have to give account to God, the saints included, *but all will not do it at the same time*. Romans we can leave as it is so clear; your difficulty is in 2 Corinthians.

The word used here for "judgment seat" is *beematos* — tribunal — and bears the thought of an examination to award a prize, not a judge on the bench to award punishment. Note, it is not said in 2 Corinthians that *persons* are judged, but rather their works, although the person receives the verdict and any reward which may be given. It is the life of the believer under the review of Christ in order that He may give to each an appropriate award, and the consequent place in the kingdom in the day of display. Unbelievers will not be there, but as Paul says in the preceding verse, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." It is the service of the saints which will come under review. I do not need to assure you that the word "accepted" in this passage has no reference to the believer's sins — but to his service.

At the great white throne unbelievers will be judged in their sins, and no saint of God will be there. The link that I see between the two judgments is that the same Person will be Judge, but it does say in relation to the great white throne, "And I saw the *dead*, small and great, stand before God." It is persons judged this time, certainly according to their works, but it is the works only and *not* the persons which are judged in 2 Corinthians 5. Whilst it says "stand before God," I do not doubt that it is the Lord Jesus Christ on the throne "for, the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," John 5: 22.

I believe the words "we" and "all" refer to the whole human family, but in 2 Corinthians 5, Paul has the saints only in mind, and hence he uses the special word "tribunal," as pointed out in an earlier paragraph of this reply. It is a question of reward for service, not of persons being judged as sinners.

## 1 JOHN 5: 16, 17. FEB. 1960

Question: Would you please explain the meaning of 1 John 5: 16-17?

Answer: I gather that the statement, "There is a sin unto death" is the subject of this enquiry. Verses 16 and 17 are both occupied with the need of the maintenance of righteousness in those who compose the family of God. If, in the disciplinary ways of the Father one of the members of the family is laid aside through sickness, we may pray for restoration both physically and spiritually. If however the sin is of such a character that God has to remove the saint by death, we are not to pray for that. It needs spiritual discernment in both cases. All sickness is not the result of unrighteousness, but where it is evident that it is and just as evidently not a sin unto death, one can pray for another that restoration may be granted.

There are recorded cases of a "sin unto death" such as the action of Ananias and Sapphira, and also those in Corinth who had fallen asleep. Mr. Kelly records that a brother once sent for him and confessed to him a certain sin, adding that he knew the Lord was going to take him away as a consequence, and the brother shortly afterwards died. "A sin unto death" is something so serious that the one who committed it would be no longer fit to bear testimony to God on earth. This matter is referred to in John 15: 2, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." This is not the same thing as the branch referred to in v. 6 as "cast forth." that would probably refer to Judas, but v. 2 refers to a saint no longer fit to bear fruit. The work of Christ has fitted such for heaven, but they were no longer fit to live on earth so far as bearing fruit is concerned. A very solemn consideration indeed for us all.

## 1 COR. 3: 12. OCT. 1960

Question: What is the meaning of "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble"? 1 Cor. 3: 12.

Answer: First of all, it may help if we point out the features of the first three chapters of this epistle.

In chapter 1 the work of Christ upon the cross is brought before us as ending in God's sight the world of human wisdom which man has constructed in ignorance and independence of God. In chapter 2 the work of the Holy Spirit is in view as introducing in a mystery the sphere where divine wisdom is operating. In chapter 3 the work of the saints as labouring in the sphere of Christianity is in view, and we have the question raised as to whether we are occupied with the things introduced into this world as the product of human wisdom, or with the things of divine wisdom which are in operation in the sphere which has been introduced by the Spirit of God. *Building* refers to the labour we are engaged with in the sphere of our service, for all is moral and spiritual today. So the question is raised — are we building with that which the cross of Christ has brought to an end for God, the things outlined for us in chapter 1; or are we building with those things which the Spirit has brought into existence as outlined in chapter 2?

"Gold, silver, precious stones" are things which the Spirit of God produces in and through the saints. "Wood, grass, straw" (N. Tr.) are the things operating in the sphere of human wisdom, the world man has constructed in independence of God. *Gold* would suggest that which is of God in His nature and attributes; love, holiness, righteousness, grace, mercy, etc. *Silver* would speak of the various effects of the redemptive work of Christ, such as forgiveness, salvation, sanctification, reconciliation, etc. *Precious Stones* would indicate the various glories of Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, Son of David, the Head, Priest, Lord, etc.. These are the positive things which will pass the test and go through the fire.

*Wood* suggest that which is purely natural. *Grass*, that which is fleshly, and *straw* that which is sinful, and which comes under positive judgment; all are the product of man at a distance from God. Let us take care to build with what is of God, that which concerns Christ, and is in the power of the Spirit.

