

555 DIFFICULT BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED - VOLUME 1

by Christian Herald

Answers to 555 difficult Bible questions compiled from the Christian Herald newspaper, founded by Rev. Michael Paget Baxter in the nineteenth century. The collection addresses challenging scriptural questions on origins, theology, and practical Christian living.

99 Chapters

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- Forward

Christian Herald: Origins and endings

The Christian Herald newspaper was the brainchild of the Rev Michael Paget Baxter, born in Doncaster on 7 December 1834. He was the tenth child born to Robert Baxter, head of a firm of solicitors based in Westminster. Baxter became a Christian at the age of 20 under the ministry of the Rev Samuel Martin of Westminster Chapel.

After spending a number of years in Canada and America during his twenties, Baxter returned to England in 1863. Four years later, in May 1867, he launched the small monthly prophetic magazine Signs of our Times in which he published articles by various ministers on the exposition of prophecy.

In 1873-4, having attended the meetings of the famed contemporary preachers Moody and Sankey, he decided "immense good could be done by publishing in my magazine full reports of the services thus enabling multitudes to read the evangelist's sermons". This idea resulted in the weekly launch of Christian Herald and Signs of our Times, the first surviving issue of which was published on 7 July 1876. The purpose of the publication as outlined in this paper's obituary for Rev Baxter on 20 January 1910 was "to make known to the masses of the people the saving truths of the Gospel of Christ".

Initially the paper was printed and published in Glasgow but it quickly became necessary to have an office in London. Premises were sought and found in Tudor Street, under the shadow of St Paul's Cathedral. For a number of years there were simultaneous issues of the Christian Herald from the two centres. At the time of Baxter's death the paper was "a welcome visitor in considerably more than 300,000 homes". Up until his death Baxter also published the Prophetic News a paper circulated for many years, even after his death, and also the separate Christian Herald Penny Stories, a single "complete, interesting and high-toned story" published once a week.

Later in his life Baxter travelled regularly to France, Belgium, Italy and Spain to distribute Bibles. He allegedly delivered by hand between two and three thousand Bibles each trip. At the time of his death Baxter reckoned that he had distributed around two million Bibles, gospels and tracts himself. Baxter was close to many of the most prominent preachers of the time and was himself quietly baptised in the Metropolitan Tabernacle by C H Spurgeon.

An enthusiastic foreteller of Armageddon he unsuccessfully predicted the end of the world for no less than seven different times between 1867 and 1908. However, commentators at the time remarked that his prophetic writings were more of a hobby alongside the more serious business of social action and spreading the Gospel.

In 1878 Baxter sent two "agents" to inaugurate an edition of the Christian Herald in New York. In 1890 Dr Louis Klopsch purchased the American rights and invited a Dr Talmage to edit. The

American edition of the Christian Herald ran successfully until 1992.

Mr Baxter, “founder and proprietor of the Christian Herald passed peacefully on the morning of 7 January 1910” so announced the national press of the day. His funeral was held on 11 January at Christ Church Highbury Grove. He was survived by his wife, Elizabeth Baxter, who lived until 1926.

Their son, Paget Baxter, took over the Christian Herald from his father and led the paper into further successes with a boasted readership of a million weekly by the end of the 1920s. In the early 1930s, the traditional hand-drawn illustrations that characterised the paper’s front page stories were replaced by black and white photography. Due to the difficulty and expense of appropriating photographs directly related to current affairs, the front page stories moved away from the large national news stories of the first 30 years to more regional, Christian-based magazine style images.

In June 1954 the Christian Herald welcomed the young evangelist preacher Billy Graham to write a question and answer column each week. This column ran for many years and in it Billy fielded questions ranging from “Are films good or evil?” and “Are family devotions practical?” to “Should a Christian read cheap books?” Throughout the next 20 years the magazine style of the paper was emphasised with features such as “It’s time to choose a hobby” and “Fish are so fashionable!”

One of the most remarkable characters in the history of The Christian Herald was Dr Thomas Wilkinson Riddle, who edited it from the Second World War until 1982. He had been the Baptist minister in Plymouth, and thanks to the high society company he kept, was referred to by some as a “Baptist Pope”. When in 1979, Colin Reeves acquired the business, Dr Riddle was listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the World’s Oldest Working Editor - he was 94.

At that time an elderly lady who lived in the Lake District, a descendant of Baxter, owned the paper. The women’s editor was 88 and the general manager was 77. Colin Reeves recalls his first visit to their print works beside Shoreham Harbour as “like walking into a Dickensian film set”. Some of the machinery was in fact given to an industrial museum.

In June 1996 current editor Russ Bravo launched the New Christian Herald, a redesigned and revamped paper closer to the ‘current affairs from a Christian perspective’ look and feel of 100 years before. In February 1999 another redesign saw the “New” dropped from the paper’s title.

Billion of readers have been informed, entertained and encouraged by the Christian Herald over five or six generations and hundreds of thousands of God’s children have been featured throughout the 6,753 editions in our archive. At the end of an extraordinary life and ministry we thank God for the faithfulness of all who have worked on the paper for his glory.

On 20 September 1952, the week the Christian Herald offices moved out of Tudor Street, London, a writer known only by his initials, C. L. J, wrote of the future of the paper: “We must expect great changes in a world growing smaller day by day as giant planes encircle the earth’s surface in a space of a few hours. Our columns will be filled with these records of men’s progress in science but our sincerest hopes and prayers will be for the renewal of the faith of all who have been privilege to hear God’s word. We go forward in a spirit of humility and pray that he who has so greatly enabled us, will lay before us a wider opportunity still.”

Amen.

- Who Wrote the Various Books in the Bible?

1. Who Wrote the Various Books in the Bible?

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy —Moses (scholarly opinions differ here, but so far no thoroughly convincing arguments have been advanced to disprove the Mosaic authorship of large portions of these books); Joshua—Joshua (also ascribed to Phineas, Eleazar, Samuel and Jeremiah); Judges— ascribed by Jewish tradition to Samuel; Ruth—unknown; I and II Samuel—unknown (probably the work of Samuel, Nathan and others) ; I and II Kings —unknown; I and II Chronicles—probably Ezra; Ezra—probably Ezra; Nehemiah—Nehemiah; Esther —probably Mordecai, or Ezra; Job—uncertain (has been attributed to Moses, or Job); the Psalms—David, Moses, and others; Proverbs—Solomon and others; Ecclesiastes—formerly ascribed to Solomon, now thought by many to belong to a later period; Song of Solomon—Solomon; Isaiah—Isaiah; Jeremiah—Jeremiah ; Lamentations—Jeremiah; the remaining books of the Old Testament were written by the prophets whose names they bear, with the probable exception of Jonah; Matthew—Matthew; Mark—Mark; Luke— Luke; John—John; Acts—Luke; Romans to Philemon—Paul; Hebrews—unknown (has been ascribed to Paul, Luke, Apollos, Barnabas); James—James; I and II Peter—Peter; I, II and III John—John; Revelation—John.

- Inspiration of the Bible.

2. Inspiration of the Bible.

The question is asked, "How can I know that the Bible is inspired?" Even in this late day, when the number of Christians has multiplied from a mere handful to four hundred and seventy millions, or fully one-fourth of the entire population of the globe, there are people who doubt the inspiration of the Bible. At different times during the last twenty centuries assaults have been made against the Sacred Book, which Gladstone termed the "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture," but without avail. It has a firmer hold on the hearts of men than in any previous age. Mr. Moody, the greatest of American evangelists, was once asked whether he regarded the Bible as inspired, and his answer was brief and to the point: "I know the Bible is inspired," he said, "because it inspires me 1" There are countless thousands who will echo this answer and whose lives have been transformed by the same inspiration. Not only the great religious scholars, but the masters of secular literature regard the Bible as unapproachable in its high standard of expression, its magnificent imagery, the transcendent nobility of its rhetoric, the authority with which it appeals to the hearts of men, the universality of its application and the power it exercises over the souls of men. It bears within itself the evidence of inspiration, and wherever it is known and read and its precepts followed, its influence is uplifting and inspiring. The theory of inspiration does not exclude, but rather implies, human agency, however. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21).

- What Is Higher Criticism?

3. What Is Higher Criticism?

The ordinary study or criticism is directed to finding out the meaning of the passages, their correct translation and their significance and bearing on doctrines. The higher critics go above and back of all that, applying to the books of the Bible the same tests and methods of examination as are applied to other ancient books. They try to find out who were really the authors of the books and when they were written and whether any changes have been made in them since they were written. This latter question they try to solve by a close examination of the text. When they find, for example, such an expression as "There was no king in Israel in those days" (Judges 17:6), they conclude that that sentence was inserted as explanatory, by some one who edited the book after the contemporaneous historian had finished it Or to take an example of a different kind: There is a statement in Psalms 51:16 that God desires not sacrifice, while in the nineteenth verse it is said that he will be pleased with sacrifice. The explanation the higher critics give is that probably the latter verse was added later, by some priest who did not wish the people to cease bringing sacrifices. The best scholars of the present day believe that many of the conclusions reached by the higher critics are erroneous, and that others are mere guesses for which there is not sufficient evidence.

- What Are the Proofs of Bible Authenticity?

4. What Are the Proofs of Bible Authenticity?

"Can we prove the authenticity of the Bible by outside evidence ?" is a frequent question. The authenticity of the Bible is being proved by the old records on monuments, by tablets recently deciphered, and by discoveries in Bible lands. That is if by authenticity you mean its historical truth. As to inspiration, the best evidence is its effects. The man who loves the Bible and tries to conduct his life according to its precepts is a better man for the effort. The Bible-reading nation advances in the best line of civilization, caring for its poor and afflicted, and becoming in all ways better. Another evidence of its being inspired is the revelation it gives a man of himself, holding a mirror to his gaze by which he recognizes himself. Another evidence is its survival. No book was ever more violently attacked, no book was ever more misused, yet it has outlived the attacks of foes and the faults of friends and is read today more widely than ever. These are a few of the reasons for believing it came from God.

- Can We Find Any Reference to Christ in Contemporaneous Secular Writers?

5. Can We Find Any Reference to Christ in Contemporaneous Secular Writers?

Yes. There are references to Christ in connection with Christians, by several historians. Tacitus, who was praetor under Domitian in A. D. 88, only fifty-eight years after the Crucifixion, refers to Christ (Annal XV144). Pliny the younger, who was tribune in Syria about the same time, also refers to him (Epistle X.-97). There are also references in Lucian, who lived about the middle of the second century. He states explicitly the fact of Christ having been crucified. Suetonius and Eusebius also refer to Christ Besides these evidences, there was the persecution of the Christians under Nero, which is recorded by all historians. Nero died A. D. 68, only thirty-eight years after the Crucifixion. It is therefore clear that there were many Christians before that time. How could the sect have come into existence without a founder? If you saw an oak growing in a place where there was no tree fifty years before, you would suspect that some one had planted an acorn there, and if four men told you how, when and by whom it was planted, you would be prepared to believe them. So there is good reason for believing the Gospel narratives, when you read in secular history of the existence of the Christian Church fifty years after the Crucifixion. Their stories are a credible explanation of a well-established fact

- Does the Bible Teach Science?

6. Does the Bible Teach Science?

It is not a scientific textbook, nor was it written to teach science, but religion. The discrepancies between the story of creation as given in the Bible and that given by the scientists are very much such as we should find in two descriptions of a great battle, if one of them was written by a clergyman who knew nothing of military tactics, and the other by a military expert who knew nothing of religion. The important fact for us— the fact that is of more momentous interest than all the discoveries of science—is that God made the universe. For this knowledge we are not indebted to science, which has not yet attained it, but we do get it from the Bible. A person who wants to know the latest discoveries of science as to geology and astronomy, should study the recent books of science; but if he wants to know the way to God and eternal happiness, he should go to the Bible. Each has its own sphere.

