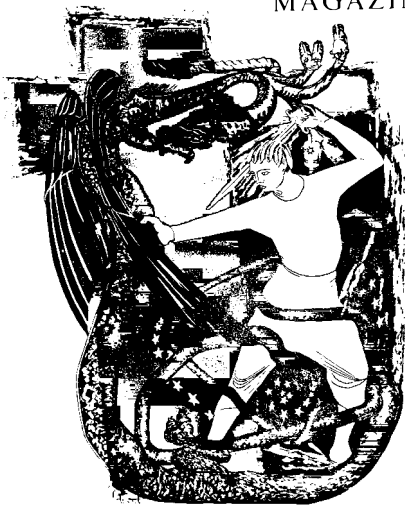


THE ENDEAVOUR

MAGAZINE



SPRING 1966

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SPRING 1966 No. 19

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Views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily
those of the Editorial Committee, but may be published
because they make a valuable contribution to discussion.

EDITORIAL

IN many aspects of our life in Christ the principles we profess make a sorry contrast with the realities of our daily existence. There is no ground for despair in this, since the teaching of Jesus and the prophets never encourages us to overestimate the potential of human nature. Some degree of failure is inevitable. Was not Jesus Himself betrayed by one of those closest to Him? But we are not invited to excuse ourselves and to rely on God's forgiveness as something to which our human nature entitles us. Instead disciples must discipline themselves, show unbounded faith in God and His Son, and submit to the divine will. Many of our failings could have been prevented had we been more deeply immersed in spiritual things and had we opened our hearts and minds without reserve and given ourselves completely to the divine will. The believer must always be asking if it is not some stubborn trait of character that shuts God out of certain issues and insists on allowing the devil to take decisions.

Fellowship is no different from other matters. What we profess can be taken straight from I John 1: 3: "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." But from what lofty heights do we fall, and to what abysmal depths, when we consider the more "practical" aspects of the question? At this level fellowship is not the positive joy of sharing one's life with the Father and His Son. It is a dividing line. First, on the local level, fellowship is expressed in a list of members: those "within" the "household of faith." Any not on the list are "without." Then, on a wider basis, fellowship is our membership of a larger community, made up of the many groups bound together by a common Statement of Faith. A dividing line as such is not

necessarily evil. Since God is holy and cannot deny Himself, His holiness inevitably divides the human race into two groups: the pure and the impure, those seeking after righteousness and those abjuring it.

Why then did we speak against lines of division? It was because our line of division as expressed in lists of members and a string of doctrines to be rejected and accepted may not correspond with that of God and His Son. *Our* fellowship may not be co-extensive with *Theirs*.

No reference is intended to unworthy members of our community whose failure to conform to the image of Christ will result in their rejection at His hands. God knows the imperfections of His creatures and no Christian fellowship has ever been perfect. The very first one experimented with the sharing of material goods as well as spiritual exercises, but this proved a failure, and the less ideal but more practical limitation of the sharing to the many facets of the spiritual life was undoubtedly done with divine approval. That our community has its failings does not mean that fundamentally we are on the wrong lines. The real cause for anxiety is that the line of division we have made may exclude some who are accepted by God and His Son.

It appears that at one stage in the history of our community it was widely held that there was no salvation outside the Christadelphian body. Whether this is so or not, such a view fully justifies the line of division we have made. If not all inside will be saved, at least none outside even qualify for consideration. Such an attitude no longer exists save for a small minority. Most would admit the possibility, and some would assert as probable or more, that there is salvation outside as well as inside our body. That this is a correct analysis of current opinion is illustrated by a recent statement of Bro. F. V. Morgan, a brother not inclined to "liberal" views:

We do not say that anyone who differs from us on some detail of the Statement of Faith is necessarily outside the pale of salvation. That is not for us to judge.

Perilous Times.

Much as one must respect the courage and integrity shown in this statement, it raises some very awkward problems. It follows quite clearly that there could be persons not in our community who may be in God's kingdom. And few of us can have the assurance of Paul that, having "run the race" and "finished the course," "a crown of righteousness" is in store. We might fail in our endeavours. Yet we, imperfect creatures, who only merit — and may get — condemnation from our Master's hands, exclude from our fellowship some who may succeed where we ourselves fail. Is there not something vitally wrong with this? Do we not lay ourselves open to the rebuke of Paul:

Who are you to pass judgment on someone else's servant? Whether he stands or falls is his own Master's business; and stand he will, because his Master has power to enable him to stand.

(Romans 14: 4, N.E.B.).

Bro. Morgan argues, "The simple answer is that there is no practicable alternative . . . there *must* be an agreed standard of belief." While there is truth in this answer, the matter is not so simply dealt with. In the first place, we would have been much happier if the "agreed standard" had included conduct as well as belief, since the standard of judgment at the Last Day (which is the only one that really matters) will not be restricted to theological knowledge. Any kind of decision that may cause us to reject those whom God and Christ may accept must be the subject of rigorous scrutiny. The servant in the parable who received a talent thought he had no alternative and hid it. To have used it would have involved risks: he might have lost it altogether. Yet only those who took the risks and successfully overcame them were approved. Loud protestations of loyalty to Christ will not suffice on the day of judgment. Only the reality and not the appearance will count.

What, then, are we urging? We do not recommend any sudden change in our established practices. In the First Century, when the

Christians were a small despised sect, no one would seek their fellowship unless he were really involved in the movement. Today, when even humanists and pantheists can go under the designation "Christian," the need for maintaining real Christian standards of belief and conduct is obvious. We would be guilty of negligence if we did not profess and enforce these standards, however distasteful this might be. But the problem arises that Scripture nowhere tells us just where to draw the line. Granting that we have drawn it at a particular point as expressed in a well-known document, there is, alas, no Scriptural justification for just that point, rather than for something a little tighter or a little looser. The real issue of fellowship for us is admittance to the Breaking of Bread, for mere attendance at our services is free to all. The table to which we admit or from which we exclude is not ours. It is the Lord's table. We should not take lightly to the custom of excluding from the Lord's table those who may be His servants. It could lead to a position where we rejoice on being on the right side of the dividing line and consider that it is more blessed to exclude than to admit, that in cases of doubt the right course is always to exclude. Jesus did not exclude Judas Iscariot from His table, and none of us knows if perchance a most respectable member of our community may not in fact be another Judas.

We must then pose the question: if we admit to excluding from the Lord's table some who may be His, can this be done without much more heart-searching than we have so far seen on this matter in Christadelphian circles? Can we excuse ourselves so lightly? Should not every effort be bent to conceiving how we could bring our fellowship more into line with that of the Father and His Son? Human traditions count for nothing with God, and we must be prepared to face the position boldly, not by looking to our own past, but by looking to Jesus. If He were here, what would He do? With all our imperfections we must allow nothing to stand between us and the true fellowship, both individually and collectively.

The Prophecy of HOSEA

(4)

By Wilfred Lambert

CHAPTER divisions as we know them are medieval and Christian in origin. However useful they may be, one must always be prepared to disregard them, since they may break up the text at the wrong points. Chapters 1 and 2 of Hosea are unhappily divided. In the Hebrew, chapter 2 begins with chapter 1, verse 10 of the English Bibles, as noted in the margin of the R.S.V. This is a possible division, because there is a real break at that point. The biographical portion of chapter 1 ends with verse 9. The division in English Bibles is most unhappy since chapter 2, verse 1 belongs with chapter 1, and only in verse 2 does the new theme begin:

"Plead with your mother, plead — for she is not my wife and I am not her husband."

The ambiguity of the English word "plead" is unfortunate. Most readers probably take it as equivalent to "beg" or "beseech." This is definitely wrong. "Plead," as often in the Old Testament, belongs to the language of the law courts. The Christian is little prepared for this, since he follows Paul's advice to be defrauded rather than to have recourse to the processes of the law. To a far greater extent than the New Testament, the Old is closely bound to juridical terms. The archaic word "covenant," which covers God's relations to Israel as established at Sinai, is a legal term more naturally rendered in modern English as "treaty." This is the highest form of legal document, since it formulates the terms to which nations bind themselves. Thus Israel in the wilderness had bound herself to honour God above all else, and the covenant was

the instrument under which this obligation was taken.

As a consequence when Israel failed, she had broken her treaty and the prophets often use legal language in speaking of Israel's failings. When she failed she was, in prophetic metaphor, put in the dock to answer for her failure to observe the terms of the treaty. Here the nation collectively is spoken of as a mother, and any individual member of it who may be so disposed is invited, as a son, to take the part of the prosecutor and recount the crimes of which the nation was guilty.

While "plead" has behind it a world of ideas for which we are little prepared, we are too well prepared for "she is not my wife and I am not her husband." Familiarity with the New Testament doctrine of Christ as the bridegroom and the church as His bride removes the force with which the metaphor must have struck those who first heard it. The idea of God as a father is found previously both in Hebrew writings and in those of other nations, but this seems to be the first time God's relations with His people are expressed in a marital metaphor. This is the beginning of the doctrine of Christ and His bride. It originated in Hosea's own experiences. In his unhappy married life he learnt the new doctrine of God's relationship to His people. He is the loyal husband who cares for His wife despite all the faithlessness she shows. Even in the depths of sin to which she had fallen He still loves her and wishes only that she would be redeemed.

Just as Gomer had left Hosea for a life of prostitution, so Israel had forsaken her Lord, not to live with another one, but for loose alliances with many. "Baal" is really a common noun in Hebrew, meaning "owner" or "Lord," and so it can be used for "husband" in view of ancient concepts of marriage. "Lord" meaning husband has, indeed, found a place in English, for example in hymn No. 205 of the Christadelphian Hymn Book: "As a woman counts the days, Till her absent lord she see. . . ." Yahweh was always, not in the marital sense, Israel's lord or baal. One of David's heroes bore the name Bealiah (I Chron. 12: 5), meaning

"Yahweh is lord (*baal*)."¹ Other similar cases show beyond doubt that in the time of David and Samuel no odium was attached to the word *baal* among the Hebrews. But Hebrew is just one of a number of dialects of Canaanite, and among many of the nations surrounding Israel *baal* had a religious significance. The most powerful male deity among most of these nations was Baal. He was worshipped at many different cities, and ancient texts differentiate by referring, e.g., to "Baal of Aleppo," to distinguish him from the other ones. Sophisticated Canaanites understood that behind the different local cults stood one deity, but the more popular conception, which is that which seeped into Israel, took the baals of the various cities as distinct gods without inquiring into their mutual relationships.

Thus it was that mother Israel had gone in search of a host of foreign lovers:

I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink. (Hosea 2: 5).

In these words Hosea gives us an insight into the cause of Israel's apostasy. Quite generally religion is not a detached state of mind, but grows as an outlook founded on a particular situation in life. The religion of a farmer will never be quite the same as that of a factory worker. In a stable society religion may seem to change hardly at all over the centuries. But if social conditions change, then a testing period for any religion takes place, whether it can adapt itself to the new conditions without losing its real characteristics. Some will cling to outworn forms oblivious of the fact that the spirit has long since gone out of them. Others may welcome change for its own sake, regardless of any loss that may be entailed. Rarely will a community succeed in dropping useless forms and expressing the inner spirit through new ones more suited to the environment.

The Hebrews went through just such a period of change. As a nation bound by a solemn treaty to God they saw their birth in the wilderness at Sinai, and that period of their history was looked back to by the prophets as one of especially close relationship to God. Hosea in

chapter 2 speaks of reform as a being led back to the wilderness by God. Amos 5: 25 cites the forty years in the wilderness as an example of how to worship God acceptably. Jeremiah is most explicit:

I remember the devotion of your youth,
Your love as a bride,

How you followed me in the wilderness,

In a land not sown. (Jeremiah 2: 2).

To us the narratives of the Pentateuch fail to convey this picture, but the pre-exilic prophets certainly had traditions about that period which are not contained in our Bibles. They do not imply that nothing was ever wrong, only that this period contrasted favourably with what took place in the promised land. The sect of the Rechabites, whose encounter with Jeremiah is recorded in chapter 35 of his book, helps us to grasp the point. These descendants of Jonadab refrained from drinking wine, they lived in tents, and never planted crops or owned agricultural land. This is, of course, the nomadic life such as the Hebrews experienced in the wilderness, and the Rechabites kept up this kind of existence as a religious vow. It was a protest against the evils of city life. A settled existence is not necessarily less pious than a vagrant one, but the Hebrew experience conditioned this judgment. While in the desert, the Hebrews had served their God with more or less faithfulness. What they had at this period was typical of any nomads; their flocks and herds, their tents and other small possessions that they carried with them. Thus their religion, which had taken a special form as a result of the theophany at Sinai, was first nurtured in a nomadic context. They could thank God for multiplying their flocks, but not for giving abundant crops, since they had none. Before them was a land of fortified cities, and the temptations were removed in that this whole civilisation was swept away, and the Hebrews then settled in the land and built up their own urban tradition. It is a big mistake to imagine the Hebrews living according to the Pentateuchal laws in the period of the Judges. This was the time when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." But at this very period the Hebrews were adjust-

ing themselves to farming the land, and their religion had likewise to change. In our secular age it is hard to conceive how religion entered so completely into the lives of people at this period. It was a necessity as much as eating and drinking, whether it entailed self-denial or self-indulgence. For this reason it was all the harder to change the emphasis. Yahweh may have led His people through the wilderness, but how could such a God make farming communities prosperous? Around the chosen people were other nations already settled, who had forms of religion suited to the needs of farming communities, however little they accorded with the purity and monotheism of the traditional Hebrew faith. So these foreign baals were imported into Israel and were praised as the givers of fertility in field and vineyard.

Experience revealed the folly of such a course. The lovers sought after by mother Israel gave no satisfaction so she resolved:

I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better with me than now.

(Hosea 2: 7).

But she failed to realise that Yahweh, not the baals, were the givers of agricultural bounty, and to discipline His wayward bride He decreed that these gifts should be withheld as punishment (2: 9-13).

The story does not end at this point. As Hosea showed love to his unfaithful wife beyond what custom or decency required, so God declared that He too would show love on Israel. The degrading experiences of the land were to be wiped out in that Israel was to be taken back to the wilderness (2: 14), and the Valley of Achor, where disaster befell the Hebrews for Achan's yielding to the allurements of city-life products (Joshua 7), was this time to become a "door of hope" (2: 15). At that time the very word *baal* would be banned so that Israel would no longer address God as "my lord" (*baali*) but as "my husband" (*ishi*). A new treaty then will be made with the chosen people, one which is astonishing at the first sight -- involves the wild creatures of the land (2: 18). Since the verse goes on to speak of the end of war, this is only Hosea's

anticipation of Isaiah's theme, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb. . . ." So Israel will be married to the Lord as though the first time had never occurred.