## **"THE DAY OF THE LORD" NOV. 1960**

Question: When does "the day of the Lord" commence?

Answer: At the rapture. This term refers to the time when our Lord will publicly assert His universal power and authority both in the heavens and on the earth. Hostile powers are still allowed in the heavens, but in that day the Lord will subdue and expel every adverse power, whether in the heavens or on the earth, and He will then fill the universe with the glory of God. Hab. 2: 14. This involves the reconciliation of all things (Col. 1: 20), and every person and every thing will come under the administration of the Lord. The first act by the Lord when He does exert this power will be to raise the dead and change the living, as we read in Phil. 3: 21. This will fit the heavenly saints ultimately to share with him in the administration of the kingdom in the world to come. Following the "catching away" of the saints, He will then continue to use His power until all things are subdued to Him, and His will becomes supreme in the universe. All the events of this period, which extend from the rapture to the appearing, are outlined for us in the book of Revelation.

In Phil. 1 we read of "the day of Jesus Christ," v. 6, also of "the day of Christ," v. 10. Both these terms refer to the world to come, when the Anointed of God will administer all things for the pleasure and glory of God. I do not think either of these terms is as extensive as "the day of the Lord." What is conveyed by them will come into evidence only when Christ is manifested in glory, whilst "the day of the Lord," "the day of Jesus Christ" and "the day of Christ" will merge, though each will manifest its distinctive features. But this is not the point in this question. We gather from 2 Pet. 3: 10, that the "day of the Lord" will bring time to an end; then will come into existence "the day of God," but this will be in "the new heavens and the new earth."

## **JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE LORD DEC. 1960**

Question: Do you think John the Baptist knew our Lord before he saw Him on the banks of the Jordan? Do you not think that as they were cousins he must have done so?

Answer: John the Baptist and our Lord were not first cousins, though this is often erroneously stated. Mary and Elizabeth were cousins, as we read in Luke 1: 36. We also read in that chapter that John dwelt in the deserts until his showing to Israel, verse 80. Nazareth was some distance from the city of Juda in which John was born. Matthew tells us that when John began to preach, his voice was the voice of one crying "in the wilderness," ch. 3: 3. Mark confirms this in the opening verse of his gospel. John, in the first chapter of his gospel, tells us that John the Baptist said himself "And I knew Him not." While John was given to understand that he would know the Son of God when he saw the heaven opened, and when the Spirit descended and abode upon Him, yet he had to wait until that event before he knew who the Son of God was. He had some knowledge of the piety of this wonderful Person when he said he had need to be baptized of Him, but twice in that chapter he says, "I knew Him not." I feel sure John neither saw nor knew the Lord until he saw Him on the banks of the Jordan. He was not sent by God to identify a relative, but to identify the Son of God, and to bear testimony of this fact to Israel. "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."

## THE DRINK OFFERING MAY 1961

Question: Why was the drink offering always poured out?

Answer: First, because being a liquid, it could hardly be burned on the altar. Some have thought it may have been poured over the sacrifice, but we have no direct Scripture to this effect so far as I can find. We may have an indirect indication of this in Phil. 2: 17 where Paul says, "Yea, and if I be offered (poured forth) upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." This is regarded as a New Testament answer to the type, joy and rejoicing being the element typified by "wine."

For myself, I have long thought the "drink offering" was not so much the sacrifice — it was not a sacrifice — but rather the divine delight obtained as the result of a work accomplished both for the pleasure of God and the blessing of His creature. For this reason it always comes in last as though it suggested the securing of the delight of God as the result of the sacrifices which it followed. The first "drink offering" ever recorded in Scripture was poured out by Jacob, Gen. 35: 14. Here, I gather, it was the result of God's dealings with Jacob till at last he is in full communion with God and from now on is moving in a way pleasurable to God. It is the only "drink offering" recorded in Genesis. The next and only one in Exodus is found in ch. 29: 40, 41. Here again it is the last offering mentioned in the consecration of the priesthood and, being bound up with the morning and evening lamb, it suggests the continual delight of God in the accomplished work of His Well-Beloved Son. The sacrifice was *offered up* and thus consumed. The "drink offering" was *poured out* and so remains.

## Matthew 25 — Foolish Virgins Apr. 1962

Question: In the parable of the ten virgins were the foolish virgins lost irrevocably, or did they just miss the joy of being present at the marriage supper of the Lamb; and would they afterwards have a place in the kingdom? (Matthew 25).