- Why Should We Believe the Scriptures?

7. Why Should We Believe the Scriptures?

Some people answer this query by saying that the reason is found in the fact that the Bible is the only book handed down to us through the ages. That is not the best answer. Some ancient writings, like the Vedas, for instance, are almost as ancient as the Bible. And many tablets and monuments are in existence containing words written as long ago as the writings of the Scriptures. There are many powerful arguments for the Bible, but the greatest is that every person who will really study it finds that it does tell the truth about the human soul. When a man reads in an arithmetic that two and two make four, he does not stop to ask himself why he should believe the arithmetic. He knows instinctively and intuitively that the arithmetic is telling him the truth. So when an honest man studies the Bible he finds it full of truths about himself. The Bible tells him he is a sinner, and he knows that is true. The Bible tells him about God, and he finds in his heart a deep conviction that just such a God exists. The Bible offers forgiveness, and the man knows he needs it. Step by step, and point by point, the Bible shows the man what he is and what he needs and points the way to finding the fulfillment of his needs and desires. People find in the Bible help for bearing their trials, power to resist temptation, assurance of immortality and friendship with God. A man who never saw the Bible before, when he reads of God in it, realizes that he always needed and longed for God, but did not know how to find him till the Bible showed him the way. Particularly does it show him how to find God in Christ. That, after all, is the supreme mission of the Bible—to lead men to Christ. But, again, taking the Bible as literature, we find that it hangs together, that it bears within itself the evidence that it is true. Start with the writings of Paul. Here is a levelheaded, highly educated, practical man who has left to the world's literature certain letters to groups of friends. These letters tell about Paul's personal knowledge of Christ, his personal friendship for him, his personal endeavors to forward the work of Christ which he had formerly antagonized until Christ himself appeared to him and set him right Paul tells of becoming acquainted later with men who had known Christ in the flesh—Peter, James, John and others. We find that these men also wrote about Jesus, John writing three letters and a narrative of his life; Peter writing two letters, and apparently giving much of the information to his nephew Mark, who wrote another version of the life of Jesus. Luke, another friend of Paul, and probably also a personal friend of Jesus, wrote another version of his life and wrote the history of what his apostles did through his power after he had risen from the dead and gone back to the heavenly world. These were all good, honest, intelligent men. We may believe what they wrote about Christ and his salvation, just as we believe what Caesar wrote about the Gallic Wars. Further, we find that Christ came from a people whose history is recorded in the books of the Bible and whose prophets uttered messages from God. Peter connects the messages of the prophets with those of himself and the other apostles in 2 Peter 3:2: "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of our Lord and Saviour." The Bible holds together about the person of Christ as the great divine-human document which reveals him to the world.

- Has Bible History Been Substantiated?

8. Has Bible History Been Substantiated?

Yes, to a very notable extent by investigations in Bible lands. Excavations of ancient Babylonian tablets have corroborated the Biblical story of the Flood. The discovery of Assyrian inscriptions has proved the identity of Sargon, one of the greatest of the kings of that nation (see Isaiah 20:1-4); identification of the site of Nineveh and of the Tower of Babel or "Birs Nimrud." Many facts concerning kings, nations, cities and events have been brought to light in these ancient records of brick, stone or papyrus, confirming Scripture history.

- Were the Gospels Written by the Men Whose Names They Bear?

9. Were the Gospels Written by the Men Whose Names They Bear?

Presumption based on internal evidence is in favor of that theory. There has been no serious question as to the authorship of Matthew. Mark is supposed to have derived his knowledge of the events he recorded from Peter. Our knowledge of Peter's character leads us to believe that if he undertook to write a Gospel it would be such an one as the Gospel according to Mark. Such an expression as that in Mark 14:72, "When he thought thereon he wept," implies an intimate knowledge of him such as would be written by Peter himself, or by a close associate. The introduction to Luke's Gospel shows that many Gospels were in existence when Luke wrote, and as he knew of them, he may have availed himself of the material they contained. His remark about writing "in order" suggests compilation. The authorship of the fourth Gospel has been hotly disputed, chiefly because some critics held that the writer of Revelation could not have written the elegant and cultured Greek of the Gospel, The majority of the commentators now, however, are in favor of the belief that John wrote it.

- When Were the Gospels Written?

10. When Were the Gospels Written?

The genuineness of the four Gospels rests upon better authority than that of any other ancient writings. It is the general conclusion of the most eminent scholars that all four were written during the latter half of the first century. Before the end of the second century they were in general use and acceptance as one collection. They are mentioned by Tertullian, in a book written about A. D. 208, as being the work of two apostles and two disciples of apostles. Marcion also mentions their apostolic origin. Origen (who lived A. D. 185-253) refers to them as "the four elements of the church's faith." Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch (A. D. 168), also mentions the Gospels in his writings, and Jerome tells us that Theophilus arranged the four into one work. Tatian (who died about A. D. 170) compiled a Harmony of the Gospels. Justin Martyr (A.D. 99-165) gives many quotations from the Gospels. Many other witnesses might be cited to the same purpose. None of the original manuscripts are now in existence.

- Curiosities of the Scriptures.

11. Curiosities of the Scriptures.

In the Bible the word "Lord" is found 1,853 times. The word "Jehovah" 6,855 times- The word "Reverend" but once, and that in the 9th verse of Psalm in. Psalms 97:8 is the middle verse of the Bible. Esther 8:9 is the longest John 11:35 is the shortest. In the 107th Psalm four verses are alike: Psalms 107:8, Psalms 107:15, Psalms 107:21 and Psalms 107:31. Ezra 7:21 contains all the letters of the alphabet except J. Each verse of Psalms 136:1-26 ends alike. No names or words of more than six syllables are found in the Bible. Isaiah 37:1-38 and 2 Kings 19:1-37 are alike. The word "girl" occurs but once in the Bible, and that in Joel 3:3. There are found in both books of the Bible 3,538,483 letters, 773.693 words, 31,373 verses, 1,189 chapters and 66 books. Acts 26:1-32 is the finest chapter to read. The most beautiful chapter is Psalms 23:1-6. The four most inspiring promises are John 14:2-6; Matthew 11:28; Psalms 37:4. Isaiah 50:1 is the one for the new convert. All who flatter themselves with vain boasting should read Matthew 6:1-34. All humanity should learn Luke 6:20-49.

- Symbols of Christ and Christianity

12. Symbols of Christ and Christianity

"What symbols are used for both Christ and his people y is a frequent question. There are six symbols used for both Christ and his people. 1. A BRANCH. For Christ, in Isaiah 11:1*4, "A branch out of his roots shall bear fruit," and "with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked;" in Zechariah 6:12-13, Hebrews 3:1-4. Isaiah 4:1-6, Zechariah 3:8, Jeremiah 23:5, Jeremiah 33:15-16. For his People. John 15:5, "Ye are the branches;" Isaiah 60:21, "The people also shall be all righteous, the branch of my planting;" also, Romans 11:16, Psalms 80:11, Psalms 80:15. 2. LIGHT. For Christ. In John 8:12, Jesus spake, "I am the light of the world;" also, in John 9:5, Luke 2:32, and 1 John 1:5, "God is light" For his People. Php_2:15, "Among whom ye are seen as lights in the world," Matthew 5:14, Ephesians 5:8, Acts 13:47, Isaiah 42:6, Proverbs 4:18. 3. A STONE. For Christ in 1 Peter 2:4, 1 Peter 2:6-8, "A living stone," "A chief corner-stone," "the stone which the builders rejected," "a stone of stumbling;" also, Psalms 118:22, Ephesians 2:20, Matthew 21:42. For his People. 1 Peter 2:1-25 "Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house;" also, Ephesians 2:21-22. 4. A TEMPLE. Used for Christ in Revelation 21:22, "And I saw no temple therein for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof;" also, John 2:19, John 2:21. For his People. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, "For the temple of God is holy which temple ye are," and 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16. 5. A SUN. 'For Christ. Psalms 84:11, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield;" also, Matthew 4:12, Revelation 21:23, Revelation 22:5. For his People. Judges 5:31, "Let them that love thee be as the sun;" also, Matthew 13:43. 6. A STAR. For Christ. Revelation 22:16, "I am the bright and morning star," 2 Peter 1:1, "Until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts;" also, Numbers 24:17. For his People. Daniel 12:1-3, "And they that be wise shall shine," "and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

- What Are the Sacred or, Symbolical Numbers?

13. What Are the Sacred or, Symbolical Numbers?

There are certain numbers employed in Scripture that are known as sacred or symbolical numbers. Among these are seven (perfection), as the triune symbol of deity and the four quarters of the earth; forty, a "round number," signifying duration, distance, quantity; ten (completeness) ; five, as used in offerings etc.; four, related to the quarters of the globe, the shape of the holy of holies in the temple, etc.; three, symbol of supreme divinity; twelve, which derives its significance from the twelve tribes and which has been called the "square number," the "zodiacal number," the "apostolic number." 12x12 means, symbolically, fixity and completeness, and taken a thousand-fold, it gives the grand multiple of 144,000 (otherwise a countless multitude), one thousand symbolizing the world wholly pervaded by the divine—a world redeemed I

- Why It Seven Used More than Any Other Number?

14. Why It Seven Used More than Any Other Number?

The symbolism of "seven" should be traced back to the symbolism of its component elements, "three" and "four," which represent divinity and humanity. Hence, "seven" represents the union between God and man. Among the Persians, the Greeks, the ancient Indians, the Romans, and all nations where seven days in the week were recognized, the influence of the number seven prevailed. It was called by Cicero "the knot and cement of all things," because in "seven" the spiritual and natural world were comprehended in one idea. Some writers claim that the Hebrews borrowed it from their heathen neighbors. The Sabbath, being the seventh day, suggested seven as the appointment for all sacred periods. The seventh month was ushered in by the Feast of Trumpets; seven weeks was the interval between the Passover and the Pentecost, and so on, recognizing seven as the symbol of all connected with the Divinity.

- What Significance Attaches to the Frequent Use of Forty?

15. What Significance Attaches to the Frequent Use of Forty?

It is not merely an arbitrary period or a "round number," but is chosen to convey the sense of fullness. Some of its prominent Scriptural uses are: Moses was forty days on the mount (Exodus 24:18, etc.); Elijah, strengthened by angel food, fasted for forty days (1 Kings 19:8) ; the rain of the flood fell for forty days (Genesis 7:12) ; Noah opened the window of the ark after forty days (Genesis 8:6); the spies spent forty days in searching Canaan (Numbers 13:25) ; Moses twice fasted and prayed for forty days (Deuteronomy 9:18-25); Ezekiel bore the iniquities of Judah forty days (Ezekiel 4:6); Nineveh was allowed forty days to repent (Jonah 4:1) ; the Israelites wandered forty years in the wilderness (Num. 34:33); Goliath defied Saul's army for forty days (1 Samuel 17:16) ; forty days was the period of embalming (Genesis 50:3); the Lord fasted for forty days (Matthew 4:2, etc.); the arisen Lord was seen for forty days (Acts 1:3); the Jews were forbidden to inflict more than forty stripes (Deuteronomy 25:3). It is noteworthy that Jerusalem was destroyed forty years after Christ's ascension, and tradition says Jesus was forty hours in the tomb. Lent lasts for forty days, as does also quarantine. St. Swithin betokens forty days' rain, while many ancient laws concerning physicians, knights, husbands, wives, widows, sanctuary privileges, fines, etc., all cluster about this number.

