by reason of that Patriarch's faith in God (implicitly in Christ). Yet, just as Abraham had to " walk before God and be perfect " (Gen. xvii, 1) so must his spiritual descendants. The Law of Moses renewed and developed the Covenant made between God and Abraham ; it provided the Israelites with signposts pointing the way to remaining in God's friendship. But all the time the Law was not divorced in God's intention from the Covenant—not separated from faith.

All that Our Lord says in effect to the lawyer is that if he observes the Law faithfully, he will continue in the friendship imparted to Abraham and Abraham's spiritual descendants. In view of Our Lord's " economy " of revelation no other answer was practicable. The Law of Moses was still in force. Though Our Lord had promulgated the New Covenant in the Sermon on the Mount, it was inaugurated actually only after Calvary (cf. Col. ii, 14). In the meantime the clearest expression of God's will for a man of faith was the Law.

But the Law was most difficult to observe faithfully—though not impossible. It was but a light ; it was not a force. It needed to be completed and perfected by the grace of Christ. Hence, the Law brought mankind under a curse (Gal. iii, 10 ; cf. iii, 20). The fault lay not with the Law but with the force of concupiscent nature (cf. Rom. ii, 17-19, etc.)

The Law as a law separated from the Covenant never saved anyone. But practised by a man of faith, incomplete and preparatory though it was, the Law *could* bring a man to eternal life.

                                                        D. J. LEAHY.

It is understandable that Herod should be troubled at the news of the birth of Christ " born king of the Jews " but why should " all Jerusalem " be troubled too ? (Matt. ii, 3).

The expression " all Jerusalem " may be regarded as a legitimate hyperbole to indicate many in the city apart from the king and his court. The reason for their fear was that a dynastic dispute nearly always meant bloodshed, sometimes on a considerable scale, as may be read in the history of all ages.

In the present case the danger was aggravated by the fact that Herod was both a usurper and a non-Jew, whose rule had never been willingly accepted by the Jews. In consequence he grew tyrannical and suspicious —and his natural tendency to cruelty was thus increased. He began his reign by putting to death forty-five nobles, adherents of Antigonus, the Hasmonaean king whom he supplanted, persuaded the Romans to kill Antigonus, had the Hasmonaean Aristobulus (High Priest and a possible rival), put to death, some years later he put his wife Mariamne (also one of the rival Hasmonaean dynasty) to death, on the grounds that she tried to poison him, and killed off the rest of the surviving Hasmonaeans in 25 B.C. In the year 8 B.C. he killed two of his own sons whom he suspected of plots against him, namely, Alexander and

Aristobulus, sons of the Hasmonaean Mariamne. They were strangled in prison. Herod finally had another son Antipater, put to death only five days before he himself died, because he suspected him of trying to poison him.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that the news of the birth of one who was " born king of the Jews " should have aroused Herod's worst suspicions. Herod was very well aware of the Messianic hopes of the Jews and the danger to his throne that these constituted (Mt. ii, 4). The danger lay of course not in the character and mission of Christ who stated quite clearly that His kingdom was not of this world (Jn. xviii, 36), but in the false ideas that the Jews had, about the Messianic king, whom they expected to overthrow the Romans, cast out Herod and set up an earthly kingdom. Drastic measures would clearly need to be used to eliminate the danger. The subsequent massacre shows that the fears of " all Jerusalem " were not without foundation. It probably took place after the murder of Alexander and Aristobulus and of course before that of Antipater.

R. C. FULLER.

What is the reason for the different renderings of Gen. iii, 15 in Protestant and Catholic Bibles, especially the feminine pronouns in the Catholic Bible ?

What is chiefly needed is to determine the correct Hebrew text; and fortunately this is not difficult. It translates as follows : " I shall put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise its heel." The verb translated " bruise " is the same in both cases, but the translation is not very satisfactory, because a serpent does not " bruise." Nor is the exact meaning of the Hebrew word easy to fix, as it occurs elsewhere only in Job ix, 17 (" crush ") and Psalm cxxxviii, 11 (" cover "), in which latter place it is so puzzling that emendations are proposed. The Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) has " lie in wait for " (or something similar) in both cases ; but a man does not lie in wait for the head of a serpent. So the Douay Version, following the Vulgate, has " crush " first, and then " lie in wait," which neglects the identity of the Hebrew word, which I should be inclined to translate " attack " in both cases.

So much for the verb. The Hebrew certainly requires " her seed " to be understood where I have rendered " it " and " its." The " it " might of itself indicate either the seed or the woman, as the pronoun in the Pentateuch does not change for gender, so far as the letters are concerned. The vowel-points were inserted by the Jewish rabbis after St. Jerome had written the Vulgate, but we may notice that they read the masculine (agreeing with " seed ") ; if they had understood the feminine, they would have put the vowel-points indicating the later