Answer: This parable does not refer to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Saints of God today are seen in responsibility as wise virgins waiting for the return of the bridegroom, while in the marriage supper of the Lamb they are the bride. No doubt in the truth lying behind this parable those seen as wise virgins will be part of the bride, yet the two thoughts are not the same. What is taught in this parable is that, during the absence of the King, the kingdom has been set up in testimony in this world and there are both true and false professors in it. It is similar to Matthew chapter 13, where the wheat and tares are spoken of. Both this parable and the one following show this to be the case. Foolish virgins *shut out* and wicked servants *cast out* are, as you say, irrevocably lost. Our Lord would never say to any one of His saints, "I know you not," however unwatchful they may have been. The reference is to those who today take up the profession of Christianity, but do not belong to the Lord at all.

In the book of Proverbs we learn that those who are wise belong to God as the children of wisdom, but those who are foolish refuse to listen to His counsel. Note that it is said of the wise virgins "But the wise took oil in their vessels," v. 4. I believe the vessels suggest that they were born of God, and were those in which the Spirit could dwell. The foolish had lamps but no vessels, i.e. they were not born of God. The return of the Lord will bring to light those who are, and those who are not His own, whatever their pretension may be. His own are sealed with the Spirit, but others have never possessed the Spirit, because they have not believed the gospel. If we keep in mind that the kingdom involves responsibility, we shall understand how some may make a profession and yet not belong to the Lord at all. I think this to be the bearing of this parable.

## Isaiah 52: 14 JUNE 1962

Question: "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men," Isaiah 52: 14. When did this take place, before the cross or on the cross? Was it by God because of our sins, or by those who nailed Him to the cross? What part has this in the work of redemption?

Answer: This very affecting verse refers to the treatment our Lord received at the hands of sinful men and, in itself, has no part in the work of redemption. Two things are brought very closely together in this part of Scripture, for the verse you call attention to is really the beginning of the further events related so graphically in chapter 53. The Lord's treatment at the hands of sinful men, and His bearing our sins under the hand of a holy and righteous God, are almost inextricably brought together in these verses, for both happened at the same time when our Lord allowed Himself to be taken by wicked hands and to be crucified. Yet, we must be clear that not one thing that men did to Him had any part in the work of redemption. Having taken Him, and so treated Him as these verses prophetically said they would do, it was then that God entered into the question of our guilt when he "bare our sins in His own body on the tree." The two things are not the same, but they happened at the same time. Peter, from whom we are quoting, adds, "by whose stripes ye were healed," 1 Peter 2: 24. Whilst men took Him in hatred and by wicked hands crucified Him, God took occasion of these circumstances to enter into the matter of dealing with our sins. We believe that the three hours in which our Lord was on the cross before the darkness, witnessed what men did to Him; then in the three hours of darkness we have the action of a holy God in remembering our sins for the last time on the head of the sinless Lamb of God. His suffering at the hands of men, and His suffering at the hand of God, happened at the same time, but we must be clear that the *first had no part in the work of redemption.*

## John 4: 6 and John 19: 14 OCT. 1962

Question: To what hour of day do these hours refer? "It was about the sixth hour," John 4: 6. "And about the sixth hour," John 19: 14. Does the apostle use Jewish time or Roman?

Answer: The apostle John uses Roman time. The other three Gospel writers use Jewish time, but John always uses Roman time; the time that we use today. If you compare Matthew 27: 45, with John 19: 16, you will note that Matthew records "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour;" referring to the time when our Lord was upon the cross. Yet John says it was "the sixth hour" when our Lord was still in Pilate's hall! Jewish time is from six o'clock in the evening to six o'clock in the morning, and from six o'clock in the morning to six o'clock in the evening. Roman time, which we use today, is from midnight to midday and from midday to midnight. The sixth hour of which Matthew speaks would correspond to our midday, and the ninth hour in that verse to our three o'clock in the afternoon. Had John recorded the three hours of darkness, he would have told us it was from the twelfth hour to the third hour.

Inattention to this fact has led to some mistaken suggestions as to some of the events recorded by John. In ch. 1: 39 we read, "it was about the tenth hour." Strange to say, in the margin of some Bibles it says, "That is, two hours before midnight." Had they given two hours before **midday** they would have been right, for it was ten o'clock in the morning, not evening. We can hardly think the disciples came to our Lord at ten o'clock at night and abode with Him that day.

While it has often been stated that the woman of Samaria came to our Lord at the well at midday, it was really six o'clock in the evening, and when our Lord was in the judgment hall of Pilate it was six o'clock in the morning.

