

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION : *What is the meaning of Mt. vii.14 “Narrow is the gate . . . and few are they that find it” ? Surely it does not mean that most of mankind will be lost ?*

ANSWER : We must always distinguish carefully between Our Lord's enunciation of principles and His statements of fact. Even when He is stating principles, it does not follow that He intends them to hold good for all time ; they may refer merely to the immediate circumstances. Thus it is evident that in Mt. xxiii.3 He is not exhorting His followers to obey for all time the scribes and Pharisees. In the same way, in Mt. vii.14, we must not be in a hurry to conclude that His words hold good for all time. At the period when He spoke the Jews had already begun to reject Him (*cf.* Mt. ix.3, xii.2, etc.), and the Gentile mission had not even begun ; the time of Our Lord's active ministry was thus perhaps the worst in the world's history.

None the less we should take a lesson from His words even today. This is not the place in which to dilate upon the subject, but I may mention that in the *Catholic Herald* for 4 March 1953 it is reported that Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, speaking at a London conference, said that the four most important causes of crime were : (1) broken and unsatisfactory homes ; (2) lack of parental control ; (3) constant picturing of brutal violence in (e.g.) “comics”, and the presentation of false values in certain films ; (4) cessation in a large section of the population of religion having the sanction in practical and daily affairs that it had even in the early part of this century.

Surely this leaves the way leading to damnation fairly wide ? The child (as Sir David realises) is father to the man.

QUESTION : *What kind of beds were described by St Luke as κλινάριον, κλίνη, κλωνίδιον ? These words seem to illustrate St Luke's meticulous care in writing, and indicate the social status of the occupants.*

ANSWER : The regular word for “bed” (“pallet” seems a rather better word) in the New Testament is *κλίνη*, used 9 times. *κλινάριον* (Acts, v.15) and *κλωνίδιον* (Lk. v.19 and 24) are diminutive forms, but there can hardly be any distinction of meaning intended in the latter case, for the *κλίνη* of Lk. v.18 is the same “bed” as the *κλωνίδιον* of Lk. v.19, 24. This leaves only *κλινάριον*, used in such a general sense in Acts v.15 that it is unlikely that it has there any special sense, distinct from the other two words. St Luke's on the whole seems the