



CONDUCTED BY
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WE HAVE for this month some more interesting and varied questions. Keep it up brethren!

Q. Luke 24 : 50 says that the Lord's ascension took place at Bethany. Acts 1 : 12 says that it took place on the Mount of Olives. How can we reconcile these two statements?

A. Of one thing we can be quite certain : Luke would hardly make one statement in the gospel, concerning the ascension, and then flatly contradict it by another, in writing the Acts. The answer is that both statements are true. Luke does not say that the ascension took place *at* Bethany. He says that the Lord led His disciples out 'as far as' (meaning near) Bethany. John 11 : 18 tells us that Bethany was 'about two miles' (A.V. marg) from Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives was 'a sabbath day's journey' (Acts 1 : 12) that is, about seven-eighths of a mile from the city. The ascension took place, therefore, on the eastern slope of the Mount, which came into the area of Bethany. The Mount of Olives is similarly associated with Bethany in Mark 11 : 1. Compare Mark 11 : 11 with Luke 21 : 37.

Q. (1) How could the man of Mark 9 : 38 cast out devils, not being a disciple of Jesus? (2) Are denominationalists right in using this passage to justify their systems?

A. (1) This is precisely the question that John asked the Lord. His question arose not only from what the Lord had said, but no doubt as a result of the previous failure of the disciples to perform such a miracle, through lack of faith (see Mark 9 : 18 and 23). But Jesus had a wider following than the twelve disciples (see Luke 6 : 13 ; Acts 1 : 13-15). That this man, though not of the twelve, was nevertheless a true disciple, is evident from the fact that the power of the Lord's name was being manifested through him ; (compare Mark 9 : 23 with Acts 3 : 16) and that his miracles were genuine as against mere exorcism (see Acts 19 : 13) is shown by the fact that neither the Lord nor John questioned them.

(2) Whilst we should always be ready to acknowledge any good that a religious body may do, sectarianism cannot be justified by this passage. This man was both *doing*, and, since his faith was honoured by the Lord, it implies that he was *teaching*, the same things as the Lord, or at least bringing the same message. Any individual or group of individuals who to-day practise and teach that which Christ and His Apostles practised and taught are as much part of the Church of the Lord as we are. But denominationalists are not doing this. Sectarianism would cease to exist if they were. (See 2 John : 9-11).