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A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

A NEW SECOND-CENTURY CHRISTIAN
DIALOGUE.

II.

Z. THOU didst promise to prove that Christ is both King and Priest.

A. Christ is anointed not with earthly oil, but with the Spirit of God, according to the prophecy of David, which says: ¹ “*Therefore God, thy God, anointed thee with oil of gladness above Thy fellows.*” But not “according to Thy fellows” is here; because his fellows are anointed with earthly oil, but He with the Holy Spirit, as is written: ² “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He anointed even Me; to preach good tidings to the poor He hath sent Me.*”

Z. It was Isaiah who said this? Surely Christ ³ is not God? (or God is not Christ?)

A. Rather this, that which Isaiah said, he said in the person of Christ. Listen therefore to his entire prophecy that thou mayest know that the prophecy suits no one else, except Christ alone. For it says as follows: ⁴ “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed even Me. *To evangelise the poor hath He sent Me,* ⁵ to heal the broken in heart, to preach to the captives release and to the blind that they see, to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord and a day of recompence to our God. To have mercy on all mourners, to give unto the mourners the glory of Sion; instead of ashes, anointing of gladness; and to the mourners a garb of gladness, instead of a spirit of heaviness. They shall be called a race of righteousness [212], a plant of the Lord unto glory; and they shall build and renew the cities laid waste, made desolate for generations [or of the Gentiles]. And*

¹ Ps. xlv. 7.

² Isa. lxi. 1.

³ Is not this a correction for a primitive “Isaiah”?—R. Harris.

⁴ Isa. lxi. 1.

⁵ One codex omits the words asterisked.

aliens shall come to shepherd thy sheep and foreigners [be thy] ploughmen and vine-dressers. But ye shall be called priests of the Lord; servants of our God shall ye be named, the powers of the Gentiles must ye devour and with their riches become wonderful. Thus shall they have the earth as a second heritage, and joy everlasting be upon their heads. For I am the Lord who love righteousness and hate robbery by injustice."

Z. All this is spoken concerning our congregation.

A. Joy everlasting has not been and is not now upon your heads.

Z. No one insults another by way of argument.

A. I do not insult thee; far be it from me to do so. But if thou canst prove to me that joy everlasting has been yours, whose very city and temple have been destroyed, and your government, and country, and ark, and holy of holies, and cherubin, and mercy-seat, then whatever thou hast learned, tell it forthwith.

Z. But all this is to be in the future, though the time is not yet.

A. Dost thou however thyself admit the anointing with the Holy Spirit, and that the prophecy of Isaiah has not been fulfilled in the case of a single one of the kings and prophets that have already been?

Z. Had then not Isaiah the Spirit?

A. He had the Holy Spirit of God, and not Isaiah alone but all the prophets of God [213]. But what I have just now cited from him, Isaiah spoke not about himself, but about another.

Z. And I say that He spoke about another, yet not about thy Christ.

A. Then the anointing of the Christ is allowed to be by the Holy Spirit?

Z. Yes.

A. Then go to Jerusalem, and learn by asking therein where the Holy Spirit descended, and upon whom, and

when, that thou mayest hear that it was in Jordan, [on Him] who was born of Mary, under Augustus Cæsar.

Z. And canst thou believe thy gospels?

A. Just because of this both the place is told thee and the time; so that thou mayest go to the spot and receive real proof, and assure thyself of the fulfilment of the prophecy in the case of all who believe in him, by beholding gladness everlasting on their heads whoever shall say,¹ “*The light of thy countenance hath been set as a sign on us, and thou hast given gladness to our hearts.*”

Z. That was said not concerning you Christians, but about us Israelites.

A. Listen to the sequel of the prophecy, that thou mayest know that it is spoken about us.

Z. Go on.

A. Thus:² “*And I will lay on them an everlasting covenant, and their seed shall be known among the heathen.*”

Z. The seed of the Jews was to be known among the heathen.

A. Thou speakest truly. For the holy apostles [214] being the seed of Abraham have been made known to us heathens; and their grandsons among the congregations³ are holy witnesses. For⁴ “*Every one who seeth them, knoweth them, that they are the seed blessed of the Lord, and they shall rejoice in the Lord with everlasting gladness.*”

Z. We have rejoiced in the Lord.

A. And again I say—your everlasting joy, what is it, when your land has been made a desert and your cities consumed with fire? Wherefore you should rather for ever mourn—yes or no? Tell me.