The remainder of chapter 2 and the last two verses of chapter 1 (with the first verse of chapter 2) are the complement to the biographical section of chapter 1. The three names of Hosea's children, symbolic of Israel's doom, are now reversed. "Not-Pitied" and "Not-My-People" become "She-Has-Obtained-Pity" (2: 1) and "Sons-of-the-Living God" (1: 10) or "My-People" (2: 23). Jezreel, which symbolized the blood bath of Jehu, is now used with two modifications. In Hebrew, more than in their English forms, Israel and Jezreel are similar-sounding, and Hosea uses the latter to mean the former. Chapter 2, verses 21-22 are additionally difficult because of the word "answer." In Hebrew this need not mean "reply (to something said before)," but can be used for a reaction to circumstances in which nothing was said. Thus here God commands the heavens, they send down their rain on the earth, which produces its yield, and this satisfies Jezreel -- Israel. The name Jezreel means, "God (not the baals!) sows."

The first three chapters of Hosea are a book within a book. They give us the life story of the prophet, an analysis of Israel's wrong based on these experiences, and promises of final redemption. Their fulfilment can be traced in Jeremiah and the New Testament. What is embryonic in Hosea became full-grown in the Gospel. The New Covenant to Hosea is couched in terms of human affection:

I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy.

I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD. (2: 19-20).

Jeremiah adds to Hosea's insight that the New Covenant will be "written upon their hearts" (31: 31-34). From the New Testament we learn that the Israel for whom this covenant is intended is not the nation as a nation, but all those who have faith in Jesus and who collectively make up the Lamb's bride.

(All quotations are from the R.S.V.)

Consider the Lilies

By Sheila Harris



THAT the Sermon on the Mount contains the fundamental principles of our Lord's teaching, is generally accepted. But the structure of it, the sequence of thought and the relation of the parts to the whole provide for us matter for thought, meditation and prayerful consideration. One thing is clear—that the dominant thought is blessing now for certain types of people, poor, meek, hungry, persecuted. This is a paradox enough. Only our familiarity with the phrases prevents these verses from being the most startling and surprising of sentiments. They are judgments on human character and experience which are wholly foreign to our normal way of thinking. If these are the fundamental judgments then it is reasonable to expect and look for further elaboration and explanation of them. May not the Sermon itself be precisely this? The answer surely lies within itself. The blessings end at verse 11 of Matt. 5 and there follows immediately a further expansion of the thought of persecution. Was not the witness of the first martyrs the light that truly shone in a dark world? In A.D. 65, in the persecution in Rome under Nero, Tacitus records that some of the Christians were impaled and covered with some fluorescent material so that they could provide lights by night in his gardens to illuminate the celebrations. Pity was stirred for them among the Roman people. Was this the light that shone that men might glorify God?

It could follow from this that the Sermon is a commentary on the Beatitudes following the common Hebrew practice of taking the last first.

If this is so then the comment on poorness of spirit will be found at the end of the Sermon. And surely it is here. Poorness of spirit means utter destitution. The recognition that "in me dwelleth no good thing," the deep inner longing for God which is the death blow to human pride—that deadliest of all sins. "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." How often we foolishly imagine that we can manage alone, in our own strength, when we can truly do nothing for ourselves and must in the end come to God in destitution and ask His help and confess our utter need. "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

To find our other commentaries then we must work back from the end and the next section baffles us because there seems no connection at all between this and mourning which is the second blessing. Clearly mourning could be connected with fasting but then we must fit in the latter part of chapter 6. If we consult the work of scholars, however, we shall discover that in the Western Text Codex Bezae, verses 4 and 5 of chapter 5 are reversed so that the meek come before the mourners. This fits the Sermon beautifully because it brings the blessing upon the meek parallel with the latter part of chapter 6. "Consider the lilies," "for they shall inherit the earth."

Therefore, taking chapter 6 verses 25-34 as the comment upon the blessing for the meek we have a most illuminating interpretation of the promise of future inheritance of the earth. Those who are now in tune with nature and see in it

the processes of God's working, who find therein an illumination of God's whole purpose, character and intentions are those who will be fit indeed to inherit the earth. We have a similar argument in John's Gospel where we read of him who "hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." The assurance of a future in the kingdom with God lies in the possession now of the spirit of that kingdom already at work within us.

Lessons from nature could be innumerable — its beauty, its variety, its regular assured cycle. But the thought which Jesus selects is that of freedom from toil, "Take no thought." This is true meekness — putting all into God's hands and letting Him work, it is the simple faith and trust of a child. This is *the* law of nature. In the misty, damp days of autumn we plant the bulbs in the ground and there they lie beneath the dark, dead earth while the winds blow, the storms rage and the snows fall. And we wait, and we shall go on waiting if we do not look and see. For all through the cold, bleak winter something has been happening there below, unseen, unnoticed. The power of life, the greatest mystery of this world stirs below. One day, unexpectedly, we see through the snow a green shoot and round it the snow gradually melts away, preaching the great immortal lesson that life is stronger than death, warmth than cold, light than dark. It is those who best love the shining barks upon which the winter sunlight plays, the delicate tracery of bare branches against a winter's sky, the misty sunrise, the long shadows of evening, the hoar frost caught in a spider's web and the strange, uncanny light of the winter moon through a grey, frosty sky who first see the buds, the

shoots, the signs of spring and learn the great lesson of nature, of the mystery of the unseen power which works in the dark, in the mist, in the cold, and brings life and light and joy.

But this is true meekness to trust to God, to leave our care, our concern, our love in His hands and let Him work, not doubting nor disputing, because we know that light conquers darkness as a small candle in a dark room, that heat conquers cold as when black coal is caught by a feeble flame, that life conquers death and love hate. In the dark and cold it is sometimes hard to believe this. But even round the death bed of a loved one, a final look of peace or smile of confidence can prove a victory.

In the darkest hour of this world's history, when all the light, hope, meaning and purpose of this world lay dead in a tomb, some women came to anoint the body — their last gift of love; and one woman remained. Her faith and hope were dead — else she would have mistaken the gardener for Jesus, not Jesus for the gardener. But in the dim light of that first Easter day, in the black, dead, barren grief of bereavement, disappointment and sorrow, she still loved and cared and stayed, faithful and undaunted. And to her He arose and said "Mary," and through her tears she cried, "Rabboni," "Master."

Learn of birds and springs and flowers
How to use thy nobler powers.

Call whole nature to thine aid,
For 'tis He whole nature made.

Join in one eternal song
Who to one God all belong.

Our Christian Worship

By Ian McHaffie



WHEN we meet as Christians every Sunday morning, we talk and we act in a way that is strange and out of keeping with the tone of the world around us. Most people have little sympathy with religion, and Christianity seems to them to have little to offer. Spheres in which it was once thought that religion supplied an explanation have now been taken over by science. Man seems to be quite capable of getting along without God, as our non-religious contemporaries demonstrate. Why then do we hang on to old traditions? Why do we meet to think and act in a way that few people bother to think and act now? Has religion any useful meaning in life, or is it a bind which many people would be happier without and which only seems to discourage us from enjoying ourselves?

Let us try to answer some of these questions.

It is true that Christianity owes much to the past. This is no reason to discount it. Our modern scientific discoveries and our good social conditions have only been made possible by what men have done in former ages. So it is with religion: neither science nor religion would be the same without their backgrounds.

FOUNDATIONS IN THE PAST

A short sketch of the background from which our Christianity has developed might help us to see how we fit into the picture.

We could start with Abram. We read how God called him to leave Ur of the Chaldees and to settle in a land that He would show him. No doubt Abram had for long felt something lacking in the beliefs and religious practices of the people around him and he responded to the call of God. With a few relatives he left the thousands in the city of Ur to live a different life and to worship differently.

Several hundreds of years later Abram's descendants still worshipped the same God but lived as slaves in Egypt. As an almost insignificant group they escaped from the land of Egypt, hoping to be able to worship their God in peace. But only a few remained loyal. In the wilderness they made a golden calf and worshipped it.

The future seemed more hopeful when the children of Israel promised to Joshua "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey," but over the years the nation frequently turned to idol worship. At times there were religious revivals under kings such as David, Solomon at the beginning of his reign, Hezekiah and Josiah, yet it is clear from the message of the prophets at the end of the Old Testament that only a few really took their worship seriously and really understood what it meant.

It was much the same in Jesus' time. Christ constantly rebuked the leaders for being hypocrites—and His efforts brought Him to the Cross. But

at least two important things then emerged. First, Christ rose from the dead and thereby showed the essential correctness of His approach to life. Second, a few people realised what human nature could do, when they saw what it had done to Jesus, and they set out to live a new way of life with Christ as their example. Historically, then, our position is understandable: we belong to a minority among the people of the world, to a small group of individuals who wish to direct their lives in accordance with the revelation they have received and understood from God.

But granting this background, granting that there is such a God as we Christians believe in, and granting that He works with people in the church of His Son, what point is there in identifying ourselves with this church when many other people seem to live all right without it?

THE FINDING OF TRUTH

For some people the truth of the matter is the deciding factor. There seems to be something in man, some universal feeling which we believe comes from God Himself, which makes us wish to know what is true and what is not. The claims which Christ made and which we make about Him, if true, open up a way to understand the existence of the world and offer us a guide to living. If false, these claims deserve to be shown up for the falsehood they are.

There is a satisfaction in knowing what is right and true, and in acting upon it. If once a person can be brought to look carefully at the claims of Christ and to see their basic truth, he or she will wish to become a follower.

THE FAILURE OF THE WORLD

This approach however does not appeal to all of us. It is easier to know what we *ought* to do than to *do* it, especially if the alternatives appear more attractive. We have all at times felt there are too many "do not's" in our religion. There are some things we think we would like to do but which the Bible or perhaps the social conventions of our community forbid.

Three courses of action are open to us if we are already in the community. We can stay in but feel we are missing something; or we can leave; or we

can compromise and stay in but act as if we were outside. To act the last is to play the modern counterpart of the Pharisees.

The objection that there are too many "do not's" has less force than at first appears. Behind it rests the assumption that there can be lasting happiness and satisfaction in the things of the world. And it may seem so when we look at our friends who enjoy the "good life" without a thought for God.

Yet at every stage of life, and more so as we grow older and have to take on more responsibilities, we need to decide the principles on which to found our lives. Many people find these in *expediency*. They find that this works not too badly so long as they can stay on top. But the doctrine of expediency is basically selfish, and when several selfish people live together they do not live happily for very long.

When we feel regrets at the "do not's" we mean that we would like to do as we please, as we please. We would prefer not to care about the well-being of others provided we are all right. Selfishness again. In our personal relationships with our family, our friends, our work mates, our employers, to be selfish makes life unhappy. Conversely, to be concerned about others and to avoid always insisting on our own way may take more effort, but it is the way of Christ and it leads to happier results.

If we did just as we liked, as do many in the world, we would not in fact get the happiness we sometimes imagine we could get without religion. The hatred, the bitterness, the broken homes; the quarrels, the disputes, the wars; the strikes, the pay claims and the incessant desire for more material possessions give ample testimony to the failure of lives lived selfishly, lives lived without Christ.

This is not to say that people who do not profess Christianity cannot have a happy existence. Many can, but they do so by applying the principles of Christ and by absorbing themselves in interests which serve to keep their minds off the unpleasant issues of life.

Nor is this to say that all we who follow Christ are going to lead happy and easy lives. We do not, often because we all fail at one time or another to live up to the principles in which we believe. But if the ethical standards of Christ were practised

universally, a very substantial amount of the suffering and unhappiness in the world would be removed. People want this, yet they cannot get it because they do not understand how.

It is here that Christianity always has been and still is relevant. For we, as followers of Christ, make up (or ought to) a body of people who realise where the true path of happiness and satisfaction lies and who wish to help one another and everyone else to find it.

THE ANSWER TO DEATH

But our religion does not just offer us the chance of satisfaction in this life, though it would be worth while even if that was all it did. Life somehow seems incomplete if all that we have worked for and all that we have gained has to disappear completely in death.

The question of the meaning of life and death is one which concerns everyone. We all know that no matter how many material possessions we gather together we cannot take them with us when we die. Man is tied down by the limitations of his physical make-up. The prospect of death forces him to realise that ability and intelligence can go so far but no further. The advance of science may be able to prolong life, but not prevent death.

Christianity again has the answer to a problem that is always with us.

LOOKING AT OURSELVES

We have looked at the historical development of Christianity and have seen that it supplies three basic human needs: if we want truth, if we want happiness and satisfaction in life, and if we want the answer to death we find them in Christ.

But to "put on" Christ and to take part in the blessing that this act can bring, involve our recognising not only the truth about our Lord Jesus, but also the truth about ourselves. Most people prefer to blind themselves to their own failings. We must not. In this lies the basic difference between the world and Christ. Those in the world live however suits them, but we take

Christ as our standard. And so we meet regularly to praise God, to communicate with Him in prayer, to remember His Son in the bread and the wine, to think about our mistakes and to resolve to do better in the future.

In a world so taken up by materialism it is not surprising that only a few of us act as we do. But we can be grateful that for us few, at least, the message of Christ's death and resurrection has not gone out in vain.

Let us, then, not lose the opportunity to meet with those who have the same convictions as we, to examine ourselves in the light of Christ, and to determine to live in the only way that is right, in the only way that gives true meaning and satisfaction to life, and in the only way that gives us hope beyond death.

EXECUTION OF THE "PRETENDER"

SEE him die!
Watch the wretched rebel
Writhe upon the torture stake.
See the glory coronet now.
Of scornful, sensual Rome
Anoint with criss-cross
Scars his brow
With blood;
And, underneath the mocking halo,
Weals torture the living corpse.
As nerves churn
And taut,
Anticipating ghastly death
Cry out and burn.
See him die!
Fearful darkness and thick —
The dark arrow strikes —
Draws out a cry —
The agony of timeless grief
Torn from his lips!
Nailed with the thief
See him die!
But glorious in his death.
The Nazarene!

JOHN WILSON.

A STATEMENT

By Ralph Lovelock

THANK you for your kind offer of space in which to explain the tangled web of circumstance which has led to the rather confused controversy now raging around my notes on the early chapters of Genesis.

About 15 years ago I was first asked by the Publishing Committee of the *Christadelphian* if I would co-operate in writing a book about the issues raised by evolution. I felt doubtful at that time if the position warranted the controversy which would be aroused, and the MS did not proceed beyond a first draft of contents, which was favourable to evolution as a divine method of creation, and which drew no unfavourable comments from the committee. About 10 years ago this request was revived, a second summary of contents prepared, but it proceeded no further due to lack of enthusiasm on my part.

Shortly after this second request had been declined, several young people were disfellowshipped for holding beliefs similar to my own, and others of whom I had knowledge decided not to join us because of this issue. As a result of this I became very worried about the course I ought to take, silence being equivalent to acquiescence in a proceeding which I viewed with abhorrence. The Darwin centenary was then only two years ahead, and the Committee made a third and stronger request for a book, to which I agreed.

A chapter-by-chapter summary was prepared, supporting in great detail the general principles of evolution as the method used by God when He created. This was approved by the Committee, and I proceeded under their instruction to prepare a MS of about 140,000 words. This MS was checked by a professional biologist and passed as containing no major errors of scientific fact; it was then handed to the Committee for their consideration. Although it corresponded exactly to the summary

which had been approved, and was not attacked on the basis of factual error, the Committee decided not to publish it because they thought it to be unwise to say such things publicly at that time.