- Who Compiled the Old Testament?

16. Who Compiled the Old Testament?

It is claimed that the books of the Old Testament were collected and arranged under the supervision of Ezra, though modern scholarship disputes the claim. The epistles of Paul to the various churches were collected and incorporated with the other epistles and the Gospels and Revelation into one book during the first half of the second century, and as we learn from Eusebius, were in general use soon after the year 300 A. D.

- What Are the Omitted Books of the Bible?

17. What Are the Omitted Books of the Bible?

The excluded books are known as "Apocrypha," and are as follows: I Esdras, II Esdras, Tobit, Judith, several chapters of Esther which are found neither in the Hebrew nor the Chaldee, The Wisdom of Solomon, The Wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, The Song of the Three Holy Children, The History of Susanna, The History of the Destruction of Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasseh, I Maccabees, II Maccabees. They were excluded by the early Christian Church on the ground that they were of doubtful authority and not tending to spiritual edification. This decision has never been reversed, although in some periods of the Church's history a number of the apocryphal writings were published in smaller type after the regular books in the Bible. At one time the volume of apocryphal writings was even larger than the genuine, but very many of them, being rejected, quickly perished.

- What Are the Famous Songs of the Bible?

18. What Are the Famous Songs of the Bible?

The great songs of the Old Testament, besides the Psalms and certain metrical passages in Job, are: Lamech's Sword Song, Genesis 4:23-24; Noah's Song, Genesis 9:25-27; Moses' and Miriam's Song, Exodus 15:1-19, Exodus 15:21; War Songs, etc., Numbers 21:1-35; Moses' Prophetic Song, Deuteronomy 32:1-43; Song of Deborah and Barak, Judges 5:2; Samson's Riddle Song, Judges 15:16; Hannah's Magnificat, 1 Samuel 2:1-10; David's Song of the Bow, 2 Samuel 1:19-27; David's Song over Abner, 2 Samuel 3:33-34; David's Thanksgiving, 1 Chronicles 16:8-36; Hezekiah's Song, Isaiah 38:10-20; Jonah's Prayer Song, Jonah 2:2-9; Habakkuk's Prayer Song, Habakkuk 3:2-9; and the four original songs in the New Testament: Luke 14:6-35; Luke 1:68-80; Luke 2:14; Luke 2:20-33.

- Who Was the Author of Revelation?

19. Who Was the Author of Revelation?

"Was the Book of Revelation written by the same John who wrote the Gospel and the Epistle?" This question has been long disputed by scholars. Dionysius, in A. D. 240, was one of the earliest to express a doubt It was attributed to John Mark, the companion of Paul and Barnabas and the author of the Gospel of Mark; to John the Presbyter, to Cerinthus, and others. The majority of German scholars agree with Luther in denying that Revelation was written by the apostle. On the other hand, there is internal evidence of John's authorship. His description of himself is in the manner of John. The apostle was the only man of prominence of that name who was banished to Patmos. The addresses to the seven churches of Asia show a knowledge of them consistent with the fact that the apostle was their overseer. On the whole, therefore, there seems good reason to believe that it was written by the Apostle John. The differences in the style of the Gospel and the Revelation, which are very marked, doubtless first gave rise to the doubt of the apostolic authorship. These are accounted for by the age of the author and by his perturbation of mind under the excitement of the visions. OLD TESTAMENT PERSONS AND THINGS

- What Were the Meaning and Result of Abraham's Sacrifice?

20. What Were the Meaning and Result of Abraham's Sacrifice?

The story of Abraham will ever be an important one, and particularly that part of it dealing with the memorable doings at the place he named "Jehovah-jireh," where, as related in Genesis 22:1-24, he showed his wonderful obedience to God. Whatever may be conjectured to the contrary, the record in Genesis is clear and unmistakable. It was a test of Abraham's faith in God. Some critics want to know why, if God is all knowing, he should have said to Abraham: "For now I know that thou fearest God" (Genesis 22:12). The problem of foreknowledge is an extremely difficult one, and discussion about it is usually fruitless. God in this case speaks of the test of Abraham as though it had been an experiment. He proved him and found him firm in faith and perfect in obedience. It was in obedience to the Lord's command that he stood ready to offer up his son Isaac, and not because he himself had chosen such a sacrifice, in order to be like his idolatrous neighbors, who offered up their children to Moloch. Genesis 22:2 dismisses this latter suggestion altogether. The immediate effect of Abraham's successful test was the great blessing which God bestowed on him (Genesis 22:16), which, together with God's covenant, made Abraham the most important Biblical character and his name better known than that of any other human being on earth. All the promises to Abraham have been fulfilled, except the return of his descendants to the promised land. His seed is past all reckoning. Not only have all the Jews been his offspring, but Christians as well are in a sense his spiritual children. Their faith in Christ brings them into his family and makes them heirs of the promises made to him. The land of Canaan was promised to his seed forever. Since they are not in possession of it now we must believe they will return, as many other prophecies also declare. The promise was, however, not made to Abraham alone, but to him and his seed, which includes Christ—to the literal Israel and also to the spiritual Israel. The complete fulfillment of the covenant awaited the coming of Christ, "the seed," concerning whom it was made. See Galatians 3:16.

- Did Abraham See God in One of the Three Men Who Visited Him?

21. Did Abraham See God in One of the Three Men Who Visited Him?

There is doubtless difficulty in reconciling the passage in Genesis 18:1-33 with the statement in John 1:18, that "No man hath seen God at any time." Authorities regarded the Genesis passage as relating to one of the "theophanies" of the Old Testament; that is, a real appearance of God to man. It is believed, however, that these appearances were of Christ the Son, rather than God the Father. The New Testament teaches that Christ existed co-eternally with the Father, and it is not inconceivable that he would at times take the appearance of humanity when he wished especially to make himself known to men. This explanation reconciles all these occurrences with the statement of John that no one has seen God; that is, God the Father. Christ is the personal manifestation of God to man.

- How Are We to Interpret the Miracle at Ajalon?

22. How Are We to Interpret the Miracle at Ajalon?

The passage in Joshua 10:1-43, describing the miracle of the sun and moon at the time of the battle in the vale of Ajalon, has been much discussed. Some commentators hold that it is a passage in which the inspired historian departs from his narrative to introduce a highly poetic quotation, in other words, a poetical figure of speech, not to be interpreted literally—as though one might say that "God and all nature fought on the side of Joshua." Again, the reference to the poetical book of Jasher as the source of this passage lends color to this explanation (see Joshua 10:13). Others prefer the literal view, regarding it as a miracle in which the hours when sun and moon were both visible (the sun on the heights of Gibeon at noon and the moon in the valley) were extended into a whole day, or twelve hours of light (see Macdonald's *Principia and the Bible*), the continued radiance of both orbs lighting the battleground. Still another interpretation is that the sun and moon were heavily obscured by storm clouds (see Joshua 10:11), and that Joshua's prayer was that they should withhold their light and that the gloom or semi-darkness of the storm might last until the battle was fought, giving the Israelites the advantage of a surprise with smaller numbers, the strength of which the enemy could not properly estimate.

- Did Adam and Eve Actually Eat Fruit, or is the Saying a Parable?

23. Did Adam and Eve Actually Eat Fruit, or is the Saying a Parable?

The only source of information is the Bible narrative and it contains no intimation that it is to be understood otherwise than literally. Theologians who have preferred to regard the narrative as a parable or allegory have usually been led to do so by the suggestion that the eating of fruit which was "good for food," and "pleasant to the eyes," and was moreover within reach, was an offense too venial to have been justly visited with a punishment so severe and far-reaching. The objection, however, is not well founded, because it ignores the main point involved. The gravity of the offense consisted, not in the act itself, but in the fact that Adam and Eve in committing it were consciously and willfully violating God's explicit and emphatic command. They were punished for disobedience. Even if we should hold that it took some other form than the actual and literal eating of fruit, the principle is the same. There is no valid reason for rejecting the Bible narrative or putting any other construction on the words than is there implied.

- Was Adam a Red Man?

24. Was Adam a Red Man?

Adam means "red" and so also does the word Edom, both having relation to the ruddiness of flesh and the color of the clayey soil. (See Genesis 2:7.) Some commentators hold that Adam, the first man, was probably of the complexion of the Arabs, or Edomites, ruddy though dark, while others take a different view. No definite theory can be formed on this subject.

- What Language Did Adam and Eve Speak?

25. What Language Did Adam and Eve Speak?

There are many mundane things beyond the reach of present human knowledge and the site of Eden and the language of our first parents are among the number. Some philologists have ventured the conjecture that the primeval language must have been a simple vocabulary whose formation is indicated in Genesis 2:19, and which was strictly limited to the natural requirements of our first progenitors; in other words, signs and sounds apprehensible by the senses. All agree that speech, or the power of expressing emotions, or desires, was coeval with the creation of man. The earliest monuments and inscriptions yet discovered do not reach as far back into antiquity as the confusion of tongues at Babel (about B.C. 2200), previous to which (Genesis 2:1), the Biblical record states that "the whole earth was of one language and one speech," although probably there were many variations and dialects, each containing some element of the original tongue. Man's first utterances were probably what philologists term a "physical language," limited to the expression of simple needs and afterwards expanded to meet man's growing experience with his own nature and the world around him.

- What Became of Aaron's Rod?

26. What Became of Aaron's Rod?

It was preserved in the tabernacle and, according to Paul (see Hebrews 9:4), it was kept in the Ark, beside the two tablets of stone and the pot of manna. There is no mention of any other receptacle. The statement in 1 Kings 8:9 implies that by Solomon's time these relics had disappeared. It is possible, however, for a different interpretation to be placed on Deuteronomy 31:26, which may mean that the rod was kept beside the Ark, and not within it.

- What Was the Name of Cain's Wife?

27. What Was the Name of Cain's Wife?

The name of Cain's wife is nowhere mentioned in the Bible. Arab traditions are preserved in one of which she is called Asura, in another Save, but these are not seriously regarded by scholars.

- Who Was David's Mother?

28. Who Was David's Mother?

Her name is not given in Scripture. The reference to Abigail, one of the members of Jesse's family, in 2 Samuel 17:25, is frequently misunderstood. The Nahash there mentioned is either another name for Jesse or it refers to Nahash, king of Ammon, one of whose wives afterward became the wife of Jesse, as stated in the chronicles of the Jewish church.

- Who Named Eve?

29. Who Named Eve?

Adam bestowed upon his companion the name of "Eve" (Genesis 3:20).

- Egypt—Date of Great Famine

30. Egypt—Date of Great Famine in:

Began approximately 1875 B. C.

- Egypt—Date of Great Famine

31. Egypt—When Did Joseph Come to?

Believed to be about 1895 B.C.

- Ham: The First Negro.

32. Ham: The First Negro.

Ham, one of the sons of Noah, was the progenitor of the negro race (see Genesis 9:18-27).

- Jacob—Date of His Journey to Egypt

33. Jacob—Date of His Journey to Egypt:

About 1874 B. C. Date of his death, 1857 B. C.

- How Many Walls Had Jerusalem?

34. How Many Walls Had Jerusalem?

There were three walls about Jerusalem. The first was built by David and Solomon; the second, enclosing one of the northern sections of the city, was built by Uzziah, Jotham and Manasseh, and restored by Nehemiah; the third was built by Herod Agrippa, and was intended to enclose the hitherto unprotected suburbs which had grown out from the northern part of the city. According to Josephus, who is not always thoroughly reliable, the circumference of the city, evidently including all the sections enclosed by the three walls he describes, was thirty-three stadia, a little less than four English miles.