Z. But I have told you that it will be in the future, even for another city to be built.

¹ Ps. xv. 7.

² Isa. lxi. 8.

³ Cp. Hegesippus *ap.* Euseb., *H. E.*, bk. iii., chaps. 20 and 32 [V. Bartlett].

⁴ Isa. lxi. 9.

A. Let us then see the sequel that [the things foretold in it] have not happened [to you Jews]. For it says this¹: “*My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, for He hath clothed me in a robe of salvation, and with a garment of joy hath He decked me.*” And if thou knewest that we who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, and have received a garment of joy, the grace of the Holy Spirit, and that we have the sign of the cross *as a mother*² *the bridegroom, and as a bride* we will adorn ourselves with the adornment of works, and *like the earth which increaseth its flowers* the church causes them that are illumined in herself to bloom year by year, and *like a sweet-smelling garden makes its seeds to sprout*, that is the newly-called unto the faith; thus shall the Lord make to shine the righteousness which is the day of salvation *and gladness, the rising up before all the heathen.*³

Z. Thou understandest, then, and preachest the first days of the month here spoken of, as thou wilt, unto thyself?

[215] A. Since thou art even yet unbelieving, hear also what follows, and for very awe tell the truth⁴: “*Because of Sion I will not be silent, and because of Jerusalem I will not submit, until My righteousness shall go forth as light and My salvation as a flaming torch. And the heathen shall see thy righteousness, and all the people thy glory. And he shall be called by a new name by which the Lord shall name him. And thou shalt become a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a kingly diadem in the hand of thy God.*”

Z. Concerning what dost thou allege this to be said?

A. Concerning Jerusalem. For it is no longer a city of the Jews, but a city of Christians who are called by a new name. For if thou goest thither, thou wilt learn that it is

¹ Isa. lxi. 10.

² Is. lxi. 10, 11, by reading, for *μητραν, μητέρα* [R. Harris].

³ There seems to be a lacuna here in the text.

⁴ Isa. lxii. 1.

become a city of Christ and a dwelling-place of solitaries, of virgins both men and women; and [thou wilt learn] the holy resurrection of Christ, and all kings upholding (or bringing) their glory, and all the heathen in their congregations the ornament of Him wherewith in preaching He was adorned.

Z. Then it is no more burned with fire or to be despised.

A. It has been destroyed and dishonoured for Jews; but for Christians it is a habitation and is made glorious.

Z. The prophecy says¹: "*And there shall come aliens as shepherds of thy flocks and foreigners plowmen and as vine-dressers. But ye shall be called priests of the Lord, and worshippers of God shall ye be named. The power of the Gentiles ye shall devour, and in their riches ye shall be wonderful.*" Dost see that it is to us Jews that He vouchsafes the promise of good tidings?

[216] A. This thou sayest truly, for so are the good tidings of God fulfilled which He assured when He swore to Abraham on himself, saying²: "*Blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying will multiply thy seed like the stars of heaven and as the sand on the seashore.*" "*He also swore to David and was not false to him.*" But moreover His seed does sit for ever on His throne. For aforetime it was made clear that our Lord Jesus Christ sprang from Judah, and by Him are all good promises fulfilled; and lo, it is aliens who shepherd His reasonable sheep, and foreigners who plough, working His Church as a field. But He himself along with the disciples has the priesthood, eating the power of the heathen. For "*I,*" He says in the Gospels, "*have meat to eat which ye know not of.*"³ And in the riches of the heathen He is wonderful. For look at the rhetors and philosophers and the makers (*i.e.* poets) bringing the riches of words; and withdrawing from idolatry

¹ Isa. lxi. 5.

