

### Querist's Column.

[All matter intended for this column should be addressed to E. C. Ford, Fort Williams, Kings County, N. S. Questions touching the meaning of scriptures will be gladly received.]

Q.—1st. What does the phrase "end of the world" in Matt. xiii. 39, and "end of this world" in verse 40 signify? Do these phrases refer to the end, or time of the destruction of this earth? And, if so, then

2nd. Why did the revisors put in the margin of the R. V. "consummation of the age?" and

3rd. What did the revisors mean by consummation of the age? O. B. E.

Ans.—2. The phrase "end of the world" and "end of this world," in verses 39 and 40, and also in verse 49 of this chapter, refer to the time of which our Lord speaks in verses 41 and 43, "when the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend"—, at which time "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"—. In Matt. xxv. 31-32, we are told that this separation will take place "when the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him"—. When Peter was speaking of this coming, Acts iii. 21, he says of Christ: "whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things whereof God spoke by the mouth of His prophets"— R. V. Again, in I. Cor. xv. 23-24, Paul teaches plainly that at the time of Christ's coming, "then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father"—. From these parallel passages it is evident that the phrase "end of the world" in these verses refer to the time of the destruction of this earth and the redemption of the children of God.

2. Many of the marginal notes in the R. V. represent "such differences of reading as were judged to be of sufficient importance to require a particular notice;" and also, "alternative renderings in difficult or debateable passages." For one or the other of the above reasons we have the marginal reading, "the consummation of the age."

3. Evidently, just what the word expressed; the completion and fulfilment of the things that God had before spoken "by the mouth of all His holy prophets."

Q.—1st. Please explain Rev. xxii. 1-2. What is meant by the "pure water of life," and "the tree of life with its twelve manner of fruits," the leaves of which were for the healing of the nations?

2. Also, Matt. iii. 11-12. What is meant by "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire?" YOUNG DISCIPLE, P. E. J.

Ans.—1. As the typical waters and the tree of life in Eden have their fulfilment in Christ, and as the waters in the vision of Ezekiel are symbolical of the triumphs and sanctifying influences of the Gospel, so the "pure river of water of life," and the "tree of life," in the vision of John, symbolize the perpetual vitality and uninterrupted continuance of glory, and fullness of joy promised to those who "shall have the right to the tree of life," and "enter in through the gates into the city."

2. The baptism of the spirit, here spoken of, had its fulfilment when the apostles received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii, 1-4, and at the house of Cornelius, when the first Gentile converts received the same mark of God's approval, Acts x. 44-47. As the baptism of the Spirit marks the divine approval, so the "baptism of fire" clearly points to the condemnation of those who "obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." This the twelfth verse clearly implies: "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Q.—1st. Did Christ partake of the bread and wine when He instituted the Lord's supper.

H. E. C.

Ans.—1. In Matt. xxvi. 29, we read: "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine"—; and in Mark xiv. 25, "I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine"—. From these Scriptures, the meaning of which is, *from this time forward*, it is evident that Christ did partake with His disciples.

Q.—1st. How do you understand Matt. viii. 21-22. Did the Lord actually refuse the son the privilege of burying his father? H. M.

Ans.—1. In all probability the father was yet living, and as this call to follow the Lord meant to "preach the kingdom of God" (Luko ix. 60), the son desired to put the matter off till after the death of his father, *then* he would go. But Christ teaches us that no such considerations as this should keep us from preaching the Gospel of the kingdom; for there will always be those who are not interested in the kingdom, the spiritually dead, to "bury their own dead."

Q.—1st. How can it be explained that the prophecy found in Zechariah, concerning the "thirty pieces of silver," and the "Potter's field," is quoted by the Apostle in Matt. xxvii. 9-10, and ascribed to Jeremiah? H. A. D.

Ans.—1. This is confessedly a difficult matter to explain satisfactorily. Some authorities say that some old manuscripts mention the name of no prophet, but say, merely, "*spoken by the prophet*;" and that in all probability the name of Jeremiah was inserted by some subsequent copyist. But Dr. Lightfoot claims that the division of the prophets, beginning with the book of Jeremiah, was called by the Jews after his name, because of the high place he held among them; and that the book of Zechariah, from which the Apostle quoted, was in this division. For this reason he insists that the word *Jeremiah* is perfectly correct as standing at the head of that division.