I protested to the Committee that it was not right to allow members to be cast out for holding beliefs which we thought were not in error, and yet not make some protest that such opinions were not vital to fellowship. They refused to make any move at that time towards a protest, on the basis that undesirable controversy would ensue. I warned them that in those circumstances I would feel morally bound to make my position public, and they strongly requested me not to do so. It was shortly after this that I came under strong criticism in the Committee for writing in *Endeavour*, although no objections at all were raised about the contents of my contributions to that magazine.

With the invitation to lead a class in Central London on an Old Testament subject, I saw the opportunity which I needed, and chose the early chapters of Genesis as the subject. The notes do not follow the earlier MS, being wholly concerned with the biblical side, and not with the scientific or evolutionary issues covered in the older treatment; the attitude and general basis of solution however is identical with it. As controversy arose, the Committee were agreed that no matters vital to fellowship were involved, and attempted to guide the Editor in a course which would discourage further ecclesial action in this matter.

Despite this attempt, ecclesial efforts to force a decision that certain additional tenets should be added to our statement of faith were redoubled, and, after a long meeting in November, the Committee finally asked for my resignation. This was a majority decision, three members strongly opposed this in discussion, and voted against it. The reasons given in discussion were that, while not being guilty of heresy, by saying what I believed about the Bible, and also by writing in *Endeavour*, I had acted in such a way that the Committee would forfeit the confidence of a majority in our body while it allowed me to remain a member.

I warned the Committee that whatever safeguards they wrote into their statement, the decision would be taken as indicating a surrender to the extremists, and that the pressure which would result against my ecclesia would force me to resign. The outcome has justified the fears, and pressure is beginning to build up against the Watford ecclesia. While most of the ecclesia is indignant about this, the fact that two members both of Watford and the Committee supported the Committee in asking for

my resignation makes it very probable that continued pressure might result in dissension after a while. In these circumstances I have tendered my resignation to the ecclesia.

I have found the spirit of Christian love and fellowship within the Watford ecclesia to be so high that I am not willing to risk dissension by remaining a member. As an example of the kind of efforts which are being made by extremists, one ecclesia has decided that it will not invite a speaker from Watford while I remain a member, and is trying to persuade others to do the same. Similar efforts are directed against me, one ecclesia still desiring me to speak had an ultimatum from several speakers on its programme that they would not come unless my appointment was cancelled. Were such efforts to win the day, I would resign from our body in any case, and I do not judge it worth the risk to Watford to remain a member long enough to damage it as a family, and then maybe have to leave in any case because the spirit of Pharisaism had gained control of our community.

Watford have held a business meeting in which they decided not to accept my resignation, and have asked me to reconsider it. I am deeply touched by the reaction of the ecclesia to my resignation, and have replied that I am willing to allow it to remain

in their hands for as long as they think fit, but that I will not engage in any *ecclesial* activity for the time being, so that there can be no legitimate basis for any other ecclesia to take action against Watford, or make further protests to them.

In conclusion, I would like to make a plea that this matter is not a minor controversy about the historical framework behind the early chapters of Genesis, but that a principle vital to our spiritual life as a community, and quite unconnected with the detail of discussion, is at stake. We commenced our existence as a protest by Dr Thomas against a rigid orthodoxy which refused to allow free discussion of Bible teaching where entrenched tradition appeared to be called in question. This is happening all over again. It is perhaps ironic that two of the matters now being called in question as heresy in my notes were clearly taught by Dr Thomas in early writings of his, but were later discarded as heresy by Robert Roberts, during the heat of discussion about Romans which resulted in a split in our body. If spiritual life is to continue in our community, or in any other, it is essential that not only must there be reverence for the inspired Word of God, but there must be freedom to discuss its message, even where that message runs counter to our own petty schemes of interpretation.

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LOVINGKINDNESS

By Ruth McHaffie

GOD said to Israel, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." It was not only to Israel that God was prepared to extend His lovingkindness. All those who are willing to come to Him can share of it. It is, therefore, of concern to us personally that we should understand the meaning of His lovingkindness and what, if anything, it demands of us in our attitude toward God and man.

In the Hebrew language, the word which we have translated as "lovingkindness" conveys a meaning which it is difficult to express in English. It is a love which exists only within the bonds of a covenant. It has no meaning unless a covenant has been previously made. It is an attitude of loyalty and faithfulness which the two parties to a covenant should have to each other. It means an eager, steadfast love which God has for those who are His, and He expects that same eager, steadfast love from those to whom He shows that special kind of love. In the New Testament, the same meaning is conveyed by the word "grace" and perhaps this helps us to understand the meaning more easily. But it is not the grace which draws us to God. It is the grace with which He sustains us once we are His. Put very simply it is the love which will not let us go. And if there is anything human beings need it is a love which will not let them go.

Israel of old went up on every high hill and under every green tree to worship other gods. Again and again they broke the covenant which they had made to serve the God of all the earth. The covenant and the law of God they could not

keep. But God, in His steadfast love for them, would not let them go. If the law they could not keep then God would make another way — and He made that way through Jesus Christ. So, says the apostle Paul, we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." So Jeremiah told the people that God would make a new covenant with them, and this new covenant was not based on a written law, but on a law which was to be in their inward parts and written in their hearts. This is the law of Christ under which we live.

How can we understand what the grace of God, this lovingkindness, is? How can we bring it down to earth, as it were? That is precisely what Jesus Christ did. He, as the Son of God, showed us in a down to earth way what the grace of God is. In the gospel of John we are told, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." He was "full of grace and truth." And so we have Jesus going about the streets of the cities exhibiting the grace of God, the very essence of His lovingkindness walking among men. He showed to the human race how great is the love of God — the love which will not let them go, the love which would let His own sinless Son die in order that men might understand the length to which their wickedness would take them, that they might be pricked in their hearts and turn to their God.

If then, we look at the character of Jesus Christ we cannot fail to understand God's love for us, nor can we fail to understand the kind of loving service which God expects from us.

Jesus worked against great difficulties. He was working against preconceived ideas. The Jews were not lacking in their own ideas of what God expected of them nor were they lacking in enthusiasm. Gone were the days when they went up on the high hills and under the green trees to worship other gods -- at least, so it seemed to them. Now, they thought, they worshipped the true God and showed to Him just that steadfast faithfulness to His law which He demanded. They duly offered their sacrifices, they gave their tithes and they kept the Sabbath. They were the very epitome of piety. And piety, they thought, was their part in the relationship of the covenant with God.

But piety easily becomes false. There are many gods which can be worshipped, and they can be worshipped without the high hill or the green tree, and they can be worshipped today as they were worshipped then, but in a different guise.

The god of the religious people of Jesus' day was formalism. They worshipped ritual and in doing so overlooked the lovingkindness of the real God. Jesus had to show them how wrong that was. He had to break down their systematic worship and put in its place the true worship of the heart. Just as Jeremiah had shown that because of the sin of Israel God had watched over them to pluck up and to break down, and then promised that He would build and plant, so Jesus had first to break down and then build up. Over the face of Moses there was a veil so that the children of Israel could not see the end of that which was abolished, but Jesus removed the veil so that they might see the law of liberty, so that they might understand the freedom which is in Christ.

There is a tendency for Christians to dislike thinking of Jesus as one Who plucked up, Who administered rebuke. Their idea of loving kindness excludes the idea of a forthright protest. So we have the hymn "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child." It was J. B. Phillips who pointed out that Jesus was meek, but not mild. Neither Jesus nor His followers

could always be mild. A great part of their mission was composed of protest. Again and again Jesus protested against the evil which He saw around Him.

When He entered the temple court and found the money changers cheating the people and making God's house merely a market and a fraudulent one at that, He was moved to protest with all His vigour. We know how He drove them out. We know how He indignantly rebuked the Pharisees because of their hypocrisy. He told them that all their ritual made them like whited sepulchres, appearing beautiful outward, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

If we want to understand Jesus we need to look more than casually at His example. Jesus protested for others, not for Himself. He protested for good not for selfish desire. And, something which we often overlook, He made His protests in different ways to different people. Jesus knew what was in man and He knew how to adapt His approach to each individual to suit the need of the case. We do not have the wisdom of Jesus Christ and yet we, too, have to judge righteous judgment. We, too, must be discerning with our fellows; we, too, must know their needs.

If we wish to follow Jesus in being one who can represent God's lovingkindness to men we have to exercise the care which Jesus exercised in not offending "one of these little ones." We must avoid putting a stumbling block in the way of others. Jesus knew that some who were apparently enthusiasts for God's service were utterly sincere, and He was full of care lest they should be offended. But He also knew that others, also apparently enthusiasts, were in fact hypocrites and it seems that what Jesus meant by hypocrisy was mental dishonesty. Those in this class were unwilling to think things out and to face unwelcome conclusions. To them Jesus spoke in no uncertain terms throughout His ministry. They were people, He said, who drew nigh to God with their lips but their hearts were far from Him. They worshipped in vain, teaching

for doctrines the commandments of men. Even the disciples were shocked that Jesus had spoken with apparent disregard for the feelings of those whom He rebuked. They said to Him, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?" But Jesus replied, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Those who show themselves to be guilty of mental dishonesty, the unwillingness even to try to examine their own thoughts, beliefs and motives, put themselves beyond the pale of God's forgiveness. Not that He is unwilling that they should be forgiven, but forgiveness can only follow repentance. The lovingkindness of God does not rule out severity. The writer to the Hebrews said that it was a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It is an even more fearful thing to fall, through wilful obtuseness, out of His hands.

Some Christians believe that they only want to live at peace with everyone. I believe Jesus would have found such a path a much easier one to follow than the one He did. It is not always possible to be at peace with a world of sin. It was because Jesus could not be at peace with it that He died. The true Christian, fulfilling his part of his covenant with God, has to dare to be a Daniel and dare to stand alone. It is because the true Christian must be an example of positive goodness that there are times when he has to say no.

There was a school of thought, now rather out of date, which taught that parents should seldom say no to their children, that instead they should only say what ought to be done. While it is true that the good parent sets his child an example of positive goodness it is also true that the child, who soon shows the sinful tendencies of his parents, needs to be told what *not* to do. The parent who really loves his child is not the mild parent. He cares for his child and he cares very much. He desires to show to his child something of the love which his God shows to him. Perhaps some of the difficulties which many parents experience with their children is caused

by their not realising that love does not rule out severity. And yet, of course, there is the opposite danger in parenthood of too much severity. Jesus was never a parent and so we cannot look to Him for specific guidance in this. But He does lay before us a principle, not only for parenthood, but for all relationships in life — that there is a time to be gentle and a time to be outspoken. Like Jesus, the way of our approach will vary. To the child who is obstinately disobedient, or the friend who is guilty of wilful, moral obtuseness, we shall not speak in the same way as to the child or person who is genuinely trying to do the right even though he does the wrong.

Jesus did not come into the world to spend His time as a leader of social reform. But because He came to reveal the love of God, it was He Who brought new hope to those who were oppressed, Who showed that the rich should help the poor and that all men are equal in the sight of God. Christians have been slow to see the consequences of His teaching. They have desired the lovingkindness of God for themselves but denied it to others. They have not always seen that they must not only receive but must also give, that His love demands from them a love to Him and a love to their fellows.

So the Calvinists, believing that they were the special, elect ones of God and that all other men were on their way to hell-fire, thought it was right to oppress them in the workshops while they, the Calvinists, became rich at the expense of their miserable employees.

Indeed, many Christians have made a poor show of Christian love. The church of the eighteenth century utterly failed to understand it. The poor were meant to be poor and the rich to be rich. There would be pie in the sky afterwards for the poor — their station in this life was to stay as they were and to be content with serving their masters. "Just let things be," said the church.

But there have always been some who had a clearer perception of the Christian duty, and, because of their work and because of their vehement protests, we today live in the comparatively

good conditions which are ours. Slaves are free, children are not exploited and workers have their rights. And we look back in scorn on those who so misunderstood. Whether we can afford to do so or not is another matter. We may see the inconsistency of Billy Graham who speaks so much about peace with God yet who sent a special prayer of support to the American servicemen fighting in Vietnam, while we ourselves are lamentably lacking.

Perhaps a future generation will look back with a shudder at the horrors which we pass by. Perhaps they will be shocked when they read of a Western world where men and women were dying through over-eating while those in other lands were dying of starvation. Well might they be appalled that anyone who dared to call himself a Christian thought that a person with a white skin had some kind of innate superiority over the person with a dark one and should be given appropriate advantages.

Perhaps they will see the inconsistency of people who will weep for a pet dog who dies in peace, who gladly pay a contribution to the R.S.P.C.A. but who think nothing of the thousands of animals crowded together living, if living it be, in the conditions on some modern farms, of hens living in batteries and being used like plants of machinery. "Let things be," perhaps we say. "This has nothing to do with the lovingkindness of God." But we sing,

O give thanks with heart and lip,
For we are His workmanship:
And all creatures are His care—
Not a bird that cleaves the air
Falls unnoticed: but who can
Speak the Father's love to man?

And, as we speak sentimentally of Jesus talking of a hen gathering her chickens beneath her wings, we may care nothing for the de-beaked pullet in her wire cage.

It is just as well that we also sing,
Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!

It is when we consider our own inconsistencies that we realise how inadequate and erring we can be. It is then that we realise with thankfulness that God is without shadow or turning, that God is not variable. The God of the Old Testament, who longed for Israel to turn to Him that they might be forgiven and Who made the way easy for them, is the same God Whom we find in the New Testament, the God Who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And the very same God still has His hands outstretched, longing for those who have not yet turned to Him to do so. He is still willing to extend to us that love which He has always offered to those who would enter into covenant with Him, the love which will not let us go.

MEEK-AND-MILD

This word "mild" is apparently deliberately used to describe a man who did not hesitate to challenge and expose the hypocrisies of the religious people of His day: a man who had such "personality" that He walked unscathed through a murderous crowd; a man so far from being a nonentity that He was regarded by the authorities as a public danger; a man who could be moved to violent anger by shameless exploitation or by smug complacent orthodoxy; a man of such courage that He deliberately walked to what He knew would mean death, despite the earnest pleas of well-meaning friends. . . . Jesus Christ might well be called "meek", in the sense of being selfless and humble and utterly devoted to what He considered right, whatever the personal cost; but "mild", never!

J. B. PHILLIPS.

LETTERS

PREACHING OPPORTUNITY

The eight years during which I was a member of the Christadelphian body saw the reunions with most of the few surviving Berean ecclesias, and with the bulk of the Suffolk St. fellowship. It was a time of hope and rejoicing. Concurrently, and in many cases connected with these events, there was continual bickering, recrimination, detraction, and disfellowshipping, "all done in the spirit of love." It got worse, not better, as time went on until three years ago I decided I could no longer condone this waste of energy which would have been better directed towards preaching the Gospel, and trying to discover how to do this in more effective ways. So I left.