² Gen. xxii. 17.

³ John iv. 32.

they walk in front of the word of grace. But you saw Him raising the dead, yet believed not, but have died; while the heathen have risen along with those who were dead.

Z. And what is there to boast of in the raising of the dead? Have not the magicians raised the dead, and did they not perform such signs so as to oppose Moses?

A. And because the magicians wrought signs and opposed Moses, did Moses therefore do nothing to boast of?

Z. Although Moses did work very great signs, yet God is not believed in because of signs, but because of the truth.

[217] A. And what is greater than the truth of Christ? For what magician could before ever he was born work signs and wonders?

Z. And as to Christ, what signs did He work before ever He was born?

A. He made the prophets to say concerning Himself: "*Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,*" as well as ten thousand other things. But more, being still in the very womb He made John leap and rejoice in his mother's womb.¹

Z. I do not believe the Gospels.

A. Then believest thou not that He was the Son of Mary?

Z. This much, that He was born in Jerusalem itself, and I know that He was a Son of Mary.

A. And in the same Jerusalem then, Elizabeth was big with John when Christ made him to rejoice and leap. And in the very moment of his birth He drew the magi from the East to worship Him.² For no magus at birth ever made a star to appear in heaven, nor made other magi come and worship him.

Z. And canst thou then satisfy me that magi at His birth came and worshipped Him?

¹ Cp. Luke i. 44.

² Cf. Matt. ii. 1.

A. Be persuaded by the very realities, and ask why it was that Herod slew the babes in Bethlehem. And having learned the reason, assure yourself that it was because of Christ, the magi having come and said: "*Where is He who was born the King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.*"¹ Wherefore also the tombs of the children are to be seen before one's eyes to this day.

[218] Z. I do not believe it was so, or else how was not Christ able to help the children and prevent their death?

A. If you would mock, put opposite the case of those children who were slain by Pharaoh "*at the time when Moses was born.*"² In their case too, surely God could have saved the children of the Jews. But if He could do so then and did not save, so here Christ, though He was able, did not save. For it was the self-same one who was long suffering both then and now.

Z. But in Moses' case God exacted vengeance for the death of the children, and brought it upon the Egyptians.

A. Well, and if you Jews were not insensate, you would be feeling—much more than the Egyptians—anguish at the cruel destruction of Jerusalem. And, moreover, the Egyptians suffered only for one or two years, but the Jews, from Christ until now, are always and continually being tormented. They will, moreover, be so again in the future age which is to come, unless they repent.

Z. Even if I did believe in Christ, I should believe in Him as in a priest, and surely not as in God. For thyself didst say, that together with His disciples He has the priesthood.

A. Nay, I said that He is both Priest and Lord and God and Shepherd.

Z. For if He be God, He is then admitted to be Shepherd. For it is of the people He is Shepherd, as also the

¹ Matt. ii. 2.

² Acts vii. 7.

prophet says¹: "*Thou who shepherdest Israel, look [on us], [219] Thou who leadest as it were the flock of Joseph.*"

A. The very same prophet called Him also Lord and God and Priest.

Z. Read me: where is it written?

A. In the hundred and ninth Psalm² he says as follows: "*The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet. A rod of power shall the Lord send thee from Sion, and thou shalt reign among thine enemies. With Thee is there for Me a beginning of the days of power unto the illumining of Thy saints. From the womb before the daystar I begat Thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not now repent Him, that Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.*" Now Solomon was not a priest, nor at all pleasing to God in his whole heart in his life. Nay rather he did evil before the Lord and died. How then does he remain a priest for ever?