### Selected.

#### FROM JAPAN.

BY G. T. S.

The Japanese are claiming that they have done in thirty years that which required three hundred in Europe. The advance from feudalism to a constitutional form of government has been achieved during this period. The cost in blood has been small; the comfort and advantages gained by the people have been large. There is not a Japanese in all the empire who has not been benefited by Jesus of Nazareth.

The treaties made by the foreigners, led by the sturdy and persistent Commodore Perry, gave great offence to the majority of the people. A civil war resulted, and the general of the army, called the Tycoon, was compelled to give way. The Emperor, who had not really ruled the country for six hundred years, was again restored to his seat of power. The men who conquered intended to annul the treaties and expel the hated foreigners. They found their utter inability to accomplish such an undertaking, and the nation awoke to the fact that Japan was not the largest and most prosperous nation in the world. The awakening was very hard. Fortunately the leaders were of good sense, and they resolved to put Japan on a par with western nations. The Emperor made a promise that he would give a constitution to the empire, thus limiting his absolute power. The feudal lords surrendered their *fiefs* to the emperor, and persuaded or compelled every other baron to do the same. The Emperor emerged from his seclusion, organized a cabinet, and the work of importing western civilization and products has continued until this day. The promise of a constitution, made twenty years ago, has been observed, and the national congress of Japan met on the 25th of

November. There was great rejoicing in every part of the empire. Flags floated everywhere, innumerable paper lanterns in gay colors illuminated the streets for three nights, while a large amount of that foe to national prosperity—rice beer—was destroyed. The destruction was effected in the usual manner by patriotic Japanese, and it had the usual effect on the individual.

The Christians in the empire prayed for the country, for the national assembly, and for the future. One preacher in Tokyo preached on the Lord's day before on the debt of gratitude they owed to God because they had attained this freedom without effort or self-denial. He told what it cost the Americans, and as he followed our troops through ice of the Delaware and the privations of Valley Forge he brought tears to the eyes of his hearers.

Some Christians wanted to become members of the assembly. To gain popular favor they gave up their faith or smirched the Christian name by their conduct. Others stood by their principles whether elected or not. About twelve staunch Christians are in the lower house, which has three hundred members. There are eight or ten more who have been Christians, but have graduated—at least they don't work at it much. One man was told that he would better give up his position as elder in the United Church of Christ if he wished to be elected. He replied that he would rather be an elder in the Christian Church than president of the house. He was elected. The lower house selects three members whose names are laid before the Emperor, who chooses one as president. The Emperor chose the one having the highest number of votes. He is the elder mentioned above.

Seven bodies of Presbyterians were too many for the Japanese to understand, so they pressed the question of union. Some of the foreign missionaries did not like it: but the Japanese gained the day. They have lately made another step toward the New Testament. Their synod, which meets biennially, has lately held a session in Tokyo. Some of the Japanese members made a motion to throw away the Westminster Confession of Faith. The discussion continued for two days, when they decided to lay aside the Westminster and adopt the apostles' creed, as it is called. I believe the apostles' creed. This church is known as the United Church of Christ in Japan. Their creed is a simple recital of the facts of the gospel contained in that venerable summary, the simplest and best of human creeds. If they could be brought to apostolic practice as to baptism they would soon stand completely on the New Testament ground. Their action shows their spirit, and that the future church of Japan will be very different from that delivered to them by the foreigners. The Japanese want union. The Methodists even asked why they should not unite with the proposed united Congregationalists and Presbyterians; but the self-supporting churches among the Methodists are few, and the foreigners can thus keep up the sect spirit. It is a time when we are needed, but our numbers are so few that our voices are drowned in the din. We have three male missionaries in Japan and untold opportunities. We ought to have at least one more; then we would have one for every ten millions of Japanese, all accessible as no other people are. We could accommodate forty missionaries—one to a million—and we could use \$20,000 in a school if we had the men to man it. Then our voices would have weight. The Presbyterians have the men and the means to give their preachers a good education. With the ridicule they throw on immersion and the gratitude due their teachers affecting the Japanese, it would be difficult to influence them to change their minds as to baptism. We baptized a Presbyterian preacher lately. He formed a friendship for one of our men in Shonai, which led him to immersion.—*Missionary Weekly*.