- What Is the Origin of the Name "Jew"?

35. What Is the Origin of the Name "Jew"?

The appellation "Jew" is derived from the patriarch Judah, and was originally applied to all members of that tribe and also to subjects of the separate kingdom of Judah, in contradistinction to the seceding ten tribes, who retained the name of Israelites. During the captivity and ever since, the term "Jew" seems to have been applied indiscriminately to the whole race.

- Who Were the Kings of Judah in Succession ?

36. Who Were the Kings of Judah in Succession ?

The names of the kings of Judah in their canonical order are: Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah (queen), Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah.

- What Was Manna?

37. What Was Manna?

It is supposed that the manna of the Israelites was a saccharine exudation of a species of tamarisk, the sap of which was set flowing by an insect. Several trees yield manna, as the flowering ash of Sicily and the eucalyptus of Australia. In India a sweet exudation comes from the bamboo, and a similar substance is obtained from the sugar-pine and common reed of our own country.

- What Is the Meaning of "Mizpah"?

38. What Is the Meaning of "Mizpah"?

Mizpah, or Mizpeh, was the name of several localities in Old Testament history. The word means "a watch-tower," and in literature the whole of the beautiful remark made by Laban to Jacob (Genesis 31:49) has been included in its meaning: "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from the other."

- Who Was Moses' Ethiopian Wife?

39. Who Was Moses' Ethiopian Wife?

Commentators hold that the Ethiopian (or Cushite) woman mentioned in Numbers 12:1-16 as the wife of Moses, against whom Aaron and Miriam complained, was Zipporah. Their opposition is believed to have been caused by jealousy of her relatives and their influence.

- What Became of Moses' Rod?

40. What Became of Moses' Rod?

There is nothing to show what became of Moses' rod. Aaron's rod, however, is said (in Hebrews 9:4) to have been preserved in the sacred Ark of the Jews along with the tables of the law and the pot of manna.

- What Was the Name of Potiphar's Wife?

41. What Was the Name of Potiphar's Wife?

Her name is not given in the Bible, although it has been preserved in tradition..

- What Two Bible Chapters Are Alike?

42. What Two Bible Chapters Are Alike?

The two chapters in the Bible that are alike are 2 Kings 19:1-37 and Isaiah 37:1-38. Both are regarded as the work of Isaiah, relating a series of events which in one book are placed in their proper historical setting and in the other find their true place among the prophecies.

- Was Sarai a Relative of Abram?

43. Was Sarai a Relative of Abram?

In Genesis 20:12 Abram speaks of Sarai as his half-sister, the daughter of the same father, but not the same mother. The common Jewish tradition referred to by Josephus (*Antiquities* 1, 6, 6) and also by Jerome, is that Sarai was identical with Iscah (see Genesis 11:29), daughter of Haran and sister of Lot, who is called Abraham's "brother."

- What Is the Meaning of "Selah"?

44. What Is the Meaning of "Selah"?

The word "Selah," which occurs a number of times in the Psalms, was a musical or liturgical sign, whose meaning is unknown. Some regard it as a pause in the music, to mark a transition in the theme or composition. It seems to have no grammatical connection with the sentence after which it appears, and has therefore nothing to do with the meaning of the passage. It was a note to the singers of the psalm, or to those who were accompanying the singing with instruments.

- What Was the Fate of Amalek?

45. What Was the Fate of Amalek?

The Amalekites were a wicked, oppressive, war-like and cruel people. They were powerful and influential and possessed cities in the south of Canaan. (See 1 Samuel 15:18; Judges 10:12; Numbers 24:7.) They were the first to oppose Israel (Exodus 17:8) ; Saul overcame them (1 Samuel 14:1-52*48); David invaded their land (1 Samuel 30:1-2), and what was left of them was completely destroyed during the reign of Hezekiah (1 Chronicles 4:41-43).

- Who Were Called "The Children of Lot"?

46. Who Were Called "The Children of Lot"?

The Ammonites were so called (Deuteronomy 2:19). They were a cruel, covetous, proud, reproachful, vindictive, superstitious and idolatrous nation (see Amos 1:13; Zephaniah 2:10; Ezekiel 25:3, Ezekiel 25:6; Judges 10:6; Jeremiah 27:3). Their chief city was Rabbah (2 Samuel 12:26-27), where they were governed by hereditary kings (2 Samuel 2:20-21). They had various encounters with Israel. With the Philistines they oppressed Israel for eighteen years (Judges 10:6-9). Saul succeeded against them as did David, and Joab overcame them (1 Samuel 11:11; 2 Samuel 10:7-14). Solomon intermarried with them and introduced their idols into Israel (1 Kings 11:1-5).

- Who Were the Amorites?

47. Who Were the Amorites?

They were one of the seven nations of Canaan and were governed by many independent kings (Joshua 5:1; Joshua 9:10). They originally inhabited a mountain district in the south (Numbers 13:29), but later acquired an extensive tract from Moab, east of Jordan (Numbers 21:1-35; Numbers 22:1-41; Numbers 23:1-30; Numbers 24:1-25; Numbers 25:1-18; Numbers 26:1-65, Numbers 30:1-16). They had many strong cities (Numbers 32:17, Numbers 32:33). They were profane, wicked and idolatrous (Genesis 15:16; Joshua 24:15). They interfered with Israel (Numbers 21:21) at times, again were peaceful, but were finally brought into bondage by Solomon (1 Kings 9:20-21).

- Where Was the First Altar Built?

48. Where Was the First Altar Built?

In Genesis 8:20 we find the first reference to an altar, namely that one on which Noah offered his sacrifice to God for deliverance from the danger of the Flood. Armenian tradition says it was built on Mount Ararat.

- What Language Was Spoken at Babel?

49. What Language Was Spoken at Babel?

The tower of Babel is always an interesting subject for discussion. Philologists are divided concerning the language spoken before the "Confusion of Tongues" at Babel. What little we know of it is learned at second-hand from the testimonies of classical authorities. The Babylonians called the locality of Babel "Barsip" (the Tower of Tongues). A French expedition to Mesopotamia found a clay cake or tablet, which showed that the language at some indefinitely remote period was written in the form of signs and hieroglyphics; but even this was probably long after the dispersion at Babel. What universal language was spoken by prehistoric man thousands of years ago will probably never be definitely known. It may have been Babylonian or Arabic in character, but this is mere conjecture. Supplementary to the Bible record, there are many traditions preserved concerning the Tower and its fate, and these mostly claim for it a Babylonian origin, holding that Babylonia was the cradle of the human race. The site of the tower, according to modern opinion, is identified as Birs Nimrud, a huge mound covering gigantic ruins and situated at Felujah in Mesopotamia; but this identification is by no means certain.

- What Was the Cause of the Babylonian Captivity?

50. What Was the Cause of the Babylonian Captivity?

The political cause of the captivity was the repeated revolt of Judah against the power of Babylon. Relying on the help of Egypt, the king broke his promise of fidelity and refused to pay the tribute he had promised to pay. The prophets uttered many warnings against this suicidal course, and still more against the idolatry and accompanying immorality which prevailed. They assured the nation that, beset as Judah was by dangers from her powerful neighbors, she would be safe, if only she would be faithful to God. But the king and people were continually forsaking him and turning to evil courses, until at last God gave them up to their enemies. This was the spiritual cause of the captivity. The neglect of the Sabbatic years, mentioned 2 Chronicles 36:21, was only one of many provocations. The writer mentions it incidentally, to show that what the people would not do voluntarily, was done when they were carried away and the land rested seventy years.

- Why Was God Angry With Balaam?

51. Why Was God Angry With Balaam?

You need to read the entire story in Numbers 22:1-41 to get a complete idea of the situation. Balaam was in the first instance forbidden to go. That answer should have been sufficient for Balaam, but when the princes came with alluring offers of gifts and office and honors, he bade them remain to see whether there might be any fresh instructions. He obviously hoped that permission would be given. He showed his ignorance of God's ways in supposing that Barak's gifts and promises could make any difference to God's decision. His answers to the men also showed that he would like to comply if God would let him. Probably, too, God read in his mind an intention to pronounce the curse for which Barak was willing to pay. Hence the warning by the way, which would brace up his wavering resolution to utter the word of the Lord even if it was disagreeable to Barak.

- In What Language Was the Message on the Wall to Belshazzar Written?

52. In What Language Was the Message on the Wall to Belshazzar Written?

The words, as they are found in Daniel, are pure Chaldee, and if they appeared in the Chaldean characters on the wall, might have been read by any person present who understood the alphabet of the Babylonian language. Authorities differ as to the language in which the famous Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin appeared. Dr. Hales suggests that it may have been in primitive Hebrew; Josephus implies that it was in Greek. Another explanation is that while the observers may have been familiar with the language, its meaning or signification may have been hidden from them, until explained by the prophet.

- What Are the Essential Facts About Cain?

53. What Are the Essential Facts About Cain?

The Genesis narrative tells us that the Lord had no respect for Cain's offering, as he had that of Abel, his brother's. The reason for this must have been a wrong spirit in Cain (Genesis 4:3-7). Genesis 4:7 states: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well sin lieth at the door." There have been many interpretations suggested for the last part of this verse; but whatever translation may be given the specific words, the whole narrative implies that the trouble with Cain was with his motive. He did not come humbly, worshipfully, as Abel did, and probably his offering was less costly, less of a real sacrifice. Again, it has been thought that in the acceptance of the animal sacrifice and the rejection of the fruit sacrifice there was a suggestion of the fact that sin requires death for an atonement. Abel's was the first of the long line of offerings for sin in which blood was shed, culminating in the sacrifice of Christ's body on the cross. The mark upon Cain has been a fertile subject of conjecture among Biblical scholars. Some hold that it was probably a sign given to Cain as assurance that no man should kill him, but the nature of the sign, and whether it was something perceptible to others, are left in uncertainty. One commentator suggests that it may have been an aspect of such ferocity that he became an object of horror and avoidance. Lastly, the question is asked about the land of Nod, to which Cain was banished after the murder of Abel and where he found his wife. The land of Nod means simply "land of exile." We may gather from Genesis 4:14-15 that at the time referred to, the human family had multiplied considerably. Cain's wife was doubtless some blood relative, probably a sister. An ancient Arab tradition states that her name was Azura. From the account in Genesis, we may conjecture that although only four persons are mentioned in the sacred narrative up to this point, the human race had increased rapidly (Josephus says that the Jews held a tradition that Adam had thirty-three sons and twenty-three daughters). Cain's fear of punishment may therefore have been directed toward his own relatives.

- How Many of the Children of Israel Entered Canaan?

54. How Many of the Children of Israel Entered Canaan?

The number of adults over twenty years of age who left Egypt is stated in Exodus 12:37, a* about six hundred thousand. Allowing the normal proportion of children to such a host we may infer that the total number was probably between one and two millions. Three or four months later, when they were at Sinai, a more careful count was made and the number of adults is then given (Exodus 38:26) at 603,550. Two years later another census was taken and the number is stated (Numbers 2:32) at exactly the same figure, but as the Levites were not included and there were 22,000 of them, we may assume that by that time the adults numbered about 625,000. Thirty-eight years later, immediately after a pestilence had swept away large numbers and just before entering Canaan, another census was taken. The figures are given (Numbers 26:21) at 601,730, which shows a slight decrease. Of these only two—Joshua and Caleb—were left of the adults who crossed the Red Sea. With these exceptions, the entire adult generation died in the wilderness.