Z. Then was it to Christ that David said: "*Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet*"?

A. David said, "*The Lord said,*" that is to say God, "*to my Lord,*" Christ, "*Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make, etc.*"

Z. And Christ sits on the right hand of God?

A. So says the prophet.

Z. So, then, is Christ greater than the Blessed One?

A. Forefend! let it not even be hinted at.

Z. And how then sits He at His right hand?

[220] A. As the only-begotten Son of His Father.

Z. And how is He still Priest if He sits at His right hand?

A. Because He is not only Priest, but is God. For being God by nature He took flesh from Mary just for this reason—that having become man, and making a sacrifice in Him-

¹ Ps. lxxx. 1.

² Ps. cix. 1-4.

self for our sake, He may become a *priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*,¹ who was not a priest after the order of *fleshly mandate*,² but was so as having been anointed by the Holy Spirit a priest for ever.

Z. And how can He who died under Pontius Pilate be a priest for ever.

A. They that are dead in their minds see His death. But the living contemplate His resurrection.

Z. And who is able to persuade me that He rose?

A. The prophet David, when he says in the Psalm :³ "*Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.*"

Z. But in that case He was a man of spirit and flesh.

A. He was man according to the flesh, and God according to the spirit. About which hear what God says through the prophet Isaiah :⁴ "*Egypt hath laboured, hath grown weary, and the merchants of the Ethiops and Sabæans, men of stature, shall pass by unto Thee, and shall be Thy servants, and after Thee shall they walk bound with manacles ; and shall worship Thee and shall [221] pray to Thee. For God is in Thee, and there is no other god but Thee. Thou wast God, and we knew not, God the Saviour of Israel. They shall be ashamed and abashed, all who are opposed to Him, and shall walk in shame. Be ye renewed in Me, ye isles. For Israel hath been saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation. They shall not be ashamed, nor abashed for ever. Thus saith the Lord, who made the heavens.*"

Z. Thou hast thyself read and avowed that Israel was saved by the Lord. Surely, then, not you, who are of the heathen?

A. He means the holy apostles by Israel. If not, how do you apply it to your own selves, when you hear the words : "*They shall not be ashamed, nor be put to shame for*

¹ Ps. cx. 4.

² Heb. vii. 16.

³ xvi. 10.

⁴ xlvi. 14.

evermore" ? Do not suppose the prophet to say what is also, [when he says] that "*Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation.*" But if thou choosest to say, "we have not been ashamed nor put to shame by losing all and being enslaved to Romans," then dare to say that our fathers obtained the prophets in falsehood.

Z. God forbid that I should pronounce the prophecies false.

A. Since Israel, then, was saved with eternal salvation, they shall not be ashamed nor put to shame for evermore. [That is] the apostles who were by nature Jews, both body and soul. For 'tis *not he that is openly circumcised that is a Jew,*¹ but whoever hath circumcision in secret, for which reason God afterwards openly censures [222] those who possess circumcision, but not in their hearts, saying: "*All the heathen are uncircumcised in the flesh, but My people in their hearts.*"²

Z. Has God, who commanded Abraham, saying: "*Let thine every male be circumcised on the eighth day,*" turned away from the circumcision ?

A. Thou dost learn the saying about [or of] the circumcision. At the same time tell me, didst thou learn unto whom God spake by the prophet the words: "*Egypt hath toiled, hath wearied, and merchants . . . Saviour of Israel*" ?³

Z. He said to Jerusalem, "*Egypt hath toiled, hath wearied . . . with manacles.*"

A. Surely he did not walk around Jerusalem, and so the rest follow after bound ?

Z. He follows after Jerusalem, who lives by her law, and who serves her continually, and worships her, and prays in her, as if actually bound unto her.

A. Is this Jerusalem also God ? For he says: "*And they shall worship Thee, and shall [223] pray. For God is in*

¹ Cf. Rom. ii. 8.

² Jer. ix. 26.

³ Cited in full as above.

Thee, and there is no other god but Thee. Thou wast God, and we knew not, God, Saviour of Israel."