I gravitated towards what are known as the Free Churches, but with my eyes open, knowing full well what to expect. Now there are churches keen and churches apathetic, but the majority are of the latter kind, and they generally have fewer active members than Christadelphian ecclesias in similar circumstances. Not being of a sedentary disposition I have joined many and seen more in my wanderings about the country.

Eventually I could no longer put up with careless attitudes, mismanaged services and footling sermons, and so became a lay preacher. There are very few who go in for this any

longer, and a favourite hymn in many churches, so I am told, is one that goes "Oh Lord, send us men." If one has been brought up a Christadelphian one cannot stay inactive for long, nor can one bear the seeming ignorance of, and lack of interest in, the Bible. My first sermon in the churches to which I was sent condemned the majority of ministers and preachers who hardly mention the Bible, and even affect to despise it in some cases. I had not expected it to be so well received. All agreed that they were starved of sound biblical preaching and teaching; they wanted more. In one village, I hope to help organise a Bible class in the near future. A second address, on the subject of baptism, again based on the biblical teachings we all revere, was equally acceptable. It made them think, (instead of go to sleep, which is the best thing one can do at times). My beliefs are no different from those I held when I left the body. It is these I preach about and shall continue to do so.

But it is the favourable reaction to my defence of the Bible which impresses me. There ought to be more preaching sound doctrine; where are they to come from? If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, then Mahomet will have to go to the mountain. Few attend Christadelphian lectures — largely because those from other churches

with small congregations are as loyal to theirs as you are to yours. Well then, go to them. Congregations are crying out for biblical teaching and for someone to say something intelligent for a change. So great is the shortage of manpower that a member from any body will be welcomed. One brother did join the Methodist circuit but was stopped by ecclesial opinion; a very short-sighted opinion, to my mind. To preach in other churches does not mean one has to subscribe to any mistaken beliefs held by the congregation. I don't, and I've made that abundantly obvious by now. What you, what we, have to decide is whether we are God's little shopkeepers or God's salesmen. Are we going to hug ourselves behind our barren counters, smug in the belief that we are the sole purveyors of Truth and nobody comes to buy; or are we going into the highways and hedges to take it to them? Ultimately, are we prepared to preach the Gospel as we understand it by whatever means open to us? Do we want people to learn the Truth first and then follow it up, or are we going to wait in the mistaken hope that they will come to us for it? I feel it would be mistaken to neglect this opportunity in God's service and to pass by a door standing wide open for you.

P. R.

GEOLOGY

The letter from Ellen Styles published in your Autumn 1965 issue suggests that the writer for all her years among the palaeontologists is rather confused not only by the mass of material remains but also by the complexity of the subject.

It is hardly to her credit to make polite sneers at the gaps in geological knowledge. No geologist would try to hide this fact nor that many elaborate reconstructions are based on what geologists hope one day to discover — not forgetting of course the information that can be drawn from what has been discovered. However, several theories as to what a thing would look like if discovered have been confirmed by new finds and a recent example is the postulated morphology (made some twenty years before the discovery confirming it) of what is now called *Latimeria chalumnae*.

In the case of the super-family Equoidea (suborder Hippomorpha), it is a matter of common knowledge that differing types existed side by side. Why your correspondent should expect that a more primitive type should abruptly vanish because a more advanced type appeared is difficult to grasp. Surely she is aware that a species like *Anchitherium*, with persistently primitive three-toed feet and low-crowned teeth, existed side by side for some time with more progressive types.

I suspect that whatever evidence palaeontologists produce the Ellen Styles of this world will always find excuses to sound warnings against it. However, we are fortunate that not everyone thinks that way and for the present intellectual stagnation is far off.

R. W. Morrell

INSPIRATION

My attention has been drawn to a contribution to *Endeavour* called "A Critical Notice of *The Bible and Modern Thinking*." May I offer a few comments?

All this logomachy about Verbal Inspiration is a tilting at windmills. Is it possible for the ideas of Holy Scriptures to be inspired by God without the words which express those ideas being inspired also? I have long wanted someone to explain to me how this could be. Cannot *Endeavour* persuade one of its erudite contributors to sort this out for us once and for all?

As I see it the issue is quite simply this. Can the words of Scripture, properly interpreted, be taken as coming to us with dependability and divine authority, or not? Is it not a fact that Edward Whittaker and Gordon Hunnings would alike reason from Scripture with complete reliance on the authority of the words? This is what matters. If either of them demurs from this empiricism, will he tell us where and why?

As to *how* God inspired the writing of the Bible, may I say that I have yet to meet a believer in the verbal inspiration who claimed to understand *how* it was done. Much that brother Gordon writes on this is merely telling us very impressively what we already know and tremble at.

I won't ask for space to take to pieces the long monologue in which brother Gordon obviously enjoys himself attacking the "Dialogue." Discussion between us has, I believe, tidied up a few misconceptions. Let it suffice to say here — what I believe with all my heart — that it is high time the discredited and evil practice of block disfellowship were buried without any hope of resurrection. This, which the review pillories with such gusto, is no part of a "true Christa-

delphian" position or of a sound biblical attitude. But then neither is the specious latitudinarianism which would encourage a man to change his *fundamental* beliefs whilst retaining the old forms which expressed them. There is a middle way more wholesome than either of these.

Harry Whittaker.

Lichfield.

ENDEAVOUR

I think *Endeavour* is a very worthwhile magazine. I am aware that quite a few brethren and sisters do not like it, but I have noted in every case that they are people who have never set eyes on it, and who rely on second and third-hand information for their prejudice against it. That is the case here anyway.

I would like to say that for quite a long time last year, I had been feeling more and more depressed about our community. The lectures and talks we were giving seemed to be continually about the judgment of God and our own exclusiveness, with little courtesy or respect for other men, and Paul's injunction to "Honour all men." Then I discovered your magazine and found that there are many Christadelphians who still see the Gospel as one of boundless love, shown in being gentle to all men and a willingness to listen to them and understand their needs.

In your Autumn 1965 issue you quoted J. B. Phillips as saying, "Somehow Christians must recapture on a grand scale this basic certainty that God is love."

I believe this, and see it reflected in your magazine and it heartens me a great deal. Also I believe it will hearten some of my friends, who have had similar feelings to myself. They want to borrow my copies of *Endeavour*.

Anne Clarke.

Melbourne.

FAMINE is an evocative word. What does it mean to you? It is not hunger or malnutrition. Half the world is hungry: the margin is so small. Famine means death—people dying from starvation, in hundreds, thousands, possibly millions.

In our damp and chilly island it is impossible to realise what so much water—and its lack—means. It is impossible to feel the burning sun beating down on burnt-up fields.

I saw such fields last November, full of nothing but stunted yellow stalks, withered through lack of rain. We stopped by one where a girl was gathering something. It was not grain. She was gleaming every isolated strand of grass she could find to keep some wretched beast alive.

CATTLE SOLD

At the same time in Bangalore, in Mysore, South India, peasants were selling their cattle for a pound apiece. They had almost to give away their main capital, their power to plough, their milk supply.

Why? Because they had nothing to feed them on.

That was cool November. How are these poor people and beasts faring now in March, as the sun gathers strength and the monsoon is still three or four months off?

As you eat your bacon and eggs you prop the paper against the teapot: "The worst famine of the century?" You reach over and refill the kettle at the tap to top up the pot. What does "the worst" mean?

Well, two million died in 1943, so it must be worse than that. Two million is two Birminghams or four Sheffields wiped out.

You may get bored with reading "the worst of the century" as you fill your third cup. But in Central India a

FAMINE—

Quaker team reported as long ago as last autumn that the wells were down to the record levels of the great famines of the early 1890s. That is 75 years ago. (Oxfam has given them £6,000 worth of drilling to deepen existing wells and to bore new ones through the rock.)

Again back in November I saw a whole village on the move with their pathetic little possessions on their backs. Even then their wells were dry. They had abandoned their homes for the city slums for one thing, water.

And conditions in the city slums of India become even more desperate as factories cut back and lay off workers for lack of water to drive the hydro-electric turbines.

Only American grain can save them from a tragedy of vast proportions this year. But it will do little more than keep them alive on a ration of half a pound of grain a day.

CITY RATIONS

The normal city ration of 12 ounces a head is not much: but think of living and working on half a pound of cereal a day.

While her population soars, India's agriculture lags. Water, as we have noted, is the prime need, because only a third of India's land is irrigated.

what does it mean?

But even where there is water, technical know-how is usually lacking. Above all, in order to feed herself, India lacks fertiliser and the foreign exchange to buy it with. The *Financial Times* calls it the "key sector" of the Indian economy.

SELF-HELP

Now Oxfam's fertiliser scheme is well under way.

It is, we feel, not only a measurable and immediate contribution to India's food crisis with a quadrupled crop of grain as well as fodder. In the long term it will also give a great stimulus to agricultural techniques in the State.

Another attraction in the project is that it is not a handout. It is self-help. The farmers pay the University and the University pays Oxfam for fertiliser. And Oxfam uses the rupees to fund its many other projects in India.

Now, as the sun burns hotter and the thirsty and hungry in India grow thirstier and hungrier and face starvation, we think of our hybrid maize growing up.

Oxfam cannot do everything, but at least we shall tide half a million poor people over the critical period of the famine.

Bill Acworth
(Oxfam's Field Secretary for Asia)

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SOME THOUGHTS FROM AN ELDER BROTHER ON A MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT CLASS

By W. S. Yearsley

WHEN I was approached regarding the arranging of a mutual improvement class, I was told that I could make myself useful; here then are some thoughts.

1. The success of such a class depends entirely on a cheerful acceptance of all criticisms: if a member, however, cannot endure criticism he should not be present; even though a critic might be a little offensive or overbearing, members should still take no offence or enter into mutual recriminations; if this should unfortunately happen you can expect the failure of the class. On the other hand a critic must endeavour not to be too personal, especially when platform manners may also be criticised. Can you, or will you, receive criticism without offence? The success of the class will depend on it. Make up your mind and stick to it.

2. Another matter on which the success of the class depends is a Resolution by all members to study a question for themselves and not altogether to depend on other members who sacrifice their time for that object: the class will gradually lose interest and fizzle out if this rule is not observed: moreover members in their studies should not aim at novelty or fancy ideas for the sake of something to say, but should be sure of their own grounds or seek explanations from the class: it is a false notion to suppose that any answer is better than none; better be silent rather than guess and be wrong.

3. I have been very disappointed with the readings at our devotional gatherings. Other gatherings matter less, though the best efforts should be made. Devotional gatherings are no place to practise; the best must be given to God. I have heard it said, "Oh, but brethren must be given an opportunity." Granted, but the Bible class or mutual improvement class is the place to be given a chance, and one should have general approval before reading at devotional services. There is definitely room for improvement among us. Now allow me to point out some common failings in reading which interrupt the train of one's thoughts. They are easy to overcome but constant practice is essential to this end. If one will not read constantly one will never make a good public reader: public reading to be of any use must be read in a meaningful manner.

4. Now for some points on public reading. Remember that you are not reading for yourself—but to an audience, therefore read loud enough for those farthest away from you to hear—and finish the words, articulate plainly, slowly. To read intelligently you must understand the nature of the matter to be read, otherwise you cannot correctly modulate your voice or emphasise essential words or phrases: I frequently hear voices dropped where they should be raised and *vice versa*, and a confusion of phrases running on without proper pauses often alters the sense of the reading. Punctuation is essential to make people understand what is read. A good example of this fault is seen in the following words: (a) "What do you think? I will shave you for

nothing and give you a drink.” (b) “What! Do you think I will shave you for nothing and give you a drink?” Expression makes all the difference in spoken reading.

You will note a person will sometimes make a small mistake in reading; he will invariably go back and correct himself, that should *not* be done unless the sense of the reading is seriously changed.

5. Finally, who is to lead or control the class? This is a delicate question but members will have to develop a thick hide and submit to the consensus of opinion. Does not common sense demand that the leader or controller of such a class be one competent to clear up a difficulty and instruct? Nor should such an one be afraid to suggest a matter beyond one’s ability; I find many things which I cannot explain to my own satisfaction; what else can be expected in writings and idioms which have come down through 4,000 years. There are matters of detail which when

pressed too far lead to irrational conclusions. However, you should not think of putting a novice in charge of such a study class, especially if not given to study or investigation. As regards the leader, must he be immune from criticism? No, his leadership must also come under fire and he must be an example of humility. If he cannot take it without offence, let him give way without a feeling of jealousy to another.

6. A brother may feel somewhat discouraged at some criticism—he should rather be glad. If he is making the same mistake continuously without knowing, he may be making a fool of himself and others may be afraid of telling him about it lest they offend him. It is the object of a mutual improvement class to remove these faults. So I say to such a one, Cheer up and remember the proverb, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try, try again” and you will win out, or as Solomon also wrote, “Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not” (Prov. ch. 8 v. 33).

Point to Ponder

Brother A says he’ll do it — and you know he won’t!

Brother B says he’ll do it — and you hope he might!

Brother C says he’ll do it — and you know he will!

A SURPRISING number of people are unreliable — even brethren and sisters. Too often too few do too much of the work, mainly because they know (from experience) that many others cannot be relied upon. No organisation or community can work efficiently unless a sufficient number of members take and maintain their proper part.

Last time you were asked to help in the Ecclesia did you make excuses for not doing it, or did you do it reluctantly and perhaps badly, or did you help willingly and reliably?

THE NATURE OF EVE'S TEMPTER

By Dennis Draper

THERE has been a certain amount of discussion in the brotherhood as to whether the serpent in Genesis 3 is literal or figurative. Much of the argument which has been advanced seems to be more concerned with the question of policy, "Is it wise to admit too much figure in the Bible?" than with the real matter at issue, "What was the nature and character of Eve's tempter?"

It is clearly necessary, therefore, that we should examine the records again to see what can be learned from Genesis itself and from other relevant passages of Scripture relating to the attributes of the serpent in Eden.

To begin with there is the narrative in Genesis 3, from which we may draw several conclusions, some explicit and certain, some implicit and not quite so certain.

First then the explicit certainties:

1. The creature which is called a serpent is subtle (more subtle than any other wild creature — R.S.V.).
2. It was grouped with these beasts or living creatures.
3. It had the ability to speak.
4. Its speech was intelligible to Eve.
5. It told a lie.

To these we may add with rather less certainty:

6. It was upright, or at least it had legs. This would appear from the nature of the curse that followed.
7. It seems to have been morally responsible for its action, firstly because a mere talking

machine would seem to implicate God as the instigator of the lie at second hand, and secondly because the subsequent curse would seem to imply some moral responsibility.

8. Its descendants were wicked men, especially those who accomplished the crucifixion of our Lord. Most of us would place this amongst the certainties. It is placed here, however, because it is implicit rather than explicit and relies on our interpretation of subsequent events.

The question must be asked "In what way can a creature with these attributes be described as a literal serpent?" The meaning of the word "literal" is "to give the ordinary sense to a word." Surely it is not possible to give the ordinary sense of the word "serpent" to a creature with the above characteristics.