- What Was the Sin of the Canaanites?

55. What Was the Sin of the Canaanites?

The Canaanites were descendants of Ham (Genesis 10:6) and comprised seven distinct nations (Deuteronomy 7:1). Though great and mighty (Num. 73:28) they were idolatrous, superstitious, profane and wicked (Deuteronomy 29:17, Deuteronomy 18:9-11, Leviticus 18:21). They had many strong cities (Numbers 13:28). Israel was warned against making league or intermarrying with them or following their idols or customs (Deuteronomy 7:2; Joshua 23:12; Exodus 23:24; Leviticus 18:26-27). They were partially subdued by Israel (Joshua 10:1-43, Joshua 11:1-23, Judges 1:1-36). Some of their descendants were still found in the time of Jesus (Matthew 15:22; Mark 7:26).

- Is It Possible to Approximate the Date of the Creation?

56. Is It Possible to Approximate the Date of the Creation?

An ever fruitful topic is the date of Creation. The chronology which one finds in the marginal columns of many of the older Bibles, notably in the Authorized Version of King James, is not a part of the Bible itself by any means. It is the work of Archbishop Ussher, an illustrious prelate of the Irish Church, who lived 1580-1656. His chronological labors were directed towards affording an idea of the time that elapsed between certain events in recorded history. For this purpose he took the year 1 A. D.—the beginning of the Christian era—as his starting point, and reckoned backwards as far as reliable recorded history afforded good working ground. He reckoned as far back as 4,000 years before Christ, and then finding no more available material in the form of history, either written or inscribed, he had necessarily to stop. He did not by any means imply, however, nor are his figures interpreted by Biblical scholars to mean, that he had reached the point of Creation. On the contrary, he had simply gone as far as recorded history enabled him to go. The Mosaic books in the Old Testament did not claim, in any sense, that the world was created in 4000 B. C. Genesis 1:1 distinctly tells us that "in the beginning" God created the heaven and the earth. Moses was educated at the court of Egypt and imbibed all that was worth learning of the Egyptian civilization, which was old even at that date. But before Egypt there had been still older kingdoms and civilizations. Any one looking up the history in any good encyclopedia of Babylonia, Phoenicia, Chaldea and other ancient nations will form some idea of the great antiquity of that portion of the world's history which has not yet been definitely written. In the last century, the world has yielded up many of its secrets to excavators, and consecrated scholarship has made unquestioned discoveries, which are accepted by all the churches, showing that recorded time must now be pushed back to a period at least 2,000 years earlier than Ussher's computation. How far beyond this we have to travel to get at the date of Creation is as much a conjecture as ever. Science tells us that countless ages may have passed in the early stages of the world's geological development; and even before man appeared on the scene. It is true that scientists differ in this as they do in many other things, but the essential fact remains that the world is far older by many thousands of years than our forefathers supposed. We have better light on the subject than they had, and yet in no vital sense does that light conflict with the words of Scripture "in the beginning." In the New Testament also the same identical language is used at the opening of John's Gospel, John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word." Thus we see in both dispensations, the old and the new, a recognition of the fact that the date of the world's creation is far beyond man's computation.

- What Time Was Consumed in the Work of Creation?

57. What Time Was Consumed in the Work of Creation?

Many have asked: "How long did it take God to create the world and what was the order in which the various beings and things were brought forth?" There are many theories propounded concerning Creation. Some interpreters contend that the Bible account should be taken as meaning literal days, while others, remembering that a day is as a thousand years in God's sight, interpret them as meaning periods of indefinite duration. This problem has been a theme of endless discussion and science is powerless to decide it. The first three days of Creation comprise the inorganic era and the last three days the organic era. The first two chapters of Genesis are repetitive of the story of Creation, the first seven verses of chapter 2 reciting more briefly what was already stated in the first chapter in a somewhat different literary form. As to the order in which Creation proceeded, we have nothing else to guide us than Genesis and the order there given is: first day, light (general); second day, earth and water divided; third day, land and water outlined and vegetation created; fourth day, light (direct) ; fifth day, lower animals created; sixth day, mammals and man created; seventh day, rest As to the length of time between the Creation of Adam and of Eve, that is one of the disputed points on which no one can speak conclusively. Theorizing is futile and traditions (such as some found in Jewish literature) do not avail.

- Was David Justified in Ordering Solomon to Have Joab and Shimei Executed?

58. Was David Justified in Ordering Solomon to Have Joab and Shimei Executed?

Dean Stanley, strange to say, avers that in the order given to Solomon (1 Kings 2:5-9) King David "bequeathed a dark legacy of long cherished vengeance." Dr. Terry's view seems more probable, that "this dying charge was not the offspring of personal revenge, but a measure of administrative wisdom." "David," says Wordsworth, "does not mention among Joab's sins that which caused him personally the most poignant grief, the murder of Absalom." He dwells on the fact that Joab had treacherously slain Abner and had also assassinated Amasa, shedding the blood of war in peace. Shimei had blasphemously insulted the royal majesty of Israel. David, it is true, had sworn to spare Shimei, but this oath was not binding on Solomon. David seems to feel that he had been too lax in punishing crime. His own guilt, though repented of, may have made him feel that the son of Zeruihah, in particular, was too strong for him. Hence this charge to Solomon as keeper of God's law and guardian of the kingdom's safety. In one sense, the execution of these men may be looked upon as an act of retributive justice (they being the enemies of the king), yet in the view of some commentators, the personal vindictiveness that David cherished in the matter, and the absence of a disinterested purpose to secure justice and the welfare and security of Israel, his kingdom, call for condemnation of David in his instructions to his son.

- Were Daniel's Companions in the Lions' Den His Brothers?

59. Were Daniel's Companions in the Lions' Den His Brothers?

In Daniel 1:6 the companions and Daniel are spoken of as the children of Judah. This means of the tribe of Judah. There is no evidence that they were brothers in the sense of blood relationship. Shadrach was the Chaldee name of Hananiah, the chief of the "three children," or young men of the tribe of Judah, who were Daniel's companions. He was taken captive with Daniel and a number of others at the first invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar about B. C. 606. All four were young men of kingly bearing of the royal tribe of Judah and of superior understanding or education. Meshach was the Chaldee name given by the Babylonian court to Mishael, and Abednego was the name similarly bestowed on Azariah.

- Who Were King David's Wives?

60. Who Were King David's Wives?

He had a number of wives, but those that are known chiefly to history are Abigail of Carmel (1 Chronicles 3:1); Michal, the daughter of Saul (2 Samuel 3:13); and Bathsheba (1 Chronicles 3:5).

- Why Was David A Man After God's Own Heart"?

61. Why Was David A Man After God's Own Heart"?

This question has often been asked, both by scoffers and the serious. David, it is true, had fallen into deep sin many times; but his struggles, his remorse, his repentance, his efforts at reparation—these also must be considered. He lived in a rude and warlike age. His whole life, as one biographer says, was "the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul toward what was good and best—a struggle often baffled, yet never ended." This was the character of the man who was illustrious as soldier, shepherd, poet, king, prophet; who kindled patriotism, united Israel, and made it a great nation, and who drove out the worship of strange gods in the land. In view of all the blessings that came to the Hebrew race through David's reign; in view also of "the oath sworn unto David," and of the many evidences of his repentance and his trust in God, as expressed in the Psalms, his career must be regarded as a whole rather than judged of by specific acts, if we would try to find out how David in any degree merited the commendation which the sacred historians accord him.

- From Whom Were the Edomites Descended?

62. From Whom Were the Edomites Descended?

They were descendants of Esau. They inhabited a fertile and rich country specially given to them (Deuteronomy 2:5; Genesis 27:39). Their country was traversed by roads though it was mountainous and rocky (Numbers 20:17; Jeremiah 49:16). They were governed by dukes and later by kings (Genesis 36:15-30; Numbers 20:14). In character they are said to have been wise, proud and self-confident, strong and cruel, vindictive, idolatrous and superstitious (Jeremiah 49:7, Jeremiah 49:16, Jeremiah 49:19; Ezekiel 25:12; 2 Chronicles 25:14, 2 Chronicles 25:20; Jeremiah 27:3). They inhabited the cities of Avith, Pau, Bozrah, Teman and others. Though they were implacable enemies of Israel, it was forbidden to hate them (Deuteronomy 23:7) or to spoil, and they might be received into the congregation in the third generation (Deuteronomy 23:8). Saul made war against them and David conquered them (1 Samuel 14:47; 2 Samuel 8:14). They took refuge in Egypt and returned after David's death (1 Kings 11:17-22) when they confederated with Israel's enemies only to again be overthrown (2 Chronicles 20:10) but finally aided Babylon against Judah (Psalms 137:7, Obadiah 1:11).

- What Became of Elijah's Body?

63. What Became of Elijah's Body?

The bodies of Elijah and Enoch were doubtless changed or transformed as Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52—the verses immediately following the well-known passage, that flesh cannot inherit the kingdom. They were changed into spiritualized bodies like in some degree that with which Christ rose from the dead. His resurrection body seemed to be made of flesh, but it was clearly different from that which he possessed before his death. All the redeemed, the saints who have died before Christ's coming and those who are alive when he comes, are promised these new "celestial" bodies for the heavenly life. These are the views of commentators who have discussed the subject.

- Was There Rain Before the Flood?

64. Was There Rain Before the Flood?

Read Genesis 2:4-6. This, according to some geologists, indicates that the earth, being then in a cooling condition, had no rain; and they also affirm that there may have been none until the great precipitation at the Flood cleared the atmosphere, and established new conditions. (See Genesis 8:1-22 and Genesis 9:1-29.) Of course, these are merely scientific speculations or conjectures, but they are not opposed to Scripture.

- What Was the Population of Earth Before and After the Flood?

65. What Was the Population of Earth Before and After the Flood?

All the information we have in Scripture concerning the population of the earth before the Flood is contained in Genesis 4:1-26, Genesis 5:1-32 and Genesis 6:1-22. It is made clear in Genesis 5:4 that Adam had a numerous progeny. Jewish tradition says he had thirty-three sons and twenty-three daughters. Genesis 5:1 tells of the increased population. There must have been intermarriages. This is the view generally accepted by commentators, as the only reasonable explanation, where no other light can be had on the subject. The only record we have of the repopulation of the world after the Flood is that found in Genesis, ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters.

- Was the Rainbow Visible before the Flood?

66. Was the Rainbow Visible before the Flood?

There is no recorded evidence that a rainbow was visible from the earth before the Flood. Some commentators hold that the conditions described in Genesis 2:6, "But there went up a mist from the earth," etc., lasted until the atmospheric change wrought by the Flood and that the rainbow was a natural consequence of such change. This, however, despite the fact that scientific support is claimed for such view, is merely conjecture. The Bible (Genesis 9:13-17) is very clear to the effect that God established the rainbow at that time as "the token of the covenant" between Him and mankind and hence we need no conjecture.

- How Soon After Adam's Fall Did Idolatry Begin?