Z. And to whom else, tell me?

A. To no one else than to Christ.

Z. How?

A. "*For Egypt hath toiled, and the merchants of the Ethiops.*" Because at the birth of Christ idolatry was broken down and magic arts shattered, and Sabæans, men of stature, passed over unto Him, and becoming His servants followed after Him bound all with fetters, the exalted of the earth; and they pray to Him and worship Him, and avow that God is in Him, and that there is no other God but He. For He was God, and they knew not, God of Israel, the Saviour.

Z. How is God in Him, while at the same time there is no other God but He?

A. Because of the unchangeable nature, of the identity of glory, of the immediacy of power. For because of this both Lord and God are one, because there is one will, one authority, and one power. For the Father does not plan one thing and the Son another; or the Father controul one and the Son another. However, if thou wouldst hear their whole counsels at large, read the seventieth Psalm of David,¹ with good conscience and godly fear. Perhaps, also, in your synagogue even, instead of a song which tickles the ears, you repeat this psalm.

Z. And what says this psalm about thy Christ?

A. Read, and thou wilt discover.

Z. I have read it, and know that it speaks of Solomon.

A. "*O God, give Thy judgments to the king.*" Who speaks?

Z. David prays God to be so good as to grant that his son, that is Solomon, may execute his judgments.

A. "*And Thy righteousness to the son of the king.*"

Z. By the son of the king he means my son. For David was king when he prayed to God, that God Himself would give His righteousness to Solomon.

A. Go on of thyself in fear of God. *“Let the mountains receive peace for Thy people, and the little hills righteousness; to work justice unto the poor of the people, and to revive the children of the needy, and to humble the proud.”*

Z. All this he speaks concerning Solomon.

A. Let us consider what follows.

Z. Go on.

A. *“He shall stand and abide with the sun, and before the moon for generations of generations.”*

Z. His name was established with the sun; wherefore, lo, even you Christians all over the earth commemorate his name as that of a sage, and unto generations of generations abides and lasts with him the glory of his name.

A. And was His name before the moon for generations of generations?

[225] Z. Yes; His name was known even before the moon's.

A. Listen to what follows.

Z. Go on.

A. *“He shall come down like rain upon a fleece, and as showers that drop on the earth.” There shall flourish in His days righteousness, much peace, until the moon be ended. And He shall reign from sea unto sea, and from rivers unto the ends of the earth. Before Him the Ethiopians shall prostrate themselves, and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the Islands shall make presents. The kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring offerings. All the kings of the earth shall fall down before Him, and all nations shall serve Him. For He hath delivered the poor from the strong, and the needy man who had none to help him. He will have pity on the poor and needy, and will save the souls of the needy; and He will redeem their soul from usury and injustice. And precious*

is His name before them ; and He shall live, and there shall be given Him of the gold of Arabia. And they shall pray to Him at all times, and all the day long they shall bless Him. He shall be the establishing of the earth on the mountain tops. The fruit thereof shall be lifted up above Libanon, and they shall flourish in the city like the grass of the earth. His name shall be blessed for ever ; before the sun is His name continually abiding. All the princes of the earth shall be blessed in Him, all the nations shall call Him happy. Blessed [226] be the Lord God of Israel, who alone doeth wonders. And blessed is the name of His glory for ever and for ever and ever. Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. May it be so, may it be."

Z. This is admitted to be said of Christ ; but as yet Christ is not come.

A. In His advent it was fulfilled ; and if He came, whom thou dost look forward to, He would find everything fulfilled which was foretold.

Z. And of the predictions, what is fulfilled ?

A. "He reigned from sea to sea, from the rivers to the ends of the earth. Before Him the Indians shall prostrate themselves," and you His enemies shall eat the dust. And all kings of the earth shall fall down before Him, all races shall serve Him, and in Him shall be blest all the races of the earth.

Z. How did the crucifiers of Him fall down before Him ?

Z. His insults¹ were set down in writing,² and His sufferings, and death, and honour, and glory, and resurrection. Hear then David, who says :³ "Why did the nations rage, and the peoples imagine vain things ? The kings of the earth were arrayed against Me, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His anointed."