The Hebrew word *Nachash* appears to be a term referring to snakes in general; there are other more specific words relating to particular varieties. It is true, of course, that the literal sense of the word "serpent" covers a wide variety of snakes, from the harmless grass snake to the venomous cobras deified in ancient Egypt, from snakes a few inches long to mighty boa-constrictors. However, all these creatures plainly display the unmistakable characteristics of their kind. They are the essentially limbless, dumb creatures we see in the reptile house. A creature which possesses characteristics which do not belong to the snake family cannot properly be described as a literal serpent.

This essay, however, is not much concerned with the misuse of words, and, however inappropriate the word "literal" may be in this context, we must ask the question "What is usually meant by the phrase 'literal serpent'?" Sometimes it is no more than an assertion that this creature actually existed.

More often "literal serpent" carries with it the idea that God took a recognised "literal" serpent and miraculously invested it with the power of speech, as a result of which it was able to tempt Eve. In other words Eve's tempter

was essentially an *ad hoc* creature. In support of this there is firstly the fact that it is called a serpent, and secondly the seeming parallel of the case of Balaam's ass. The use of the word "serpent" will be dealt with later.

In the matter of Balaam's ass we are clearly in the realm of miracle. The narrative gives us to understand that Balaam's ass was just an ordinary "literal" donkey which was endowed temporarily with the power of speech in order to restrain the prophet's folly. We would, in fact, have no hesitation in saying that God was speaking to Balaam through the mouth of the ass. What the ass said was completely consistent with the character of the God Who takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner. The allusion by Peter emphasises this "the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet" (II Pet. 2: 6). Peter is here pointing out that the power of speech was not an inherent attribute of the ass, it was, in fact, normally dumb and its power of speech was God's direct work in the beneficent restraint of evil doing.

Is it possible to say that the serpent's power of speech was a similar case of special endowment? There are serious difficulties. Firstly, there is the very great difference between the altogether wholesome words of Balaam's ass and the malignant lying suggestion of the serpent. Whilst we have no hesitation in saying that God was speaking to Balaam through the ass, surely no one would dare to suggest that God was speaking to Eve through the serpent. This concept of an amoral creature specially endowed unavoidably implicates God in the serpent's lie. If the serpent was not morally responsible it is difficult, with our beliefs, to avoid the conclusion that God was. For orthodox Christians there is no problem. This idea of a specially endowed literal serpent is essentially part of orthodox theology. It fits neatly and logically into the dual concept of God versus the supernatural devil. It was the devil using an otherwise harmless creature (see section on "serpent" in I.V.F. New Bible Dictionary). We have no such easy solution. A literal serpent of this sort is completely inconsistent with our scriptural understanding of our Sovereign Lord,

and for this reason many brethren have preferred to see much of this narrative as a figure of Eve's capacity to sin, rather than hold an interpretation which would seem to implicate God in a device which would be judged shameful even by human standards.

Apart altogether from this serious moral objection, the idea of a specially endowed amoral, literal serpent finds no support in the narrative itself. We are told that the serpent was subtle. A straight-forward reading of the passage gives the impression that this subtlety consisted of the ability to think and to express its thoughts in the way which resulted in the temptation of Eve. This subtlety was not a temporary endowment, it was an intrinsic attribute of the creature. This is confirmed by Paul's comment in II Cor. 11: 3, "as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty." Eve's temptation was the result of the tempter's intrinsic character.

It is not easy to see how this ability to think relatively complex thoughts could be divorced from the inherent ability to speak. The relationship between thought and language is a very close one indeed. People whose grasp of language is poor find it impossible to conceive of a complex idea. We may think visually of colour and shape, and aurally of sound, without the mental use of language. But it is surely impossible even to conceive such thoughts as Eve's tempter expressed without the mental ability to frame the thoughts in words.

There is a passage in the New Testament which we strongly feel confirms this conclusion. "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8: 44, R.S.V.).

Everything would seem to indicate that this was a direct allusion to the serpent's lie. The Lord was actually talking to those who were later to bring Him to the cross. Both the Lord Himself and John the Baptist had called them a "generation of vipers." In a special sense these were the

seed of the serpent who were to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman. It is significant that Jesus later in Rev. 20: 2 couples the word "Devil" with "that old serpent." We may have confidence then, without being dogmatic, that this passage in John has special reference to Eve's tempter, in which case these words render the concept of a specially endowed literal serpent completely untenable. This creature did not merely tell an isolated lie, it was a congenital liar. The lie in Eden was no temporary, uncharacteristic action, it was an expression of the basic character of the serpent. This was no amoral creature playing a part, it was a being with the intrinsic power of thought, deceitful thought, and the intrinsic power of expressing its thought. Lying is not the vice of the inarticulate, it depends essentially upon the power of speech.

There is another very strong implication behind all this. Speech is communication and communication implies a community. The power of speech in an isolated individual is meaningless. The fully developed language used by the serpent — language which was intelligible to Eve — was not a thing of the moment, nor was it the attribute of one, lonely, isolated being. Language is of necessity the attribute of the race rather than the individual.

The very strong implication behind the Genesis account of the temptation and behind the penetrating comments in the New Testament is that there was, contemporary with Adam and Eve, a race of beings who possessed the same power of thought and speech as the serpent itself.

If we were to group together the attributes of Eve's tempter and ask a twelve-year-old boy which creature was subtle, could think, could speak, told lies, whose descendants were wicked men and which apparently had legs, he would reply, "A man, of course." Many times in Christadelphian circles the phrase has been used, "The serpent's lie was typical of human thinking."

But if these beings were men of some sort they were certainly not Adamic man. There were only two members of the new race at that time. This is surely the reason why they were included

with the lower creation. The word "beasts" is the A.V. rendering of the Hebrew word *Chaiyah*, which, according to Young, means living creature. Viewing this study against the background of the recent controversy, we may ask the question "Where do the words 'literal' and 'figurative' come in relation to these conclusions?" No attempt has been made here to give any but the ordinary sense to the words of Scripture, as far as possible. The existence and the attributes of Eve's tempter have been shown to have been real and literal in the true sense of these words. We have, however, already seen, apart from our later conclusion, that it is impossible to attach the literal sense of the word "serpent" to a creature with such remarkable characteristics as Eve's tempter. This renders void the argument that the serpent of Gen. 3 must have been literal in order to provide a literal basis for the subsequent figurative use of the word. It is a misapplication of a generally sound principle. Eve's tempter was called a serpent in much the same way as Herod Antipas was called a fox (Luke 13: 32), or the Gentiles called dogs (Matt. 15: 26), because there was a striking similarity between the attributes, or assumed attributes, of the literal creature and the character of the one to whom it was figuratively applied. Snakes in the Bible bite (Prov. 23: 32), are full of poison (Psalm 58: 4), are inscrutable (Prov. 30: 19) and are noted for their wisdom (Matt. 10: 16). This is the literal basis for the figure. The curse on the tempter was couched in terms consistent with the figure: "Upon thy belly shalt thou go," in the same way that the destiny of Egypt, figured as a whale, was expressed in the words, "I will therefore spread out my net over thee" (Ezekiel 32: 3).

In no sense do these conclusions cut across the accepted fundamental teaching of the Book of Genesis. Equally important, we are able to see the serpent in a light which is consistent with our understanding of the one Sovereign Lord, so that we are no longer embarrassed by trying to fit into our thinking a view of Eve's tempter which belongs essentially to a theology which we have rightly rejected.

THE SINEW WHICH SHRANK

(Gen. 32: 24-32)

By Gavin Cree

THIS passage is enigmatical but obviously intended to convey a spiritual truth. The following points were gained as a result of class study and are now raised as suggestions for further consideration.

We are told (v. 24) "Jacob was left alone." Let us compare Isaiah 51: 2. "I called him (Abraham) alone, and blessed him." Being "alone" and being "blessed" is common to both passages under consideration. Being "alone" is an essential development in spiritual experience. Without a doubt much guidance, encouragement and blessing are achieved through communal worship and fellowship but private meditation and prayer stimulate faith and formulate individuality. Practical experience stems from this foundation and is wrought out individually and continuously in our own environment, as our emotions and reactions are tested and strained in the conflict with the prevailing powers of darkness. This was the common experience of the faithful. Elijah could say "I, even I only, am left." Moses appears very much alone in the midst of a multitude. Our Lord had no spiritual peer on earth. Salvation is an individual matter. We suggest that Jacob has been separated for a specific purpose or trial. "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."

The time factor is important. God works with man progressively. This is indicated from the beginning by the frequent use of the words "The evening and the morning." They suggest a transition from darkness to light. This phrase is repeated six times as man's understanding and experiences are progressively developed leading to the day of God's rest. The elect are children of the day and not of the night, attracted by the Light of the World.

Enlightenment is a gradual process, it is accumulative yet can never reach saturation point until our

God becomes a reality unto us. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The expression, "The breaking of the day" may suggest the introduction of light and understanding.

An obvious difficulty now presents itself. Jacob consistently manifested a desire for, and an understanding of, the promises made to the fathers. God was a reality to him, what further light did he require?

We read, "There wrestled a man with him." It is to be noted that the initiative is not with Jacob but with "the man." Hosea comments upon this passage "He had power over the angel, and prevailed."

Can we visualise mortal man wrestling and prevailing against God? Not in the normal usage of the word and yet wrestle he did. It was a wrestling of wills. Jacob desired a blessing and sought it in his own strength. God is willing to grant the blessing but on terms which would manifest His righteousness.

It is recorded that Jacob was a "plain man, dwelling in tents." The original word translated "plain" is the same word used to describe Job "perfect and upright." Is it possible that both Jacob and Job lived according to God's law in a perfect and upright manner, but that their very perfection blinded their eyes to the righteousness of God?

The book of Job is the story of a just and upright man wrestling with God. Under great stress he openly justifies himself because he is righteous in his own eyes. The answer of God humbles Job so that he repents in dust and ashes. He says "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: *but now mine eye seeth thee.*"

Jacob is in a similar position to Job. He lived according to the laws of God perfectly, but the promise of life is not by works but "by grace ye are saved." The lesson can only be brought home to him by divine intervention in the person of the angel and so the hollow of his thigh is put out of joint.

What significance has the "thigh" in Scripture?

In Jer. 31: 18, 19, we read of Ephraim bemoaning himself, "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned,

I repented; and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." The strongest bone in the body is the thigh. If it is put out of joint man falls to the ground. Jacob could no longer stand on his own strength. Upheld by God, he could still plead for the blessing but in humility. "As a prince hast thou power with God and with man." He has wrestled with God and prevailed, the blessing is now his. It is day-break. He now understands the power, the majesty, the grace and the righteousness of God. It is a revelation, he sees God and lives. The "sun rose upon him" which speaks to us of God's blessing being poured upon him. Why? because he halted upon his thigh. The lesson taught that day was ever with him influencing his way of life.

Unhappily this was not the case with Israel of

whom it is written that they "eat not of the sinew which shrank." Israel did not benefit from the lesson. Their history continually emphasises the truth that they were stiff-necked and rebellious, their rebellion culminating in the crucifying of the Son of the Living God, their Messiah.

Our Lord shows their weakness in a parable, Luke 18: 11. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus *with himself*. . . ." Uplifted in pride he became his own God. "I thank thee that I am not as other men are." He could not see beyond his own righteousness. To the Pharisee there was neither room nor need for mercy and out of his own mouth he stands condemned.

The object lesson given to Jacob so long ago is essentially a lesson for today. Let us "do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God" and so may the sun rise upon us.

TRUTH

For the Christian truth is never only intellectual truth; truth is always moral truth. Truth is not something which exercises only the mind; truth is something which exercises the whole personality. Truth is not the discovery of abstract truth; it is concrete living. Truth is not only thinking; it is also acting.

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There is such a thing as "discussion circle Christianity." It is possible to look on Christianity as a series of intellectual problems to be solved, and it is possible to look on the Bible as a book about which illuminating information is to be amassed. But for the Christian Christianity is something to be followed, and the Bible is a book to be obeyed. It is perfectly possible for intellectual eminence and moral failure to go hand in hand. For the Christian the truth is something first to be discovered and then to be obeyed.

WILLIAM BARCLAY

Every one admits that Truth has nothing to fear from the fullest inquiry into each portion of the realm which she claims for her inheritance; but it is hard to carry the admission into practice. And so reticence begets suspicion, and suspicion hardens into distrust and disbelief, which would never have grown up, if a candid exposition of the difficulties and defects in evidence had been made in the first instance by one who did not hold them to be insuperable.

B. F. WESTCOTT (1866)

TWO CULTURES

By John Sealey

WHAT does *logos*, translated "Word" in the Prologue of John's gospel, really mean? Time and time again we hear platform definitions of this difficult word, but it seems that the explanation is too glib. This is possibly because the speaker wishes to make a clear, unambiguous point—a worthy aim, especially when it is dealt with from the open-air platform. Unfortunately, the explanatory point is usually a negative one.

It is often stated by the speaker that our Trinitarian friends mis-interpret John's familiar Prologue, and our own interpretation stops short at the assertion that the phrase "The Word was God" does not necessarily imply that Jesus is God, the Second Person of the Trinity. We then go on *from other texts* to show that Jesus is the Son of God and not God the Son. We often fail to recognize that almost any other text we draw on is from a much earlier Christian utterance; that John's contribution to Christology is later; that his explanation of the origin of Christ was given with Hellenized Jews and Pagans in mind, not, like Paul, with Jew or Gentile Christians in mind. There is a whole culture of difference between the readers addressed by Paul and the synoptic writers, and those addressed by John the Evangelist. "The fact is that the Fourth Gospel belongs only in part to the same class as the synoptics. Its true context is only partially that which it shares with the other gospels." (C. H. Dodd). The scene had changed; the argument had shifted; the battle of Christ's gospel was resumed on wider fields; John attacks the philosophical enemy with its own weapons, and therefore his characteristic word for enfleshed Deity is *logos*. The difference between Paul and John is not that of internal difficulty, as between Jewish Christians who wished to keep the Law

of Moses, and Gentile Christians led by Paul, who thought it unnecessary to keep it in entirety. By the time John wrote, that battle had been won; Jewish Christian Mosaism had been defeated and the national Jew, his home and religious centre in ruins, was now severed from the Christian church and so was no problem within the church.

We should bear it in mind, however, that in using the idea of *logos*, John does not intend to contradict Paul's idea of the Son of God. Wherever Paul speaks of Christ, he does not intend his statements to be taken as a definition of Christ's Person (as we sometimes too easily assert, when it suits our argument); he is speaking of the language of devotion and exhortation. When John talks of the *logos*, he is explaining in metaphysical terms the origin of Christ. Thus, both points of view may be regarded as complementary. It can be seen, too, that in his most earnest desire to show the importance of Christ in God's scheme of salvation, Paul uses, in Colossians ch. 1, expressions of praise which would seem to parallel the theological assertions of John's Prologue. "(Christ) is the first of all creation; so that everything was created in him, both in heaven and on earth, things both visible and invisible; whether thrones or lordships, or rulers or authorities; all things were created through and in him. He is before all, and everything is sustained in him."