67. How Soon After Adam's Fall Did Idolatry Begin?

Adam and some of his descendants as late as the time of the Flood, are believed to have lived under a revealed system, in which, through their patriarchs and otherwise, they had a knowledge of God sufficient for their condition. Afterwards there arose the nature-worship, called Fetishism, consisting of the setting up and worshipping of animals, trees and stones, etc.— an idolatry invented by those who for their sins had been forsaken of God (Romans 1:28). There is no distinct mention in the Bible of any idols prior to the time of the Flood, but it is reasonable to suppose that idolatry was one of the abominations for which that terrible punishment was visited on the earth. The first positive indications of idolatry which appear in history are found in the worship of Set or Sitekh (equivalent to the Hebrew Patriarch, Seth), to whom divine honors were paid by the Egyptians. Some Jewish writers interpret Genesis 4:1-26; Genesis 5:1-32; Genesis 6:1-22; Genesis 7:1-24; Genesis 8:1-22; Genesis 9:1-29; Genesis 10:1-32; Genesis 11:1-32; Genesis 12:1-20; Genesis 13:1-18; Genesis 14:1-24; Genesis 15:1-21; Genesis 16:1-16; Genesis 17:1-27; Genesis 18:1-33; Genesis 19:1-38; Genesis 20:1-18; Genesis 21:1-34; Genesis 22:1-24; Genesis 23:1-20; Genesis 24:1-67; Genesis 25:1-34; Genesis 26:1-35 to mean that Ems, the son of Seth, was the originator of idolatry in that he paid divine honors to the host of heaven instead of to God alone.

- What Is Known of the Hittites?

68. What Is Known of the Hittites?

They were descendants of Canaan's son Heth. One of the seven Canaanitish nations, they dwelt in Hebron and were governed by kings (Deuteronomy 7:1; Genesis 23:10; 1 Kings 10:29). Their land was promised to Israel and it was commanded to destroy them; but Israel did not destroy them entirely (Deuteronomy 7:1-2, Deuteronomy 7:24; Joshua 14:13; Judges 3:5). Among their prominent personages were Ephron, Ahimelech and Uriah (Genesis 49:30; 1 Samuel 26:1-25; 1 Samuel 25:1-44; 1 Samuel 24:1-22; 1 Samuel 23:1-29; 1 Samuel 22:1-23; 1 Samuel 21:1-15; 1 Samuel 20:1-42; 1 Samuel 19:1-24; 1 Samuel 18:1-30; 1 Samuel 17:1-58; 1 Samuel 16:1-23; 1 Samuel 15:1-35; 1 Samuel 14:1-52; 1 Samuel 13:1-23; 1 Samuel 12:1-25; 1 Samuel 11:1-15; 1 Samuel 10:1-27; 1 Samuel 9:1-27; 1 Samuel 8:1-22; 1 Samuel 7:1-17; 1 Samuel 6:1-21; 2 Samuel 11:6, 2 Samuel 11:21). Esau, Solomon and many other Israelites intermarried with the Hittites. They were a warlike people and made many conquests.

- What Is Known of the Hivites?

69. What Is Known of the Hivites?

They formed one of the seven nations of Canaan, descended from Canaan (Genesis 10:15, Genesis 10:17). They dwelt near Lebanon. The Shechemites and Gibeonites were affiliated with them (Judges 3:3; Genesis 34:2; Joshua 9:3-7). Esau intermarried with them. Their land was promised to Israel and it was commanded to destroy them (Deuteronomy 7:1-2, Deuteronomy 7:24). In the reign of Solomon, a remnant of the Hivites was made tributary to Israel (1 Kings 9:20-21).

- Who Were the Ishmaelites?

70. Who Were the Ishmaelites?

They were descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son, and were divided into twelve tribes (Genesis 25:16; Genesis 16:15-16). They were also called Hagarites, Hagarites and Arabians (1 Chronicles 5:10; Psalms 83:6; Isaiah 13:20). They were governed by kings, were rich in cattle and dwelt in tents (Jeremiah 25:24; Isaiah 13:1-22; Isaiah 14:1-32; Isaiah 15:1-9; Isaiah 16:1-14; Isaiah 17:1-14; Isaiah 18:1-7; Isaiah 19:1-25; Isaiah 20:1-6; 1 Chronicles 5:21). Though they were the merchants of the East and traveled around in large caravans (Genesis 37:25; Job 6:19), they were frequently lawless and would waylay and plunder travelers (Jeremiah 3:2). After harassing Israel, they were overcome by Gideon (Judges 8:10-24; 2 Chronicles 5:10; 2 Chronicles 26:1-23; 2 Chronicles 25:1-28; 2 Chronicles 24:1-27; 2 Chronicles 23:1-21; 2 Chronicles 22:1-12; 2 Chronicles 21:1-20; 2 Chronicles 20:1-37; 2 Chronicles 19:1-11; 2 Chronicles 18:1-34; 2 Chronicles 17:1-19; 2 Chronicles 16:1-14; 2 Chronicles 15:1-19; 2 Chronicles 14:1-15; 2 Chronicles 13:1-22; 2 Chronicles 12:1-16; 2 Chronicles 11:1-23; 2 Chronicles 10:1-19; 2 Chronicles 9:1-31; 2 Chronicles 8:1-18; 2 Chronicles 7:1-22). It would seem that later they became more peacefully inclined, as they sent presents to Kings Solomon and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 10:15; 2 Chronicles 17:11).

- When Did the Change in Jacob's Spiritual Nature Occur?

71. When Did the Change in Jacob's Spiritual Nature Occur?

It began at Bethel but the change there was extremely slight. Jacob regarded his vision there very much as a business arrangement. If God would help him and give him bread to eat and bring him back safe, then God should be his God and he would give him a tenth of all. At Jabbok the crisis was much more far-reaching. He realized there his danger and his need of a blessing. He no longer bargained with God, he saw that his own strength was futile, he was a humble suppliant for God's favor. From that night on he was a different man, by no means perfect, but far better than before.

- Did Jephthah Really Offer Up His Daughter As a Sacrifice?

72. Did Jephthah Really Offer Up His Daughter As a Sacrifice?

Both the Authorized and Revised Versions leave the question in doubt, and commentators have been divided in opinion as to whether she was sacrificed or doomed to live the life of a recluse. Human sacrifices are an abomination unto the Lord. A new reading or translation which several notable scholars have urged as the correct one is: "It shall surely be the Lord's or I will offer up to him a burnt offering." Hebrew scholars declare this to be the more accurate rendering. (See Judges n 30, 31, 39.) It changes the aspect of the case and makes Jephthah to say practically that if the first living thing that came forth from his house to meet him was one that would be unacceptable, then a burnt offering of an acceptable character would be substituted. This would lead to the conclusion that the daughter was not sacrificed, but condemned to a life of perpetual virginity and a burnt offering offered up in her stead. Several eminent writers, including Joseph Kinchi, Ben Gerson and Bechai (Jewish authorities) and a number of Christian authors, held that instead of being sacrificed she was shut up in a house specially prepared by her father and visited there by the daughters of Israel four days in a year as long as she lived. In support of this theory it is pointed out that the Hebrew term employed to express Jephthah's vow is the word *neder*, which means a "consecration" and not *che-rem*, which means "destruction."

- Why Do the Jews Face the East When Praying?

73. Why Do the Jews Face the East When Praying?

In Jerusalem, the Jews always turned their faces toward the "holy hill" of the temple while praying (see Daniel 6:10; 2 Chronicles 6:34). The Samaritans, on the contrary, faced Mt. Gerizim. In the court of the temple, the Jews in prayer faced the temple itself (see 1 Kings 8:38) to the Holy of Holies (see Psalms 5:8). Daniel, while praying in exile, opened his window toward Jerusalem (see Daniel 6:10). Modern Jews in Europe and America customarily face the East in prayer. It was a custom among the early Christians to face the East but that has long been discontinued. Mohammedans face in the direction of Mecca.

- Will the Jews Be Restored to Palestine at Christ's Second Coming?

74. Will the Jews Be Restored to Palestine at Christ's Second Coming?

Students of prophecy are not agreed on the subject. The majority infer, from various passages, that they will be restored before the coming of Christ in the 1st second stage of that coming. The first stage is thought to be in the air to summon those Christians who are looking for him, to meet him (see 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). The second stage is after the great tribulation when he comes to reign.

- How Often Was Jerusalem Destroyed?

75. How Often Was Jerusalem Destroyed?

The Holy City has been captured and recaptured many times by contending forces. In several of the sieges it has been partially ruined, but in at least four it has been practically destroyed, the first about 1400 B. C, when captured by the tribes of Judah and Simeon ; the second in 586 by Nebuchadnezzar; the third in 170 B. C by Antiochus Epiphanes; the fourth, and doubtless most terrible, in 70 A. D., by Titus. The city was restored by Hadrian in 135 A. D., and since then has changed hands many times. It now belongs to Turkey, and has about 60,000 inhabitants.

- Why Was the Temple Built in Jerusalem?

76. Why Was the Temple Built in Jerusalem?

In 2 Samuel 24:16-25 we learn how the threshing floor of Araunah came to be chosen for the site of an altar of commemoration and sacrifice. Moreover, Scripture and Jewish tradition unite in pointing to that threshing floor as the spot upon which Abraham prepared to offer Isaac (although some eminent authorities have disputed this). Read also the account of the purchase of the site from Oman (Araunah) in 1 Chronicles 21:26-28; and in the next chapter (1 Chronicles 22:1, 1 Chronicles 22:9-10) which shows how David had a divine revelation that his son should build the temple there.

- Who Was Job?

77. Who Was Job?

According to leading commentators, Job was a personage of distinction, wealth and influence who lived in the north of Arabia Deserta, near the Euphrates, some 1800 B. C. His life was patriarchal, his language the Hebrew of that early day, when it was interspersed with Syriac and Arabic. He lived before Moses. His book is probably the oldest book in the world. It is now interpreted as a public debate in poetic form, dealing with the Divine government. It abounds in figurative language. The "day" mentioned in Job 2:1 was one appointed for the angels to give an account of their ministry to God. Evil is personified in Satan, who also comes to make report. The question to Satan and his response are simply a dramatic or poetic form of opening the great controversy which follows.

- Did God Give Job into the Hands of Satan to Be Tempted?

78. Did God Give Job into the Hands of Satan to Be Tempted?

"Tempted" is scarcely the word to use in that case. Job was tried or tested. The question was what his motive was in serving God. Satan with his natural doubt about any one having pure motives, asserted that Job served God only for what he gained by it, and that if his property was taken away from him, he would curse God. So Job was put to the proof, to see what he would do under trial, and whether he was really as disinterested as God believed him to be. The object of the author appears to have been to correct, a false view of adversity, which view was prevalent in his time. People had the idea that severe calamities were punishments dealt out by God because of sin. When a man of good moral character, therefore, was in trouble, people suspected that he had sinned secretly, and that God was punishing him for it. It was often a cruel and unjust suspicion. In writing this description, the author evidently was trying to eradicate it. After reading such a book, a man who saw another in trouble, instead of despising him as a sinner, might say, "Perhaps he is being tried as Job was," and so might sympathize instead of blaming him. Our concern should be to learn the lesson the book was designed to teach, rather than to discuss the question whether it is history or parable, for that question cannot now be authoritatively answered.

- Did God "Blot Out" the Day on Which Job Was Born?

79. Did God "Blot Out" the Day on Which Job Was Born?

This question is doubtless prompted by the ancient tradition or superstition that we have less days in February than any other month, as Job was born in February. This of course is a fallacy. There was no February in the time of Job, 1520 B. C. The months, or divisions of time, were not as we have them now. The year of the Jews consisted of twelve lunar months of twenty-nine and thirty days alternately, a thirteenth being from time to time introduced to accommodate it to the sun and seasons. Let it be noted that while Job cursed his birthday, he did not curse his Maker, so why should the Lord drop a day on account of a little weakness in his servant, who, despite his great sufferings, never uttered any reproach against the Author of his being? Our months as at present, we have from the Romans. With those people February had originally twenty-nine days in an ordinary year, but when the Roman Senate decreed that the eighth month should bear the name of Augustus, a day was taken from February and given to August, which had then only thirty, that it might not be inferior to July, named in honor of Julius Caesar.