¹ Perhaps "enemies" should be the translation.

² The Arm. = ἀναστοιχείω.

³ Ps. ii. 1, 2.

Z. How both against the Lord, and because of Him ?

A. Because God knew the good¹ and made him write what came to pass differently. And this is what was said by God through the prophet:² [227] "*Behold, I set up in Sion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. And whoever believeth in Him, let him not be ashamed.*"

Z. And why did He set Him up a Stone of stumbling, and not rather cause Him to be openly avowed ?

A. Why, if it had not already been told thee thus, "*Whoever believeth in Him, let him not be ashamed,*" then perhaps what was set up would be justly found fault with. But since thou wast warned beforehand, thou must blame thyself for thy want of faith. For He is the Stone which was rejected among the builders, about which the prophet says³: "*The Stone which the builders rejected, the Same is become the Headstone of the corner.*"

Z. And the Wisdom of God became a stone ?

A. The Wisdom of God has been called a Stone according to the flesh, because it took flesh from the Virgin, in order to be manifested to us in the flesh as in a temple. For this reason it was called a Stone. And the same is the Rock which Daniel⁴ interpreted, cut out of the mountain without hand, pulverizing the image of idolatry.

Z. And from what mountain was it cut ?

A. By mountain is meant the holy Virgin Mary; wherefore the Rock is said to have been cut out without hand, for the Virgin brought forth His flesh without a man. For the prophecy says: Nabuchodonoser saw a dream, and the dream departed from him, that is, he forgot it. And he called unto him seers and magi, and the wise men of

¹ The sense is obscure.

² Is. xxviii. 16; Heb. ix. 33. Notice that Isaiah xxviii. 16 is here quoted in the same form as by Paul, yet, it would seem, direct from the text of a LXX., and not through Paul's epistle nor through the Armenian Vulgate, which reproduces the LXX.

³ Ps. cxviii. 22.

⁴ ii. 45.

Babylon, and said to them, The dream hath departed from me, so now tell me the dream and its explanation. And the magi and seers declared that there was no one on the earth who could tell the king the matter, save only gods who should have no dwelling on the earth. And Nabuchodonoser commanded that all the seers and the magi and sages should be destroyed. And Daniel, having learned of the king's matter, besought him to allow him a fixed time after three days. And having been granted it by the king, he entered into his house; and he prayed to God, and set before Him the dream which the king had seen and its interpretation. And the dream was this: A great figure appeared raised aloft, and its appearance was terrible. Its head was of pure gold; its hands and breast and arms of silver; its belly and thighs of brass; its legs of iron; its feet in part of iron, and in part of potsherd. It was seen until that Rock was cut from the mountain without hand; and this smote the image upon the feet of iron and potsherd, and brake them utterly. Then were broken in pieces the potsherd and iron, and brass, and silver, and gold, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. And the violence of the wind blew them away, and their place was not found. But the Rock which smote the image became a mighty mountain, and filled the whole earth. This was the dream of the king. And Daniel interprets the dream, giving various explanations of the heterogeneous figure. And the rock is a kingdom, which shall not fail for ever. This is the kingdom of Christ, compared to a rock, because your fathers stumbled against it.

Z. Now I understand. Your Christ is compared to a stone.

A. It is always the case that obscure and dim things are known and made plain by means of parables; or hast thou not heard God saying by the prophet,¹ "*I will be as* [229]

¹ Hos. v. 14.

a panther to Ephrem, and as a lion to the house of Judah"? And elsewhere,¹ "I will meet them as a bear that is hungry"? So then, if He compares to a bear or to other animals of the same kind the Godhead, will He give offence?