So then, the highest thoughts of both John and Paul, in the language of both theology and devotion, indicated a measure of agreement between them which ought not to be ignored when we "compare Scripture with Scripture." When John wrote, one of his aims was to produce a story, a Glad Story, of Jesus which would both

be understandable to the Hellenistic culture of the age and also refute certain Gnostic notions about Christ's Person.

Paul had made it a maxim of his preaching to be "all things to all men," and John steps into line with this; the difference between them is time and emphasis. It is not to say that Hellenism was not a force to be seriously considered by the earliest church. It was a simple matter of priorities. The exclusiveness of Judaism had first to be defeated. But this having been done, the more insidious philosophies of the Hellenistic world sooner or later had to be faced. Paul, as early as A.D. 57, is to be seen using language which may be directly attributed to Stoic thought. For example, in Romans 2: 14, "For when Gentiles, who have no law, follow the Law by natural instinct, these people who have no law, are a law to themselves." The whole conception of the "law of nature" is fundamental to Stoicism. And when Paul speaks of their (Gentile) "conscience" testifying between accusation or defence (v. 15), he can hardly be ignorant of the fact that the Stoics invented the word "conscience." In Acts, Paul actually gives a quotation from the Stoic Aratus in defence of his gospel (Acts ch. 17, v. 28). In principle, at least, John is doing very little more than this when he uses the word *logos* in the Fourth Gospel.

CURRENT GENTILE THOUGHT

Before the end of the first century one of the greatest character tests for Christianity was not so much the obvious dangers of persecution, as the more insidious forces of the popular philosophies of the heathen world. John therefore, makes an ally out of a potential enemy—the idea of *logos*. How did the world at the end of first century understand this term? It has been said that there may be no need to look beyond the Old Testament and Rabbinic works for an interpretation of the use of *logos*, but we can hardly imagine an intelligent pagan ignoring the normal uses of the word as it was accepted in contemporary society. And we must give John credit for understanding this. Therefore, when we study the language used by John, it is per-

tinent to ask what *other* factors may be influencing the Hellenistic mind of this period. In answering this question, it may be that we have, in the process, found out what John was thinking too. This will in no way lessen our regard for John as an inspired writer, for he is clearly writing under the guidance of the "spirit of truth," and we may readily accept his ideas as the revealed will of God.

To the Stoic, the word *logos* meant "God," *logos* was the "rational principle" by which the world is governed; the world is the mind, or soul, or thought of God. "God permeateth all substance." He is "diffused throughout creation." "God is mind, God is soul, God is nature." God is "the Word, and the Word is reason." (Quotations are from Zeno: *Life of Marcus Aurelius* by Sedgwick).

Logos is the soul of everything and exists in everything. For the Stoic, *logos*, actively creative in the world, does not produce something from nothing, but gives form and purpose to what is formless and purposeless. It arranges matter into order, a "kosmos." How close we are here to Paul's language as we have seen it in Col. 1! And how close, too, are we to the language of John, "He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (R.S.V.). The Stoic would say that all nature is "worked upon" by the *logos*; and "*logos* is God."

It must not be thought that these ideas were understood clearly by the man in the Ephesian street. They were the messages of the masters, not the light reading of the layman. But the type of language was familiar; the atmosphere was recognisable in much the same way that the language and thought-forms of a scientific age are recognised by non-scientists.

THE THOUGHT OF PHILO

For the Alexandrian Jew, Philo, the term *logos* meant the medium of creation and the means by which God rules His universe. Through the same medium the world can approach God. *Logos* is mediator; it shows to the world the mind of God.

Indeed, Philo makes *logos* into a symbolical demigod. Only the perfect man can know God. For man, the sinner, there is only the knowledge of *logos*, and to Philo the *logos* seems to have meant the world of "ideas"—the perfections which men strive to attain like perfect truth, or perfect beauty; only in these things can we see God.

Perhaps we can see a certain similarity of thought between John and the Alexandrian Jew. Philo sees *logos* as the shadow, or the "image" of God; the perfection which we must follow in order to know God; he would term it the "High Priest" of God. Thus with the gospel writer, John records that Jesus said "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

THE HEBREW IDEA OF LOGOS

The Old Testament's equivalent to John's *logos*, as it is used in the Prologue, is "the Word of the Lord." And in many instances it may be equated with the "Torah" as for example in Isaiah 2: 3. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." But the phrase "word of the Lord" means much more than a voice that is heard. For the Hebrew, this "word" had power; almost a separate existence. The Psalmist tells us that by the "word of the Lord were the heavens made," and we cannot help but notice the parallel in John's first chapter: "All things were made through him (it)" (v. 3). The "word" for the Hebrew was God's power in *action*. And this is precisely what John saw in the divine sonship of Christ.

GENESIS

There is more than coincidence between the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel and the first verses of Genesis. There is design. John undoubtedly recognised, in the creation, the power of God's spoken word. As a counterpart to the imposing simplicity of Genesis, there is awful majesty in the sublime phrases of the Prologue, as would befit the earthly origin of the "new Creation."

WISDOM

Can John be completely unaware too, of the parallels that exist between his *logos* and the Hebrew concept of "Wisdom"? Ben Sirach records of Wisdom that "In Jacob thou shalt dwell." John says that the *logos* "dwelt among us." Proverbs tells us that "they hated wisdom." John says that the world "did not recognise him" (N.E.B.). Again, Proverbs: "For my ways are the ways of life," while John records "in him was life." The examples could be multiplied. It is sufficient to understand that the gospel writer is in tune with current "wisdom" thought. However, it is not enough for us simply to conclude that John sees the *logos* as the "substance" of God's thought projected in creation, and remaining as an immanent power within the world and in man. It remains true that, however much man reaches out in his attempt to grasp God; however much the "Wisdom" of the Hebrew wise man might help to draw us nearer the divine, still, "the world by 'wisdom' knew not God."

CONCLUSION

What then may we decide from these considerations of the word *logos* as it appeared in the last century before Christ and the first century A.D.? Firstly, that there is no slick explanation for John's use of it in his Prologue. There were so many different shades of meaning prevalent at the time when John wrote that it would be a bold man who would state that any *single* interpretation was the basis for John's usage.

We should surely misjudge the evangelist's inspiration and personality if we refused to attribute *some* influence to popular Stoicism. It would certainly be flying in the face of facts were we to ignore the influence of Philo, or deny to John his own Hebrew heritage in the power of "The Word of the Lord," or the parallel contribution of "Wisdom." The possible influence of each must be weighed carefully.

Clearly, there are similarities. The Stoic has said "God is the word;" John has said "The Word was God." What is the difference? The answer is that there is no difference—at this point. It would seem that John is not afraid to

"come down" to his reader. We may say it is paralleled by Paul, "What you worship but do not know—this is what I now proclaim." Thus John is saying, "Many of the qualities you pagans claim for the *logos*, his immanence, his transcendence, his meditation, are here fulfilled in this mortal flesh." To Philo, John gives a similar answer: "Your *logos* is little more than a name given to the wisdom which reaches out for God, and a name cannot be touched; your *logos* is impersonal, but to you, as to Nathaniel, God says "Come and see."

To both Stoics and Philo, John would say "You clothed your *logos* with names; you have done as well as you could. But God has clothed him with flesh. You have seen fit to call him "Rational Principle" or "High Priest," but God has called him "Immanuel."

John is thus an outstanding example of meeting men, for their own salvation, on their own grounds. *Logos* in the Old Testament is poetical; in Philo metaphysical, but becomes in John, historical: "The Word became flesh."

And to the Hebrew, who, as we have seen, could claim that *logos* was equal to "Torah" (the Law), John recorded "The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." In other words, he says to the Jews, "Though you attribute divinity to the Law, the letter of which can kill, it is only through this "Word" which God has made human that salvation can ultimately be gained."

But to go back to the introduction for a moment. Can we now say that our church friends misinterpret the Prologue of John's gospel? It has been my own experience that a few unthinking Trinitarians jump too quickly to the conclusion that this "Word" is the Second Person in the Trinity; but it does us no credit to jump as quickly in the opposite direction and claim that no divinity is implied. By all means let us steer clear of orthodox Trinitarianism, but do not let us be guilty of slighting "and the Word was *divine*" for John implies no change of divine nature when he says that this "Word" became flesh; he still reflects the glory of God, and "bears the very stamp of His nature."

THE DATES OF ISRAEL'S EXODUS

By David Pitt Francis

THROUGHOUT the centuries differing views have been held upon the exact date of Israel's Exodus from Egypt. Egyptology is not very helpful, and an event which was of such great magnitude in the historical traditions of Israel seems to have passed unnoticed in the annals of Egypt. Although one modern writer has dated the Exodus before the time of the Hyksos (the shepherd kings of Egypt who constituted the 15th and 16th dynasties), it is more common to assign a date some time after the expulsion of the Hyksos. Josephus, a scholar who lived at the beginning of our era, identified the Exodus with the expulsion of the Hyksos. Now, how-

ever, modern scholarship inclines either to the view that the Exodus took place in the middle of the fifteenth century, in the middle of the eighteenth dynasty, or that it took place even later, in the days of Rameses II in the late thirteenth century, at the beginning of the nineteenth dynasty.

The reasons for a late dating of the Exodus are numerous. In the early thirties of this century there was a tendency to date the destruction of Jericho in the middle of the fifteenth century before Christ, and thus the Exodus would have been dated forty years earlier. Now, scholarship is of the opinion that Israel would

have experienced great difficulty in conquering Palestine at this point in history for the eighteenth dynasty was at its height under Thutmose III who had the whole of Palestine in his possession. The book of Joshua reflects the conquest of a large number of isolated peoples rather than a conquest of a land virtually part of the Egyptian empire.

There are other reasons for late dating of the Exodus. It was once thought that the "Habiru" or "Khabiru" mentioned in letters nos. 286/290 of the Amarna letters were the "Hebrews" of the Bible. The word has since been discovered in Cappadocian texts dating from the 20th century B.C., a period long before the Hebrews came into existence as a race. The ascription "Habiru" has since been thought to indicate a class of people rather than a particular race. Some consider that the "Habiru" were mercenaries or low-grade artisans, whilst the general description of the "Habiru" in the Amarna letters indicates a band of outlaws rather than the people of God.

A clue to the date of the Exodus is also given to us in the text of Exodus where we read that the Israelites built store-cities, Pithom and Rameses. The name of the latter city indicates that the Pharaoh who ordered their construction was himself a Rameses. The first king of this name was an insignificant person who led the revolt against the eighteenth dynasty shortly after the high-priest of Egypt acted as regent at the death of the boy-king Tutankhamun: his rule did not last for more than a few years. The most obvious Pharaoh of the Exodus is therefore Rameses II. Other facts fit well into the same picture. Edom, Moab and Ammon are the names of nations met by Israel in their wanderings through the wilderness. In the fifteenth century they would not have occupied the positions mentioned in Exodus. They did not, in fact, settle in those places until the end of the fourteenth century. The Philistines also,

a positive danger in the book of Exodus, had not settled in their position until the twelfth century.

Both Israel and the Philistines are mentioned in Egyptian literature in the stele of Merneptah, dating from the twelfth century and their mention, the Philistines as the invading "Sea Peoples" and Israel in one line, "Israel lies desolate, its seed is no more," indicates that at this time Israel had settled in Palestine.

But problems exist in late dating the Exodus. Merneptah reigned for about twelve years only. If Rameses II really was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, and Israel really entered the land of Palestine when Merneptah wrote his inscription, it is difficult to fit the whole of Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness into the twelve years of Merneptah's reign. The difficulty of trying to reconcile the short reign of Merneptah with the long period of wandering in the wilderness has led some scholars to think that the inscription of Merneptah does not refer to Israel in Palestine after all. We must remember that the Pharaoh of the Oppression,—whoever he was—according to the Bible narrative, had a long reign, while the Pharaoh of the Exodus perished in the Red Sea and therefore had a much shorter reign. These details indicate the Pharaoh of the Oppression to be Rameses II who reigned for over half a century, and the Pharaoh of the Exodus to be Merneptah, writing probably not of Israel in Palestine, but of Israelite settlements in Egypt. The Israelites took advantage of the invasions of the "Sea Peoples" to make good their escape from Egypt.

They made their escape from Egypt in the most remarkable manner. They avoided the "way of the Philistines." While Egypt was groaning under the crushing burden of the "Sea Peoples" Israel was undergoing a period of intensive preparation for becoming the chosen people under the covenant of God.



THE PRODIGAL SON

LORD.

Guide me when I leave you for a far country,
and, when I stray, give me the vision to see your
hands outstretched.

When I come to myself,
give me the strength to realise your love, and, when I return,
give me the humility to come to you just as I am.

Help me to accept the depth of your compassion
and the warmth of your open arms.

Teach me the joy of your forgiveness,
and fill my life with gratitude and praise.
Through Jesus Christ,

AMEN.





"School feeding gives children strength and power, and their minds float about looking for work to do."

"It vanishes hunger"

DURING dinner time I kept on circumambulating in the school yard not knowing what to do. Now I am able to concentrate better since having the school dinner.

The soup is my favourable food. It gives energy. It vanishes hunger. It brings back lost senses.

DEROSES KHABA
(Goedgegun Central School).

I registered for the soup because I was weak for it was impossible for me to have lunch, and I could return to the classroom after lunch being hungry and feeling drowsy and that made me not to observe anything the teacher taught because I kept on yawning while he was teaching, and I sometimes fell asleep.

SAMSON DLAMINI
(Hlatikulu Central School).

*With acknowledgements to Oxfam
and The Save The Children Fund.
Photograph by R. Furniss.*

WORDS BY Swaziland children — from their entries for a Save the Children Fund essay competition on school feeding schemes.

"I am pretty as a lily . . . brave as a lion"

BEFORE the soup arrived in schools I was very thin and not lovely child in looks, because my parents are the poorest people in the world.

After few days I have been started eating this soup I was sweeping in my room. While I was nearest to the mirror I saw a very fresh body and pretty girl, then I was surprised.

But after a few minutes, I remembered that there is nobody in my room. I am just alone. So the girl with fresh body is I.

I was very proud and happy to see that I am now pretty as a lilly, all pimples are moved away, so I am fresh as butter and beautiful as a super rose flower. I am also brave as a lion and feel no pains in my body.

THEMBESELE MARY JELE
(Lobamba Central School).

School feeding has come with a sort of civilisation into my body. When coming to school I walk freely without any pain in the body. Even if I run or jump it does not take care. I usually run when coming to school.

School feeding gives children strength and power, and their minds float about looking for work to do.

MIRIAM DLUDLU
(Goedgegun Central School).

A major assault on school feeding in Swaziland towns is being undertaken by the Save the Children Fund, with the help of grants from Oxfam.

S.C.F. is meeting the costs of a director, office stores accommodation, and food. Oxfam grants, phased over three years, will provide a vehicle, school kitchens, wages for an African field organiser, driver, and cooks for the larger schools.

Over 3,000 children are being fed in 32 schools. The scheme is expanding. Between 20 and 50 per cent of the school enrolment participate.

Parents are asked to contribute where they can afford to do so. Particular importance is attached to this aspect of the scheme.