## **John 1: 21 and Matthew 17: 12-13 MAR 1963**

Question: In John 1: 21 we read that when the Jews sent messengers to John the Baptist to ask him if he was Elias he replied "I am not." Yet in Matthew 17: 12-13, the Lord said "Elias is come already, and . . . the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist." Why did John say he was not Elias when the Lord said he was?

Answer: The solution of this problem is given to us by the Lord Himself in Matthew 11: 14. "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." Had you considered the rest of the verse in Matthew from which you quote, the clue to the problem is given as, "they knew him not."

To those who received John, *he was* Elias, but to those who refused him *he was not*. It was to the Jews who had clearly shown they would not receive him, or submit to be baptised of him that he said he was not Elias. They formed part of the company to whom our Lord referred in Luke 7: 24-31. To the people who had justified God by submitting to the baptism of John he *was* Elias, but to the Pharisees and lawyers who refused the counsel of God and refused to be baptised of John he *was not* Elias. Thus John the Baptist was Elias to some, but not to others.

## **Acts 18: 24 APR 1963**

Question: Do you think Apollos was born of God when he came to Ephesus? If so, was he sealed by the Spirit seeing he only knew the baptism of John? (Acts 18: 24).

Answer: There can be no doubt that he was born of God and had made progress in the understanding of the word. We read he "taught exactly the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John." He was a believer, though limited in his knowledge. Where he had been since he had believed the truth preached by John the Baptist we do not know, but he was of the company of whom John the Apostle wrote, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," (John 1: 13). Apollos had been born of God through the testimony of John the Baptist, and must have been an apt student of the word; so much so that he boldly spoke of that which he had learned when in the synagogue at Ephesus.

Although we do not read that he had been sealed by the Spirit, I do not doubt he must have been, for we do not read that he received the Spirit after his further instruction from Aquila and Priscilla. This would surely have been recorded had it been so, but I judge he already had the Spirit even if he needed further light in relation to Jesus. I cannot think that a man not born of God, and not having the Spirit, could convince others "by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." His own witness proved that both these things *were* true of him.

## **Leviticus 4. OCT. 1963**

Question: In the ritual of the sin-offering in Leviticus 4, I notice that if the priest who is anointed sinned, the blood of his sin offering was to be sprinkled seven times before the LORD before the veil of the sanctuary, put upon the horns of the altar of incense, and poured out at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering. The same procedure was to be followed in the event of the whole congregation sinning, but not if it were a ruler or one of the common people. Can you explain why this difference is made?

Answer: "The priest that is anointed" was the only person who had access to God as far as the veil, and he alone burnt incense upon the "altar of sweet incense." In view of his restoration to this place of privilege, the ground upon which he stood and the altar which he touched in that service, needed also to

be cleansed by blood. Included in this was the pouring out of the blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering, for that was the ground upon which he stood when offering a sacrifice for any of the congregation who had sinned, or offered a sweet savour offering to the LORD. It suggests that if a priest should sin, the ground upon which he stood, and the vessels with which he officiated were defiled, and these things as well as he himself must be cleansed by blood.

So it was with the whole congregation, for the priest stood upon that ground and officiated at the altars as the representative of the people before God. Perhaps these elements are included in the verse, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood," Heb. 9: 22.

## **STARS; DUST; SAND NOV. 1963**

Question: With regard to the distinction suggested between the seed as "stars," "dust" and "sand" in your August issue, page 240, why does Moses allude to Israel as "stars" in Exodus 32: 13; Deu. 1: 10, 10: 22, 28: 62? Also at a later date when the Levites addressed God as recorded in Nehemiah 9: 23, they too referred to Israel as "the stars of heaven"?

Answer: We assure you that we had considered the passages to which you refer before suggesting the meanings which we have recorded in the notes of the Bible readings on the book of Genesis. We still do not doubt that the meanings given in these readings are correct, but in relation to the interesting matters to which you call our attention, we offer the following as a solution of the problem.

As pointed out in the readings, the "stars" were connected with Isaac, the son who was the surety of the *unconditional* promise of God which He made to Abraham. Both the "dust" and the "sand" are seen in relation to Jacob, the man in *responsibility*, whereas Isaac was the son of *promise*. Perhaps both Moses and the Levites had this in mind when referring to Israel as the "stars." they did not have the knowledge of the dispensational ways of God as we have today. Israel as the favoured people of God was the vision before their minds. From the three descriptions of the seed they selected that which in their estimation was the greatest of the three, and in this they were right. Might not these servants have had sufficient light to recognize that if Israel were to be blessed of God it must be on the ground of His unconditional promise, and not on the ground of their responsibility? You will note in both prayers there was concern as to the failure of the people, and both Moses and the Levites were praying to God on their behalf in relation to His unconditional promise concerning them and not on the ground of their responsibility in which they had failed.