Z. Surely it is not true that God became a bear, but the term is used to inspire fear?

A. Just in the same way; because many were scandalized in mind at the Lord, He was called a Rock. Hear then another prophecy about the Lord in the same prophet²: "I beheld," he says, "till the thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days sat down. His raiment was like white snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was like a flame of fire, the wheels thereof burning fire. And a stream of fire came forth before Him, and thousands of thousands ministered unto Him, and myriads of myriads stood before Him. The court sat down, and the books were opened. I saw in a dream by night, and lo, in the clouds of heaven as it were the Son of man went forward, and came as far as the Ancient of Days, and stood before Him. And to Him was given authority, and honour, and kingship; and all peoples, races, and tongues served Him. His authority is everlasting authority which passes not away, and His kingship shall not be destroyed. My soul was affrighted within me. I am Daniel; and the vision of my head disturbed me. And I came to one that stood there, and I demanded to learn the truth about all that. And he told me the truth, and showed me the interpretation of the words. Those four beasts are four kings [that] [230] shall rise up against the earth, who shall be taken away, and the saints shall assume the kingdom of the Exalted One, and shall possess it for æons of æons."

Z. And who are the four kings or who the holy ones?

A. Who is the Ancient of Days? If thou knowest, say.

Z. I say God Almighty. For whom else do thousands of

¹ Hos. xiii. 8.

² Dan. vii. 9, 10, 13-18.

thousands serve, or before whom else do myriads of myriads stand, except God only ?

A. Thou hast answered well. And He who came with clouds of heaven having the likeness of the Son of man, who was He ?

Z. Christ.

A. And the holy ones are plainly those who have the kingdom, his disciples. And the four kings, who are they ? Kings of the four regions of the world praying to be servants of those saints.

Z. But when I said Christ, I did not mean thy Christ, but him for whom we hope.

A. And again I tell thee, if he for whom thouapest should come, he would find everything long ago seized of the truth. For reckoning together the periods of years, we have found them to agree with those of the prophet. And the heathen have been released from the yoke of idolatry, and everything else has come to pass in accord with the prophecy.

Z. Where is the time specified ?

A. Daniel himself says,¹ “ *And while I was speaking and praying, telling their sins to my people Israel, pouring forth my pity before God because of the mountain of the Lord God, the Holy One,—behold the man Gabriel, whom I saw in my first dream, flying, approached unto me, as it were at the hour of the evening sacrifice, and made me understand, and spake to me, and said, Daniel, I am now come to make thee intelligent with understanding. In the beginning of thy prayers went forth an oracle ; and I am come to apprise thee and tell thee ; because thou art a man of desire. So then ponder on thy word, and take into consideration thy vision. Seventy hebdomads have been abridged upon thy people and on the holy city, unto the ending of sin, and sealing of illegalities, and the coming of everlasting righteousness ; and unto the sealing of vision and*

¹ Dan. xi. 20-26.

prophecy, and the anointing of the holy of holies. And thou shalt know, and become apprised from the goings forth of words to give answer. And to build Jerusalem, until the anointed leader, hebdomads seven and hebdomads sixty and two. And they shall return, and courts shall be built and wall. And times shall be renewed. But after sixty and two hebdomads the anointing shall be destroyed, and judgments shall not be therein; and the city and the holiness shall be destroyed." Thou hast heard that up to the leadership of the anointed Cyrus are seven hebdomads of years, and hebdomads sixty and two, which make hebdomads sixty and nine—that is, 483 years. Read then the chronologist, and thou wilt find that from Darius, son of Arshaur, until Christ there are 483 years. For in the first year of Darius he says he saw the revelation of the dream of the prophet. And when the time comes, "anointing and judgment shall be destroyed," that is, king and judge; and more than that, "both city and holiness shall be destroyed."

[232] Z. Thou didst promise to tell me the reason for not receiving the circumcision which is from the fathers.

A. Because God did not enjoin on the fathers circumcision, He Himself said: "*Behold days shall come, said the Lord, and I will lay upon Judah a new covenant; not according to the covenant which I laid on their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, giving my laws into their minds.*"¹ For no longer is there a law of circumcision, that their glory [be] not by shame, but in the heart.