Many children walk as much as seven miles to school.

THE
ENDEAVOUR
MAGAZINE



SUMMER 1966

Price 2/-



OUR COVER

The Good Shepherd

The shepherds in Britain seldom have the same loving care for their sheep as that associated with them in the Old and New Testament. Sheep in this country are kept largely for the slaughter house but in Palestine they are kept mostly for their wool. They would be in the care of their shepherd for a long time and would know him well and he them. A good shepherd would give his life to save his sheep.

So we see the point of Jesus calling Himself the Good Shepherd. And the word which is used for "good" carries with it the idea of loveliness. The followers of Jesus have to be good in the same way that He was. They must be no careless, irresponsible "hirelings" but each must be his brother's keeper. Each as opportunity arises must be ready to do as Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." And he must feed those lambs not as a good deed done but as an act of love.

EDITORIAL MATTER

Readers are invited to send articles for publication which are designed to assist all aspects of the Christian life (intellectual, moral and practical) in the contemporary world.

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Correspondence about opportunities for practical service should be sent to:

The Endeavour Magazine,
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20 Saunby Close,
Arnold,
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The purpose of "The Endeavour Magazine" is to help:

- By providing a forum for fair discussion of difficulties concerning Christian belief in the modern world—especially those difficulties facing young people.
- By encouraging deeper devotion in our Lord's service.
- By offering suggestions for the practical expression of our faith.
- By introducing articles designed to help in Bible study.
- By bringing to the notice of readers books of value which might otherwise escape their attention.
- By producing literature for spreading the Gospel.

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FOR CHRISTIAN THOUGHT AND ACTION

SUMMER 1966

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Views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily
those of the Editorial Committee, but may be published
because they make a valuable contribution to discussion

EDITORIAL

THE ENDEAVOUR MAGAZINE has now been published for five years. The time is opportune, we feel, to take stock of ourselves and to consider any changes we think desirable.

It is not without regret that we realise we have caused unrest to many sincere hearts, that we have stirred up anger and that many have not been able to understand the reason for our existence. We have tried to search out with honesty our motives, we have wondered whether or not we were achieving any positive results of value and whether we should continue. We have tried to see ourselves as the community sees us, to see the community as "outsiders" see us, and, above all, to see our intentions and activities as God sees them. We recognise that our human judgment is necessarily limited but taking thought for the pleas which we receive either to continue or discontinue we feel that the former is, at present, the right path for us to take. For the most part those who wish our existence to cease have the strengthening they desire in other magazines produced in the community. *Endeavour* goes on for the sake of those who cannot find the consolation, the understanding and the interpretation of principles which they feel they need.

As we have said previously we have no desire to make unhappy those brethren and sisters who wish to hold their faith without further examination, who are fully satisfied with their understanding of the Bible. We only ask that they allow others the freedom to investigate further if they wish, without bitter recrimination, and that it be allowed that we cannot all be satisfied in the same way. Perhaps it is a little inconsistent of brethren and sisters who believe it their duty to disturb the lifelong, cherished beliefs of orthodox church members, to complain that we are disturbing the minds of many in our own body when we suggest alternative interpretation of some Scripture. Surely we should all be ready to consider the investigations and

convictions of one another with unprejudiced minds.

That some, unable to see the need for this will be hurt, that some so sure of themselves will be angry, is sad indeed, but it must not deter us. Jesus was not deterred by the grief nor the anger of His fellow countrymen when He disturbed their cherished ideas. Neither were the prophets before Him, nor the apostles after Him. We have neither the insight nor the authority of Jesus, prophets or apostles. But we still feel it our duty to speak up. Each member of the community must order his walk in the light of his conscience, searching over and over again to ascertain whether he is being ruled by his own desires or by what is right in the sight of God.

We believe that *Endeavour* is fulfilling a useful purpose and, God willing, it must continue. We have, however, decided to change the format of our magazine as from the autumn issue, so enabling us to have more funds for other projects of a more practical nature. Some readers will prefer the new arrangement. We hope all will find it acceptable.

We shall continue to be moved by the simple principle that discussion of problems makes not only for a solution but brings a side effect in keen, well-informed minds whose faith is enriched and strengthened by the exchanges. This presupposes, of course, that the discussion is conducted in a certain way. It presupposes an environment in which a sincere point of view can be respected as such. It presupposes that points put forward will be weighed carefully and only answered, if need be, by reliable information which may lead to a contrary view. Discussion is hurtful only when the desirable environment does not exist, when those taking part become irritated and show it, when they attempt to evade the force of an argument by intimidation and general unpleasantness.

We ask, therefore, that the recipients of this magazine will join in the spirit in which it is sent out. We ask that all discussion within the community be conducted in a spirit befitting to Christ's disciples and with a desire for the betterment of the Christian understanding of all who seek to serve Him.

THE LONELY

By Sheila Harris

LONELINESS is not a modern problem; it is not restricted to any particular age, sex or situation in life. It happens to most people at some time and to some people most of the time. It has therefore been chosen as the introductory theme of our discussion of aspects of society which affect the brotherhood no less than the world and upon which we so often need help and guidance "to speak a word in season to him that is weary," "lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." The discussion is intended to be introductory, not exhaustive, in the hope that others may be stimulated to contribute from their own knowledge and experience further illustrations, aspects and suggestions for helping us all as shepherds of the flock.

Although the lonely, like the poor, have always been with us, yet modern life, in our country at least, has made the problem more acute. With the breakdown of the structure of family life many have lost that basic security which has been the stable foundation of society through the ages. With the greater emphasis which is now placed upon independence young people are sent out into the world to fend for themselves and to find their own place in society in the huge uncharted sea of humanity, while the increase of social benefits and material prosperity makes it possible for people to live independently of their relatives and friends. And so, particularly in our great cities, there are countless individuals, young and old, coping or not coping with living alone. But in spite of this emphasis upon independence there has surely never been an age of greater conformity, of mass production, of machine-made products so that we all think alike, look alike, dress alike—or do we? Are there not some who struggle against the common

stream, who seek to find an individuality out of the common mass? Are they not thought rather queer, rather odd, misfits in an age of technical progress and prosperity? Are they not very much alone?

The ecclesia is a part of society and we have these people in our midst. There are those who have lost their loved ones and so live alone. There are those who are alone in the Truth as their families have no sympathy with, nor interest in, their faith and worship. There are young people who, in their course of training, are living in communities with whom they may have little in common. There is no reason in any household of God for these to be lonely. A little thought, a little imagination can provide fellowship at any level for them. The lonely old sister or brother needs a regular, friendly, sympathetic, cheerful visit, or a ride in the country or an invitation to a meal. Let them especially be remembered at Christmas. Our own cheer is the warmer for being shared with such lonely ones. Those who are lonely in the Truth need above all things the fellowship of Christian homes where in the cosy family circle round the Word of God they can feel themselves truly a part of the family of God. But the best antidote to loneliness is a real sense of belonging, of caring and being cared for. We shall never truly belong where we only receive. Let us see and help others to see where best they can give. The answer to many problems is to allow and encourage a scope for others to contribute according to their gifts, abilities and inclinations. Many fine spiritual talks can be engaged in over the washing up. Let the lonely help and give of their thoughts, of their service, of their time and help them to see how their loneliness can be made into a rich opportunity for fellowship to others.

The physically lonely, the ones who sit by themselves, are a challenge to us all. But mental loneliness is a much deeper problem. There are those who are naturally shy and reserved, who find it difficult to mix—the recluses of society who prefer their books, their study, their quiet unseen corner to all the fellowship in the world. There are those who have an inner urge “to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield,” who are not content with stock arguments and standard proofs but who must seek a deeper satisfaction for themselves, who ask difficult questions and have doubts and problems, and so often are not understood and yet they see truth as something bigger, and deeper and fuller and must go on to find it. To them friendship, real friendship is a deep communion of soul and fellowship of spirit before God and so, unable to accept with satisfaction a more superficial relationship, at times they have an intense longing to escape “to the wilder-

ness.” And there beneath the stars, where the branches of the trees stand out black against the sky, and the wind stirs and the leaves rustle, they find the Friend Who never fails, Who always understands, Who Himself sought the mountains in loneliness to pray. And there they find fellowship, and help and understanding and enlightenment. And they come back different, as all must who have been with God. These are the poets, the dreamers, the mystics, the philosophers, the idealists. Let us be thankful that in our mass-produced society such people exist and let us not frustrate their gifts. Repression has never been a sound principle of education. But wise guidance and sympathetic understanding should help them best to see where best to contribute of their gifts for the upbuilding of the house of God. And in that giving and finding their part they may find other lonely souls with whom to share their thoughts, their aspirations and their dreams.

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HANDS raised in horror. Outrage at the commercialisation of the gospel. These are samples of attitudes I have encountered as an ex-salesman advocating a more efficient presentation of the gospel message in talks and addresses. The approach is not new, for over 2,000 years ago the prophet Isaiah presented a sales talk which would be regarded as a classic by today's top sales executives:

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Is. 55: 1.) Perhaps this was the forerunner of today's free-gift schemes; in any case it shows a better grasp of sound psychological principles than many of the dry-as-dust addresses which pass for preaching today.

There is ample biblical warrant for the application of effective sales techniques to the presentation of the gospel: a planned sales presentation pays — in speaking and preaching as much as in selling a commercial product. A salesman's job is to convince the prospective purchaser that his goods are worth buying; a preacher's job is to convince the prospective convert that what he has to offer is worthwhile.

It is remarkable how few preachers are aware of the end which is in view in the preparation of their talk or address. To be successful as a salesman means keeping the end result in view constantly — to make a sale. For a preacher to be successful, he too must keep in mind his goal — that of winning men and women for Christ.

The successful salesman is one who has a deep understanding of human nature — who knows what makes men tick — and who puts that knowledge to work by considering the motives underlying men's actions and constructing a careful sales-story which will appeal to these motives. Successful preaching demands the same forethought.

What makes a good sales presentation? There are five points or steps on which all successful sales presentations depend:

A FIVE-POINT SALES PLAN FOR SPEAKERS AND PREACHERS

By John T. Wilson

- ★ ATTENTION
- ★ INTEREST
- ★ CONVICTION
- ★ PROPOSAL
- ★ CLOSE.

The labels may appear differently in books on salesmanship, but these five points are the all important essence of modern salesmanship, and have each been the subject of countless chapters in sales training manuals. Chapters are ruled out here, but a few words on each should be enough to stimulate further thought.

The first step in any presentation, be it a sales talk, a public address or a gospel proclamation, is to attract the attention of the listeners. This may appear to be easy — after all in the case of an address or talk they have come to listen. Have they? Perhaps. More likely they are there by habit. They may look interested, but this might well be due to politeness. They may even have come full of good intentions to listen all the way through the address. But people are so easily put off by a poor opening, or lulled into mesmeric trance by a long sentence, cleverly put together and full of classical allusions — but oh, how incredibly dull! A speaker must make an impact in the first sentence he utters — not by making it a structure to delight the grammarians, but by a simple, arresting presentation of a worthwhile thought. This can be achieved by beginning with a startling fact or a visual demonstration of some point which the speaker wishes to impress on the minds of the audience. Even the simple device of the question can be an extremely effective opening. Who could not fail to give a speaker full attention when his address on the brevity of life began: "How many people here have stood at the bedside of a child

and watched him die?" The first sentence is vitally important in securing the attention of the listeners.

Having caught their attention, the speaker must hold the interest of his audience, and fulfil the promise of his arresting beginning. Of course he must try to do this throughout his address, but it is particularly important in this second stage, which is the bridge linking his opening remarks to the main body of his talk. How can this interest be maintained? The secret of this stage is to relate the message to the personal life or desires of the listeners. What is in it for them? What do they gain in terms of positive benefits — mental, physical, social, emotional, spiritual? What do they avoid in terms of negative benefits — boredom, fear, frustration, insecurity? People are interested in their own needs — think of these needs and see how the message of the gospel can meet these needs; then you will be able to present a message relevant to their needs and be assured of a greater degree of interest to what you have to say.

Now to the main body of the address. How does one create conviction? By proof — which consists of facts. But the presentation of facts can make or mar this stage. How much more likely to be believed is the speaker who does not merely say, "Archaeology has proved the Bible to be reliable history," but is able to give specific examples with just sufficient detail to show that his information is reliable.

It is worthwhile when preparing this stage to make a list of all the points for and against your argument. This serves two purposes, first to enable your own case to be carefully scrutinised and the best evidence brought forward, and secondly to enable you to incorporate in the body of the speech answers to anticipated objections. It is at this stage too that the "buying motive" of the audience must be considered carefully and the address constructed to suit the motive as far as it can be shown. Emphasis should not be laid on too many points but on one or two of the most important points. It is better that the audience take away one clear idea than a mass

of hazy and incoherent ones. If the main argument is carried on too long the listeners will become restive. Before the point of boredom must come the proposal (sometimes described as the step of Desire).

The proposal must be a winding up of the theme on two levels. First the creation of desire for the "product"; having described the benefits accruing from acceptance of the proposition, the preacher must begin to persuade his hearers to act on conviction. This is best done by stressing the benefits and asking if the listeners would not like to share in these benefits. The second level of the proposal must be practical. There must be, at this stage, an answer or remedy suggested to the listener for his own situation — there must be a reasonable and practicable plan of action presented to him as the thing he will find most helpful to him. This step merges naturally into the close.

Some salesmen give a first-class story, but cannot understand why they get few orders. In many cases it is because they have failed to ask for the order! This is the purpose of the close: it is to urge action, for this is the point of decision. Confidence at this point is vital. There should be a natural and evident belief on the part of the speaker that his message will be accepted; there is no need to be apologetic, but a great need for boldness in asking firmly and simply for the appropriate action to be taken on the part of the audience. This confidence must be sincere — unless we believe in our product we will lose conviction, enthusiasm and the will to sell our message to others. The tricks and techniques of salesmanship will not sell a poor product, or cover up for a salesman who lacks confidence in his own products.

The five basic steps of the sales presentation can be simplified into the beginning (attention and interest), the middle (conviction), and the end (proposal and close) — the commonsense sequence of audience-interest, main argument and plea-for-action. Of course selling techniques are not unique — they are simply commonsense, but how common is commonsense?

ONE IN THREE

By Anne Clarke

THE hills beyond Melbourne are clothed with trees right up to their summit. They are covered with grey-green eucalyptus which shimmer with a silvery light under the hot summer sun.

Deep in the fern gullies, where the tree ferns rise like graceful palm trees, a sound like a cracking whip betrays the whip-bird's presence, and somewhere a kookaburra lets out a cackling gale of laughter.

It is here, in the quiet hush that falls during the heat of the day, that a visitor is reminded of the primeval glory of the garden of Eden. It is here in these hills that a visitor may find one of the most interesting national reserves, in the state of Victoria. It is called the William Ricketts' Reserve.

Here, in a few acres of bushland, William Ricketts works on his sculptures. They are all statues of his friends, the Australian aborigines amongst whom he lived, after he came from Scotland in his youth. His statues are works of art which are fascinating to study. They are set along shady paths between the tree ferns, and beside tiny trickling streams.