## **Sisters praying FEB. 1964**

Question: Should sisters pray in a mixed meeting held in a private house?

Answer: I do not think so. Why alter clear assembly instructions because a house is used for the gathering and not the meeting room? I have often had the privilege of sharing in family prayers in the many homes I am privileged to stay in but have yet to hear any woman taking part in prayer. I have also had the privilege of joining many house meetings of both young and elderly saints, but again have never heard a female voice in prayer. I am sure if sisters have regard to the features of true piety they will not wish to pray in the presence of brothers. The following verse of Scripture may help to curb the emotions of some who may think they are doing God service, and yet in reality are offending against clear assembly instructions: -

"Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the

LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15: 22).

### **Titus 3: 5 — Regeneration APRIL 1964**

Question: Would you please give some help as to the meaning of the "regeneration" in Titus 3: 5? Does it mean "new birth"?

Answer: No. This word is used twice in the New Testament, here and in Matthew 19: 28, where it is evident that "new birth" cannot be the meaning. Regeneration suggests an outward change, not the beginning of something entirely new as new birth quite evidently is. It conveys the thought of restoration rather than that of new birth, and in Matthew 19 it evidently refers to the kingdom in the world-to-come. All will then be restored by Christ when He takes His power and reigns.

Further, new birth could not be described as "washing," which is a similar word to that used by Peter, "the sow that was washed," 2 Peter 2: 22.

"Renewing of the Holy Ghost" which is also referred to in Titus 3: 5, is more on the line of new birth. In the energy of this new power — "kainos," something entirely new — those to whom the apostle referred had cleansed themselves from their former unclean habits, thus giving evidence of the fact that they had been born of God.

The following note taken from J.N.D.'s Synopsis on Titus makes the matter quite clear.

The word used here, is not being born again. It is used, besides this passage, only in the end of Matthew 19 for the millennium. The renewing of the Holy Ghost is a distinct thing from the regeneration. This last is a change of one state of things to another.

Enlargement on thoughts concerning the "**holy city, new Jerusalem**" OCT. 1964

Question: In the bound volume of "Precious Things" for 1958, there is a statement on page 105 which I would like you to expand a little further. Here it is — "I believe the city will be the eternal establishment of the work of God; the bride — the work of Christ; and the tabernacle — the work of the Spirit."

Answer: There is a most interesting line of truth running through the New Testament which, in result, is found in the portion of Scripture we were referring to, that is, *the evident fact of the Godhead working in unity*. One has found in almost every outstanding truth revealed to us that each Person of the Godhead is to be seen actively engaged in relation to it. A few examples will show this to be so.

In the account of the incarnation as given to us by Luke, we read, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," Luke 1: 35. Here each Person is seen moving in the unity of the Godhead in relation to the great matter of the incarnation of the Son of God. Later, as our Lord was about to commence His public ministry, this unity is observed again in the scene on the banks of the Jordan. "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My Beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased," Luke 3: 22. Yet again, in the work of our Lord upon the cross, we read, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God," Hebrews 9: 14. These are but a few passages which demonstrate the unity of the Godhead in relation to the outstanding operations of God.

There is one more Scripture to which attention is called in view of the direct bearing it has upon the question raised. It is in the second chapter of Ephesians, in fact the whole of that chapter. It will readily

be seen that in verses 1 to 10 we have the work of *God*, relating in the main to the work of quickening (v. 5) and to that which He creates in verse 10. In verses 11 to 17 we have the work of the *Son* — He redeems (v. 13), and He reconciles us to God (v. 16). Finally, in verses 18 to 22 we have the work of the *Spirit* who gives us access (v. 18), and builds us together as a habitation for God (v. 22). It was this chapter which was in mind when making the statement that the three descriptions of the assembly in her eternal place would show the full result of the teaching in Ephesians. All that is being effected as described there is the working out of the "eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Ephesians 3: 11). From these references we judge that the City will be the distinctive result of the work of God in relation to the assembly; as the Bride — the distinctive work of Christ Himself; and as the Tabernacle — the distinctive work of the Holy Spirit. Notice that it is only when the assembly is seen in her eternal home that she is called "New Jerusalem." Would not this show the distinctive character of "new creation" effected in her by the direct working of God?

To the overcomer in Philadelphia *only* is the reward held out of "New Jerusalem." It may encourage us in our day to seek to be marked by Philadelphian features, seeing that what God is effecting in such overcomers will not only be displayed in the world-to-come (temple), but will go into the eternal state (New Jerusalem).