- Are the Speeches of Job's Friends to Be Regarded as Inspired?

80. Are the Speeches of Job's Friends to Be Regarded as Inspired?

This question is answered authoritatively in the book itself (see Job 42:7), where God is represented as saying, "My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right." One gets a clearer idea of the book by regarding it as a symposium on the problem of suffering, each speaker being a representative of a school of thought. Each speaker keeps to the same aspect of the subject but all agree in regarding unusual suffering as an evidence of unusual sin. They imply that in Job's case, he being outwardly so good a man, his sin was aggravated by hypocrisy. This was unjust, because, as we learn by the first chapter, it was precisely because he was so good a man that his affliction came upon him. The author of the book evidently wished to administer a warning to the people of his time against being uncharitable in their inferences.

- Is the Book of Job a Real History or a Dramatic Allegory?

81. Is the Book of Job a Real History or a Dramatic Allegory?

Job is believed to have been a real personage—a type of the earliest patriarchs, a man of high intelligence and great faith. The story is cast in dramatic form. Professor S. S. Curry, of Yale and Harvard Divinity Schools, thus outlines it: the place, a hill outside the city; a rising storm, flashing lightning, rolling thunder and a rainbow; the speakers, God, the patriarch Job, his friends, and Satan; the theme, the mystery of human suffering, and human existence." To which may be added, a sublime faith in the divine wisdom, righteousness and justice. The book of Job is regarded by the highest Bible scholarship as a spiritual allegory. The name Job is derived from an Arabic word signifying "repentance," although Job himself is held to be a real personage. (See Ezekiel 14:14 and James 5:11.)

- Why Did 'the Wicked Kings of Judah Let Their Sons Pass through Fire?

82. Why Did 'the Wicked Kings of Judah Let Their Sons Pass through Fire?

It was a heathen form of worship to Molech, Mil-corn or Chemosh, which the Israelites had borrowed or adapted from the Moabites and Ammonites. Human sacrifices were made in high places to Molech. The chief interpreters Jarchi, Kimchi and Maimonides wrote that in the worship of Molech, the children were not burned, but were made to pass before two burning pyres as a purificatory rite. It is quite clear, however, that in many cases lives were actually sacrificed (see Psalms 106:37-38; Jeremiah 7:31). It was assumed that by this rite the victims were purged from dross of the body and attained union with the deity.

- Who Were the "Lost Tribes"?

83. Who Were the "Lost Tribes"?

The "lost tribes," so-called, were the Jews carried into captivity by Shalmaneser (2 Kings 17:36), and chiefly belonging to Israel or the ten tribes. Many theories as to their location and their descendants have been ventilated, and they have been successively located (by ingenious investigators) in Hindustan, Tartary, China, Africa, Great Britain and among the aborigines of North America. More reasonable conjectures hold that while some returned after the exile, and others were left in Samaria, many remained in Assyria and afterward joined with the Jews in forming colonies throughout the East, so that, in a certain sense, they shared the ultimate history of their brethren of Judah.

- What Secular Evidence Have We of the Fate of Lot's Wife?

84. What Secular Evidence Have We of the Fate of Lot's Wife?

The pillar which is mentioned in the story concerning the fate of Lot's wife, in Genesis 19:1-38, is referred to by a number of writers. Josephus (in Antiquities I, II, 4) wrote that it still remained in his day, and he had seen it—i. e., the peculiar formation of crumbling, crystalline rock associated by tradition with the event. Clemens Romanus, Irenaeus and Benjamin of Tudela also wrote of the strange formation as visible in their day, but later writers stated that it had ceased to exist. It is related that, by a singular coincidence, Lieutenant Lynch, who led an American exploring party around the Dead Sea, found on the southwestern shore, at a place called by the Arabs Usdum, a pillar some forty feet high, composed of salt crystals, capped with carbonate of lime, which he assumed to have been detached by the action of the winter rains upon the rock-salt hills. Professor Palmer claims in one of his books to have seen this same formation, which the Arabs, in their usual manner, had connected with the Bible story, although it is not at all certain that the locality is identical with that indicated in Genesis. Several commentators hold that the geological character of the rocks and the prevalence of salt crystals justify the conclusion that the Bible passage might be interpreted to mean "like a pillar of salt," and that the body of Lot's wife "had become fixed for a time to the soil by saline or bituminous incrustations."

- Who and What Was Melchisedec?

85. Who and What Was Melchisedec?

It is in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis that Melchisedec is historically presented to us. The incident and its record, although so brief, and standing in such singular isolation from the thread of the history which it interrupts, is not only in itself most striking and interesting, but also in its typical teaching profoundly instructive. How suddenly and altogether unexpectedly does Melchisedec here appear before us—a most kingly and majestic form, yet clad in priestly robes, and with the mystic emblems of eucharistic offering— bread and wine—in his hands. We see those priestly hands raised in blessing; we observe the great patriarch, Abraham—the father of the faithful and the Friend of God—bowing before the mysterious priest-king, and presenting to him the tithes of all his spoil; and then, as abruptly as it appeared, the vision passes away, and for nearly a thousand years the voice of inspiration utters not again the name of Melchisedec. Then, however, in an ecstatic Psalm of a most distinctly Messianic character, and descriptive of our Lord's exaltation in the day of his power, we meet with it once more in the solemn declaration: "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec (Psalms 110:4). Again, something like a thousand years pass away, and then, once more, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews take up the subject of this mysterious personage, who, "Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, or end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually" (Hebrews 7:13) ; and on the two brief references to him, above given, which are all that the Scriptures contain, founds an argument to show the superiority of Christ's priesthood, as being "after the order of Melchisedec," to that of Aaron, or Levi, which it had superseded. Who was Melchisedec? Much labor has been wasted in attempts to answer the question. Later Jewish tradition identified him with Shem; and it is certain that that patriarch was not only alive in the days of Abraham, but even continued to live till Jacob was fifty years old. (Compare Gen. with verses 12:26, 21:5, 25:7-26.) According to others he belonged to the family of Ham, or of Japheth; and it has been said that this is necessarily implied by the language of the Apostle when drawing a parallel between Melchisedec and Christ, he says that our Lord belonged to "a tribe of which no man gave attendance at the altar." Some, again, have suggested that he was an incarnate angel, or other superhuman creature, who lived for a time among men. Others have held that he was an early manifestation of the Son of God; and a sect, called the Melchisedecians, asserted that he was "an incarnation of the Holy Ghost." But, in all these conjectures, the fact has been strangely overlooked that the reticence of Scripture on the point is typical and significant, for, could it be determined who Melchisedec really was, it could no longer be said that he was "without father, without mother, without genealogy"; which statement is to be understood, not as implying that he was not a natural descendant of Adam, but that he designedly appears and disappears in the sacred narrative without mention either of his parentage or death. There can, however, be no question that, whoever Melchisedec may have been, he was an eminent type of Christ. This is placed beyond doubt, not only by the language of Psalms 110:1-7—the Messianic character of which has ever been recognized by Jews and Christians

alike—but especially by the argument of the Apostle, in Hebrews 7:1-28, in the course of which there occurs the explicit declaration that he was—in the various respects mentioned—"made like unto the Son of God."

- Who Were the Moabites?

86. Who Were the Moabites?

They were the descendants of Lot and were neighbors of the Amorites on the opposite side of the River Arnon (Numbers 21:1-35; Numbers 20:1-29; Numbers 19:1-22; Numbers 18:1-32; Numbers 17:1-13; Numbers 16:1-50; Numbers 15:1-41; Numbers 14:1-45; Numbers 13:1-33). They were governed by kings and possessed many great cities (Numbers 21:28-30; Isaiah 15:1; Numbers 23:7). They were proud, arrogant, idolatrous, superstitious, rich, confident and prosperous. They were mighty men of war (Isaiah 16:6; 1 Kings 11:7; Jeremiah 27:3; Jeremiah 48:7, Jeremiah 48:11, Jeremiah 48:14). The Amorites deprived them of a large part of their territory (Numbers 21:1-35; Numbers 22:1-41; Numbers 23:1-30; Numbers 24:1-25; Numbers 25:1-18; Numbers 26:1-65). The Moabites refused to let Israel pass through their country and were so greatly impressed and alarmed by the multitude of the Israelitish host that, with Midian, they sent Balaam to curse it (Numbers 22:1-41; Numbers 23:1-30; Numbers 24:1-25). Subsequently, Israel was enticed into their idolatry and even intermarried with them. They were always hostile to Israel until Saul subdued them (1 Samuel 14:47) and were later made tributary to David and the Jewish kings (2 Samuel 8:2-12; 2 Kings 3:4), but finally joined Babylon against Judah (2 Kings 24:2).

- Why Did Moses Strike the Rock?

87. Why Did Moses Strike the Rock?

The account in Numbers 20:1-29 very clearly shows that Moses disobeyed the divine command in striking the rock as he did. For the moment he apparently lost his faith, and his temper as well. He had been explicitly instructed to "speak unto the rock" (Numbers 20:8) instead of which he addressed the people in hasty and passionate words and smote the rock twice. (See Psalms 106:32-33.) His whole attitude betrayed his doubt, not of God's power, but of his will to help a people who had been rebellious. Further, Moses was irreverent (see Numbers 20:12) in that his language and bearing detracted from the sanctity of the occasion and was therefore displeasing to God. He had been entrusted with a great enterprise and his perfect obedience to and implicit faith in God were indispensable. As the result showed, his failure involved serious consequences for the whole nation.

- What Was the Dispute Over Moses' Body Between Michael and Satan?

88. What Was the Dispute Over Moses' Body Between Michael and Satan?

The passage in Jude 1:1 :g referring to the dispute between Michael and Satan over the body of Moses, is regarded by Vitranga, Lardner, McKnight and other distinguished commentators as symbolical, "the body of Moses" being intended to represent the Mosaic law and institutions (see Zechariah 3:1), in the same manner in which modern Christians call the Church "the body of Christ." According to others, it has reference to a Jewish legend connected with the secret burial of the great lawgiver (Deuteronomy 34:6). The Targum of Jonathan attributes the burial of Moses to the hands of angels, led by Michael as the guardian of Israel. Other views set forth in the Hebrew books are that Satan disputed the burial, claiming the body because of the blood of the Egyptian whom Moses slew, and because of the leader's sin at Meribah. Having "the power of death," he opposes the raising of Moses' body again for these reasons, but the hitter's visible presence with Enoch and Elijah at the Transfiguration gave evidence of Michael's triumph, and was also a pledge of the coming resurrection. Josephus, the Jewish historian (in Anri quities 4:8), states that God hid the body of Moses, lest it should be worshiped by the people.

- Did Nebuchadnezzar Literally Eat Grass?

89. Did Nebuchadnezzar Literally Eat Grass?

We do not know any more on the subject than is related in the Bible. The natural inference from the narrative is that the king was temporarily deprived of his reason, and insane people often do things as unnatural as eating grass. There is nothing improbable in the Biblical statement. On the other hand, some authorities suggest that the narrative means nothing more than that the king left his palace and the cares of state and lived the life of a peasant for seven years; or, as we might say, vegetated in rural seclusion; but the plain statement of the text is that generally accepted. Daniel 4:35-37 indicates that he became, at least outwardly, a believer in the true God.

- What Were the Dimensions and Material of Noah's Ark?