Z. And God who commanded our fathers, saying²: "*Every male who shall not be circumcised on the eighth day shall be destroyed out of the congregation*"—does He no more desire circumcision?

A. He knoweth what is profitable. At that time accordingly He asked for the shadow, but now for the truth. For

¹ Jer. xxxi. 31, 32.

² Gen. xvii. 12.

it was not so much this that He proposed and demanded, I mean the circumcision of the flesh of uncircumcision; but He desired thereby to hint at the truth. Wherefore He blames them, saying¹: "*All the heathen are uncircumcised in the flesh, but this My people in their hearts.*" And that He does not justify circumcision is clear from this that Abraham in his uncircumcision was pleasing to God.² For it was previously that He appeared to him, and afterwards only that He gave him the law of circumcision. And those who were born in the desert during the period of forty years were uncircumcised.³

Z. Thou canst not prove it.

A. Thou art aware that when they were about to enter the land of reward, then according to the command of God Joshua son of Nun took stones from the rocks and with these stones he circumcised the people.

[233] Z. And forasmuch as thou knowest that God is solicitous about circumcision, why sayest thou that circumcision is naught?

A. Dost thou see that God's command is clear as to its purport? For He desired circumcision more amidst the Egyptians on the part of the children of Israel, before ever He caused them to go into Egypt, in order that the race might be manifest to all men. On the other hand He did not insist on circumcision when they were in the wilderness, because they were alone, and they had no contact with any one. But when they were once more on the eve of mixing with aliens He again commanded them to be circumcised, in order that the race might be manifest to those who lived around them. And then it was He told Joshua to take knives from rocks to circumcise them withal. And this was no insignificant thing, but full of mystery. For Christ is the Rock wherewith we are circumcised, not in the flesh of uncircumcision, but in the im-

¹ Jer. ix. 26.

² Cf. Rom. iv. 10.

³ Josh. v. 5.

purity of the heart. And in fact if this was not done as a mystery, then why were they circumcised not with a knife, but with stones.

Z. In order to show the greatness of God, if they could be circumcised even with stones.

A. Much more was it shown, if with a bare and single word they had been circumcised, without any material thing. And that thou mayest know that circumcision does not justify, Noe was a just and pious man without circumcision, and Enoch was translated though uncircumcised.

Z. And how canst thou prove that they were uncircumcised?

A. Because circumcision only began with Abraham. For to him first and foremost did God give the commandment to be circumcised, and to his seed.

[234] Z. Give me a satisfactory reason why you also abstain from performing sacrifices, when the just men of old sacrificed to God. Thou surely canst not allege that this only began with Abraham? For the Scriptures plainly say that Abel, the last born of Adam, sacrificed, and that his sacrifice was acceptable because it was a sacrifice of animals.

A. Yes, we are well aware that all the saints previous to the advent of Christ sacrificed. But after Christ [the sacrifice] of irrational animals ceased, and that which is by means of the Holy Spirit increased, for God openly proclaimed¹: "*I eat not the flesh of oxen, nor drink the blood of goats. Sacrifice to God the sacrifice of praise.*" And elsewhere He says²: "*The lifting up of My hands, the evening sacrifice.*" And³: "*Behold the days are coming, saith the Lord, and I will lay on the house of Judah a new covenant. Not according to the covenant which I laid on their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the*

¹ Ps. l. 13, 14.

² Ps. cxli. 2.

³ Jer. xxxi. 31-33.

land of Egypt. I have given My laws in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them."

Z. Thou hast convinced me from all points of view that our fathers acted impiously in crucifying Christ. For it has appeared from what thou hast said that He was the expectation, and the Jews forfeited their hope. What therefore must I do that I may be saved?

A. Repent and be baptized unto the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, that thou too mayest hearken unto David's words:¹ "*Blessed are they whose transgressions have been remitted and whose sins have been hidden.*"

F. C. CONYBEARE.

¹ Ps. xxxii. 1.