

EASTER.

SISTER N. S. Stevens, of Daisy, Arkansas, wants to know about Easter: is it the day Christ rose from the grave? Why is it not the same day of the month and the same month of the year, like Christmas?

Easter is mentioned but once in the Bible, in Acts xii. 4. Herod Agrippa the first, father of the Agrippa before whom Paul later made his stirring defense, as told in Acts xxvi., stretched forth his hands to vex the church of God, killed James, the brother of John, seized Peter and cast him into prison. It being the time of the feast of unleavened bread when Peter was arrested, Herod, though not a Jew himself, was politician enough to know that the Jews would not care to enter into judgment with Peter during their festive season, so kept him in confinement, intending to bring him forth after Easter, or after the passover week of unleavened bread. The word here translated Easter is, in the original Greek, Pascha, and literally means the passover, not having any reference whatever to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The Jewish passover was eaten on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year, and, for seven days therefrom, was the feast of unleavened bread. Roughly speaking, this corresponds to our month of April. When Christ ate of the passover with his disciples on the evening of the day before his crucifixion, that day must have been the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, therefore the date of his resurrection would be the first day of the week next following. In other words, Christ rose from the dead on the 17th of *Abib*, or *Nisan*, as it was renamed after the captivity. This is most certainly a fixed date, the same as was the date of his birth, and not a movable date, as the date of Easter now is as observed by the so-called christian sects of the world. This observance of Easter by the religions of the World as at present engaged in under the pretense of celebrating the resurrection of Christ, is but one of the many glaring inconsistencies of error. The Council of Nice, a Catholic body of over 1500 delegates, called together by the Roman emperor Constantine in the year 325, decreed that Easter should always be observed on the first Sunday following the full moon happening upon or next: after the 21st of March. Thus Easter must fall not earlier than March 22nd and not later than April 25th. The Catholics instituted this glaring error, and the Protestant daughters, of the "scarlet woman" have helped her to perpetuate it. How can any one be so deluded as to believe that a day which; moves about from year to year, as does Easter, can be the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? This latter event is as fixed and immovable in the history of the church just as certainly as his birth is fixed and immovable. The date of Jesus' birth is said to have been the 25th of December, but no human being has ever been able to prove that even this date is correct. The word "Easter" itself is derived from the Anglo-Saxon, and is taken from the name of the old Saxon goddess Ostara, or Eastre, who represented the morning, or east, and the opening year, or spring. This pagan deity

flourished in the imaginations of men about the same time that the Council of Nice bound its dictum upon their intellects. Thus, summing up the whole matter, what do we find? That Easter, as currently observed, is a mass of Judaism, Catholicism, paganism, of falsehood and superstition, with not a vestige of real true gospel virtue in it anywhere. For the gospel church of our Lord Jesus Christ to set apart days, or weeks, or months, or years, to commemorate anything which the Head of the church has not definitely enjoined, is to follow after men and their traditions; it is to become entangled again with the yoke of bondage, which never could justify the ungodly. The truth of God as in Christ Jesus is in its very nature eternal and spiritual, and cannot be limited to this or that duration of time. Read Paul's letter to the Galatians. "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This miracle of the new birth wrought in the experience of the children of God, and not the 25th of December, is the living memorial of the birth of Christ, written by the finger of God. In Ephesians, first chapter, we read, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know * * * what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." Belief in Christ is effected by the experimental operation of the same mighty power that brought again the Lord Jesus from the dead. This miracle, and not Easter, is the Spirit's commemoration of the resurrection of the great Shepherd of the sheep, and of his victory over death, hell and the grave. "Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?" Amen. L.

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