90. What Were the Dimensions and Material of Noah's Ark?

According to the directions in Genesis 6:15, the Ark was 300 cubits long, 50 cubits broad and 30 cubits high. Bible students have been greatly puzzled over the length of the cubit, which seems to have varied greatly in ancient times. It is evident, however (from Deuteronomy 3:11), that it was taken as a measure from the human body, and may have been either from the wrist to the end of the third figure, or the entire length of the lower or forearm, from the elbow to the wrist, or even from the elbow to the finger-point. One authority, Celsus, says the cubit was identified with the ulna, or under and larger of the two bones of the arm. The Egyptian cubit, which the Hebrews may have taken, measured six hand-breadths and the Jewish rabbins (as the Mishna states) assigned six hand-breadths to the Mosaic cubit, while Josephus says a cubit was equal to two spans, the span being equal to three hand-breadths. Ezekiel 40:5, Ezekiel 43:13 speaks of the cubit "which was a cubit and a hand-breadth" which was the Babylonian cubit. It would thus seem that the Ark, though its size cannot be confidently stated, was a very spacious vessel, probably exceeding 500 feet in length, fully 85 feet broad and over 52 feet high. In 1609 Peter Jansen of Horn, in Holland, built a vessel of these proportions and found that it would stow fully a third more cargo than ships of its size built in the ordinary manner. It had 3,600,000 cubic feet of space, and after nine-tenths had been assigned for food storage there was still room for 7,000 pairs of animals, each with 50 cubic feet of space. It was, in fact, a huge floating storehouse, rather than a ship. As to the materials of which the Ark was built, we find in Genesis 6:14 that Noah is told to make an ark of "gopher" wood. There are various conjectures as to what kind of wood this was. Bunsen holds that it was a wood found only in Egypt; Dietrich believes it was a heavy reed-like growth; Gesenius affirms that it was pine, fir or cedar, and Bochart says cypress. Chaldee translators declare it to have been the sissu, a dark-colored wood of Arabian growth and highly valued. A majority hold to the opinion that cypress was meant, on account of its enduring qualities. As to the time occupied in building it, much has been said but little of real worth. The only Bible passage supposedly referable to this question is Genesis 6:3. This passage is variously interpreted. By some it is held to refer to a shortening of human life; by others it is interpreted as meaning that the period stated would be further granted as a respite—an opportunity for repentance—failing which the divine presence (the Shecinah, which had hitherto continued at the gate of Eden) would be withdrawn from the world on account of its wickedness. The best answer is that nowhere is it stated in the Bible how long Noah was engaged in building the Ark. The Lord had offered a respite of 120 years, after the warning to the human race (see 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5), and it was during this period that Noah, who was a "preacher of righteousness," not only labored in the work of awakening the people to the enormity of their sin and of urging them to repentance, but also used a portion of that period in preparing the Ark for the emergency that would arise, if the people did not listen to his cry for repentance.

- What Were the "Bitter Herbs" Used at the Passover?

91. What Were the "Bitter Herbs" Used at the Passover?

Since endive, chicory, wild lettuce, or nettles, were important articles of food to the ancient Egyptians, it is likely that these were the bitter herbs of the Passover feast, more especially so, as they are at the present time eaten by the Jews in the East.

- Were the Patriarchs Really As Old As the Bible Record States?

92. Were the Patriarchs Really As Old As the Bible Record States?

Some of the "higher critics" claim that the ancient calendar of the antediluvians made the year really a month, or lunar period. Others, with somewhat more reason, assert that a year was a season of growth equal to three of our months. Hensler and Hufeland, two German authorities, claim that the patriarchal year was three months till Abraham's time, eight months till Joseph's time, and thereafter twelve months. One eminent Bible scholar has pointed out that if we accept the monthly year theory, Mahalaleel's sixty-five years before the birth of his son Jared would make him a parent at five years and three months of our reckoning; Enoch would be the same age when his son Methuselah was born, and the ages of the other patriarchs at the birth of their children would be equally preposterous. Of course, such conclusions absolutely condemn the monthly year theory. Conditions among the antediluvians were totally different from those after the Flood. There had been no rain, and the sun and planets were not visible; in the moist atmosphere, growth was greatly stimulated and all natural conditions tended to animal and vegetable longevity, precisely as the Bible indicates. Besides, as that period produced animal types of giant proportions, created for strength and endurance, the analogy of nature would seem to demand that man should bear some harmonious proportion to his surroundings. Genesis 6:1-22 uj. (first clause) clearly implies this. Age and stature, not only human but otherwise, became gready diminished after the Flood.

- Was Pharaoh Drowned in the Red Sea?

93. Was Pharaoh Drowned in the Red Sea?

All the evidence is against the theory that he was drowned in the Red Sea. Some very interesting information, furnishing striking confirmation of the Bible narrative, has recently been obtained, by deciphering the inscriptions on ancient Egyptian monuments. From these it appears that the Pharaoh who "refused to let the people go" was named Menephtah. He was the youngest son of the great Pharaoh, Ram-esses II, the Pharaoh who oppressed the Hebrews and ordered the killing of the male infants, and whose death is mentioned in Exodus 2:1-25. Menephtah was an old man, at least sixty, when he came to the throne, and was constitutionally timid and feeble. He joined with him in the government his brilliant son Seti, a young man resembling in person and character his grandfather, the great Rameses. Seti was virtually king though his father, Menephtah, was king in name. The Bible alludes to Seti as "the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on the throne" (Exodus 12:29). This young man's tomb has been found, and a record of his achievements, showing him to have been a great general and administrator. But his name does not appear in the list of the Pharaohs and the inscription on his tomb shows that he never became king, but died suddenly, while still only a prince. The Bible tells us how he died. It was on the night when the angel slew the firstborn. Menephtah, as we know by the Bible narrative, pursued the Hebrews. He had no son now to take command as on former occasions. He was then an old man eighty-two years of age. What more likely than that, when he saw the Israelites descend into the Red Sea, he should send on his army and stay behind himself, not caring at his age, and at night, to undertake so perilous a journey. The Egyptian records state that once before, on the eve of battle, when he should have led his army, the old man had a convenient vision, ordering him not to enter the battle but to give the command to his son. He doubtless excused himself on this occasion and so saved his life. A parallel case of a father and son reigning simultaneously is found in Belshazzar, who, though exercising kingly functions, does not appear on the list of kings. He was associated in government with his father, Nabon-nidus, and, like Seti in Egypt, died before his father.

- What Is Meant by "I Will Harden Pharaoh's Heart"?

94. What Is Meant by "I Will Harden Pharaoh's Heart"?

This expression in Exodus 7:3 has been a stumbling-block to many. There is a point reached by those who have long persisted in wicked courses which is known as judicial blindness, a point at which—God's restraining spirit being withdrawn—they become unable to distinguish right from wrong or good from evil. They grow hardened and morally incorrigible. (See Mark 3:5; Romans 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:14; Ephesians 4:18.) Under such circumstances, the offender turns even blessings into sin by abusing them, and unless overtaken by some great adversity, continues in his course, blind to consequences. This was doubtless the case with Pharaoh. Egypt had sinned deeply, and so long as its rulers were unchecked by some stronger power, they would continue to sin. Pharaoh, long accustomed to the abuse of power, steeled himself against all sense of justice and mercy, and this the "permissive act of providence" allowed, in order that the culminating punishment should be the more severe. In other words, Pharaoh was permitted to go on in his sin, in order that his fate might be made an awful example to the whole world.

- If God "Hardened" Pharaoh's Heart, Was It Possible for Him to do Otherwise than He Did?

95. If God "Hardened" Pharaoh's Heart, Was It Possible for Him to do Otherwise than He Did?

The true interpretation is that the divine message of warning and the plagues which followed were the occasion of Pharaoh's heart being hardened. Thus the expression which has been translated as "hardened," is, in Hebrew, "strong," implying that the influence of the events had been to make the king's heart stubborn or rebellious. (See Exodus 7:13-14, Exodus 8:19, and Exodus 9:35.) Elsewhere in the same narrative the Hebrew expression is capable of being translated "made heavy" (as in Exodus 7:14 and Exodus 8:15 and Exodus 8:32, also Exodus 9:-34). The passage in Exodus 7:1-25; Exodus 8:1-32; Exodus 9:1-35; Exodus 10:1-29; Exodus 11:1-10; Exodus 12:1-51; Exodus 13:1-22; Exodus 14:1-31; Exodus 15:1-27; Exodus 16:1-36; Exodus 17:1-16; Exodus 18:1-27; Exodus 19:1-25; Exodus 20:1-26; Exodus 21:1-36; Exodus 22:1-31; Exodus 23:1-33, which may be rendered as in the Authorized Version, and also as "he (Pharaoh) set his heart even to this," expresses the condition of Egypt's ruler, who had set his face like a flint against Jehovah, and was alternately depressed and defiant, but not repentant

- Who Were the Philistines?

96. Who Were the Philistines?

Their origin is nowhere expressly stated in the Bible; but since the prophets describe them as "the Philistines from Caphtor" (Amos 9:7), and "the remnant of the maritime district of Caphtor" (Jeremiah 47:1-4), it is probable that they were the "Caphtorim which came out of Caphtor," and who expelled the Avim from their lands and occupied them (Deuteronomy 2:23), and that they were the Caphtorim mentioned in the Mosaic genealogical table among the descendants of Mizraim. There is equal authority for believing Caphtor to have been the island of Cyprus, or a land somewhere between Egypt and Ethiopia, or a part of Northern Egypt. Some have claimed that Caphtor and the modern island of Crete are identical; but the best authorities do not agree with this conclusion.

- Who Wrote the Book of Proverbs?

97. Who Wrote the Book of Proverbs?

Some ancient authorities, rabbins and others attribute the book to Solomon; others hold that it has a composite origin and is the work of a number of writers. The ablest modern critics hold the latter opinion. It is probable that Solomon was the author of the portion beginning with Proverbs 10:1 and ending with Proverbs 22:16. As we learn from Proverbs 25:1, the collection of proverbs extending to the end of the twenty-ninth chapter was also attributed to him, but was not compiled until 250 years after his death. The remainder of the book appears to be composed of six portions by different hands at different periods. One of these is the introduction, which occupies the first nine chapters. This was probably written by the man who compiled the whole book, but whose name is unknown.

97A. Who Composed the Psalms? The Book of Psalms (which is the Psalter of the Hebrews) has many authors, the principal one being David. Some are attributed to Hezekiah, Josiah, and Zerubbabel, two (Psalms 72:1-20 and Psalms 127:1-6) to Solomon, several to the Levites and the Asaphites, one, at least, to Jeduthun, eleven to the sons of Korah, one to Ethan (Psalms 89:1-52), while many are of uncertain authorship. Moses is given by tradition as the author of Psalms 90:1-17, being the only contribution of which his authorship is reasonably certain. The Psalms cover a period of a thousand years. They were composed at different remote periods, by various poets; David, the most prolific contributor, being indicated as the author of seventy-three Psalms in the Hebrew text and eleven in the Septuagint

- What Figure Is Conveyed by the Words "Rachel Weeping for Her Children"?

98. What Figure Is Conveyed by the Words "Rachel Weeping for Her Children"?

The passage in Matthew 2:18 relates to the Baby-lonian captivity. Rachel, the wife of Jacob, and mother of Joseph and Benjamin, is figuratively represented as rising from the tomb and lamenting over the loss of her children. Raman in Benjamin was a scene of pillage and massacre in Jeremiah's time (see Jeremiah 3:1-25), and hence is chosen by the prophet in his figurative scene of lamentation.

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