There are children playing with a possum, little innocent faces looking out from behind tree trunks, dingoes, old men, cross-legged and dreaming, and William Ricketts himself with his arms round the children he loves so dearly.

As a visitor walks through the reserve, he may read inscriptions beside the figures. Then he will realise that William Ricketts sees himself as a man fighting a one-man peace crusade. Clearly, everywhere, the message is that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts ch. 17, v. 26). His plea to Europeans is to learn from the shy aboriginal folk that, not in the



multiplying of possessions does true wealth lie, but in peace and unity with God and nature.

One hot afternoon I had the pleasure of taking a visitor from Wales through the reserve and into William Ricketts' studio at the top. That experience gave us some thoughts that I would like to pass on to you.

There was wet clay and half-finished works everywhere, and three kilted gentlemen from Edinburgh were listening with eager animation to the earnest words that issued from the gaunt little artist.

He spoke of the destructiveness of man, who was always fighting with man somewhere. He spoke of those who cared so little for God's creation that they carelessly started bush-fires with a thrown away cigarette butt. He talked sorrowfully of boys who came shooting the wild life in the bush, not caring for the fact that only in this part of the world are there such unique and lovely creatures as koalas, or wombats, or lyre-birds. He told us of his lyre-bird that came to his studio every morning, and of the little yellow robins that fed out of his hand. Most of all he conveyed to us the beauty of the aboriginal way of life that was at one with

nature, and how white people would soon plunge headlong into destruction unless they recaptured the gentle rhythm of life which these primitive people had not lost.

While he was talking, our eyes rested on a clay-daubed text on the wall, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain" (Isaiah ch. 11, v. 9). How close the Kingdom of God seemed to be then on that Australian mountain!

Few of us can express the vision of the Kingdom with the talent of William Ricketts, but all of us can try to become living sculptures of Christianity. Like those serene figures amongst the tree ferns, we can teach all that see us, that man should love his fellow man, and that God will bring all to unity in Christ.

In many ways God is preparing the world for the coming of His Son. Many hearts are yearning for that revelation, however dimly they understand it. It is spoken of increasingly in

the churches now, more hymns are sung about it, and it reveals itself in the attitude of individuals like William Ricketts. Truly God's Holy Spirit is everywhere.

Thou art the stream of love,
The unity divine;
Good men and true are one in thee,
And in thy radiance shine.

The heroes and the saints
Thy messengers became;
And all the lamps that guide the world
Were kindled at thy flame.

The calls that come to us
Upon thy winds are brought;
The light that gleams beyond our dreams
Is something thou hast thought.

P. DEARMER (1857-1936)

CORRESPONDENCE (Continued from page 17)

which, in unity of mind, brethren and sisters could grow in grace and the knowledge of the Truth. (In the ultimate sense, of course, our fellowship is with God, but who is and who is not in that fellowship will not be manifest until "the last day.") But where there is disunity of mind, then, as we have found by sad experience over the last few years, controversy rages, and time and effort are diverted from the prime duties laid upon us.

It could (and no doubt will) be argued that the solution is to broaden our basis of faith to accommodate those who differ. I do not agree with this for three reasons.

1. If we are to obey our Lord, we still have to draw a line somewhere, and we are likely to find ourselves facing the same problem as that with which we started.
2. Broadening our basis of faith is likely to promote exactly

those divisions (i.e. disunity of mind) which were deprecated by the apostle Paul.

3. It seems to me (if not to others) that it is our very insistence upon a high degree of unity of mind that has in the past preserved the Truth in our midst and has enabled us to preach the Gospel with one voice.

On this view, while I strongly disagree with, for example, those doctrines that characterise the Advocate Fellowship, I am not prepared to say that *ipso facto* they are excluded from the Kingdom of God. That is not for me, or any other, to judge. I do believe however, that it is better that those of the Advocate persuasion should constitute a separate fellowship. Thus each fellowship can do its best to preserve the Truth as it sees it, each can get on with the work without the constant distraction of controversy, and each can preach with one voice. It appears

to me that the modern "liberal" attitude to Genesis is no less disruptive than the characteristic Advocate doctrines.

No one, I imagine, wishes to make a brother "a sinner for a word." But certain ideas are so destructive of our understanding of the Truth that it is impossible, as I see it, to work harmoniously with those who hold them. The B.A.S.F. was designed to exclude such from our fellowship. I believe that it is effective in accomplishing its purpose. If, however, anyone believes that he can produce a statement of faith that possesses a greater clarity or is more felicitously expressed, *and is equally effective*, I, for one, have no objection to his making the attempt and inviting the Ecclesias to accept it. I would warn, however, that it would be no easy task to secure acceptance by Ecclesias made suspicious by recent events.

Francis V. Morgan
Birmingham.

THE FOSSILS

By John Weaving

TODAY, on the radio, television and in literature, evolution in one form or another is assumed. Young children come home from school and tell us they are descended from ape-like creatures. Surely, then, the time is long overdue when, as a body, we should acquaint ourselves with the facts, examine the theories and fit ourselves for discussing the subject. This does not mean that we all need to do this. It is preferable that we should, after acquiring a sound knowledge of the Scriptures, specialise in the field which we find appropriate to our bent.

It might seem odd to start by saying that we do not regard this subject as of fundamental importance. If we believe that God is the Creator, the way in which He performed His acts of creation, though interesting, is not a question of first principle.

It is often argued that as the Bible says "In the beginning God created . . ." no further study or discussion is necessary. Though we respect this view it is patently clear that the very brevity of the first chapter of Genesis means that it can be filled out with greater detail appropriate to this age which, in previous ages, would have been of less value. Indeed, the Apostle Paul points out in his letter to the Romans that God is manifested through all His creation, and to obtain the fullest picture of His working we shall profit by spreading our vision as wide as He has given us knowledge and ability. So both astronomy and geology can extend the frontiers of our knowledge of God's workings.

However, an over-riding point is that about half of the children that take the G.C.E. examination today do so in scientific subjects. To them a general theory of evolution is presented as if proved without doubt. They start, therefore, with a background prejudiced against the early chapters of Genesis and thus suspicious about the whole of the Bible. More mature scientists will not begin to listen to our views on Biblical matters unless we are at least prepared to see their point of view. If we have any love for these two large classes of people surely we must do something about it.

Though the author is personally convinced that



Fig. 1

strong arguments can be brought against the various theories of evolution we shall do ourselves no good by denying the *facts* of prehistoric life in our efforts to denounce the *theories* of evolution.

The facts lie in the fossils, the Trilobite shown in Fig. 1 cannot be denied. It is prehistoric but — how old is it? This can only be determined by dating the strata in which the fossil was found.¹

Millions of fossils have been found so that pictures of the history of the earth's crust in the various ages may be built up as a history of life giving us a wonderful insight in the working of God in the past.

The period of abundant fossils, estimated as some 600 million years, geologists divide into three ages or eras. The Cainozoic (Recent life), the Mesozoic (Middle life) and Palaeozoic (Ancient life).² In these articles, after a brief mention of even earlier times, we propose to examine first the Palaeozoic era. We do not intend at this stage to examine or criticise any theories of evolution but only weigh up the evidence relating to the conditions of the earth at each particular age.

Formation of Fossils

Fossils are formed in many ways. The modern methods of preservation of foodstuffs by refrigera-

tion and tinning have been occurring in nature over millions of years, preserving the remains of animals and plants so that many of their fine details may be observed today. The former method, refrigeration, is illustrated by the frozen muds of Northern Siberia, in which carcasses of the large elephant, the mammoth and woolly rhinoceros have been completely preserved including the last meal taken in their stomachs. Illustrating the "tinning" method of preservation, we have, in nature, bees and insects preserved in amber and resinous substances which have oozed from the barks of trees. Common peat is also a reasonable preservative sealing up the dead animal or plant from the oxidising action of the air and partially from the action of bacteria. Thus many skeletons of animals have been preserved, though the flesh has disappeared. Similarly in the sea, sand and mud have protected the skeletons and shells of marine life.

The above types of fossils are preserved to a greater or lesser extent in their original live form, but the commonest fossils are in fact "turned to stone." This can happen in more than one way. Water containing a variety of minerals may percolate through an animal entombed in sand or limestone and gradually replace or petrify the original structure of the animal. In other cases grains of calcium carbonate may form round the animal which subsequently decays and is dissolved away by percolating water leaving a cavity in the sandstone. This forms a mould for mineral material to fill up. Though these casts are not the actual animals, they are almost perfect replicas of the external shape and sometimes of the internal structure also.

However fossils are not readily formed. In order to be fossilised, an animal must be buried at the time of death or very shortly thereafter; otherwise the body is likely to be eaten by scavengers or disintegrated by bacteria. Thus fossils formed on land are relatively rare, for even when land animals are covered by wind-blown earth or sand rapidly enough to escape destruction by scavengers or bacterial decay, the potential fossils are soon removed by erosion. Only under exceptional conditions, such as prevail when an eruption traps animals under heavy layers of volcanic ash, or dripping resin accumulates over long periods, or land animals are caught in the floods and are carried out to sea, do we get fossils good enough to contribute to our sketchy picture of ancient terrestrial life. Fossils of marine invertebrates (animals without backbones), however, are very abundant, for rapid burial is easily accomplished in shallow sea water.

The Fossil Record

The British Museum (Natural History) publishes an excellent brief account of the fossil record in the various strata of the earth's crust. In this article we propose to summarise the main contents of this small book.

A reconstruction of each period is illustrated and some of the evidence on which the reconstruction is based is presented. The method usually adopted is to illustrate each period by a few typical plants or animals; but to appreciate the full evidence it is necessary to visit the Palaeontological department of the British Museum (Natural History) or similar museums abroad and the reader may then weigh up for himself more fully the evidence that is presented. As the fossil record of the animal life consists largely of skeletons some conjecture has to be made in presenting the typical appearance of such animals.

Biological Classification

To appreciate the significance of the plants and animals of the various ages it is helpful to know a little of their general structure on which biologists and palaeontologists base their classification. For instance, a layman seeing a shark and a porpoise would probably say they are both fish. But, structurally, a porpoise is, in fact, more like a man. The shark has gills, cold blood and scales, while the porpoise has lungs, warm blood, hair and suckles its young, and thus belongs to the class of animals called *mammals*.

In the main, for the Palaeozoic era, we need only consider the larger divisions into which biologists divide the animals. These main divisions are called "phyla"³ (singular, phylum) and are differentiated by the radically different plans of organisation. The following descriptions are based on contemporary animals (but to avoid duplication illustrations are taken from fossils). We will consider first the invertebrate animals. Other animals and plants will be observed as they occur in the various ages. The simplest phylum is the Protozoa.

(1) Protozoa

This phylum consists of microscopic single-celled animals and are represented today, for instance, by the *Amœba* found in abundance in ponds.

(2) Sponges

There are a variety of sponge-like animals, of which the common bath sponge is one, characterised by the fact that it captures its food through microscopic pores.⁴

(3) Jellyfishes, Corals, Sea Anemones (Coelenterates) ⁵

The animals that belong to this phylum have a main cavity in the body for digestive purposes. It is fed by a mouth.

(4) Worms

There are actually more than one phylum of worms, e.g., flatworms, roundworms, arrow-worms and segmented worms, but for our purpose there is no need to go into the somewhat complicated differentiation. The earthworm differs from other worms in its segmented structure as seen in the

common earthworm and marine animal Nereis. In Nereis, all segments or rings, except the first and last, are very similar. The earthworm is internally considerably different, containing a circulating blood system with five hearts and a system of blood vessels.

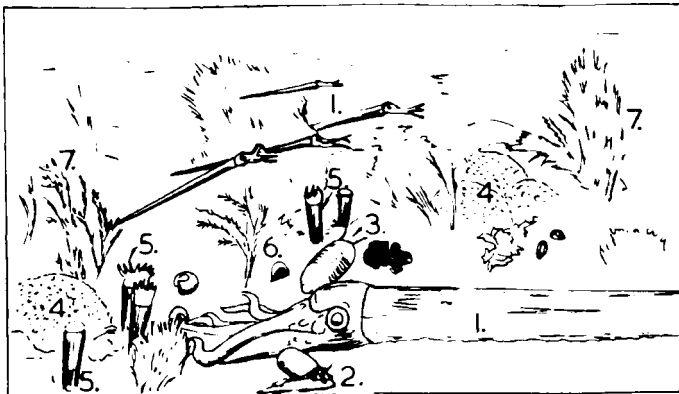
(5) Bryozoa

The name of this phylum means "moss animals" because many, but not all, of the group are in colonies and are scrub-like, and grow from crevices of rocks. Each individual however has a protective hard case, calcareous (chalk-like) or horny, into which it can withdraw completely.



Fig. 2

Ordovician Sea Life Reconstruction



- (1) Cephalopod
- (2) Snail
- (3) Trilobite
- (4) Corals
- (5) Sea Cucumbers
- (6) Brachiopods
- (7) Sea Weed

Key to Fig. 2

(Photograph by courtesy of the Chicago Natural History Museum)

(6) Brachiopoda

These have a superficial appearance (Fig. 2) similar to some common hinged double seaside shells, e.g., cockles and mussels, but are asymmetrical and have a top and bottom rather than two similar sides. There are about two hundred living species but in the Palaeozoic period we are considering first there were at least three thousand. The so-called lamp shells come in this class.

(7) Molluscs

In this very large phylum, we have animals differing very much in external appearance such as snails, slugs, cockles, mussels, squids, and octopuses; but in spite of this, all molluscs share a fundamentally similar body plan. They have a soft, unsegmented body, typically with an anterior head, and a large visceral mass (i.e., the mass containing most of the internal organs) supported on a fleshy muscular foot. The body is largely surrounded by a thin fleshy layer (the mantle), which secretes a shell of various types in most members of the phylum. In clams and oysters the shell consists of two hinged valves, while in snails it usually consists of a single coiled shell. The chitons are protected by a series of eight movable plates, while in cuttlefish and squids the shell is completely internal.

(8) Arthropods (Jointed feet)

This enormous phylum, of some three-quarter million species (out of a total of about a million of all species of animals) is characterised by the possession of jointed limbs providing their means of locomotion. First the crustaceans which include lobsters, crabs, shrimps and barnacles: next the centipedes and spiders and, by far the largest class, the insects. The insects are characterised by being made up of three distinctive parts, the head, the thorax and abdomen. The thorax has three segments each with a pair of legs and the second and third with a pair of wings also. A grasshopper is a typical example; also in this class are flies, beetles, and butterflies.

(9) Echinoderms (Spiny skinned)

This phylum is entirely marine and includes the starfish,⁶ sea urchins,⁷ sea cucumbers,⁸ and sea lilies.⁹ The name starfish is a misnomer and the animal has no resemblance to a fish. Its means of locomotion is through a kind of hydraulic pressure mechanism consisting of tubes or canals, which extends and contracts the arms, the arms being furnished with innumerable suckers. This is peculiar to echinoderms. They also have a type of skeleton made up of plates joined by connective tissues and muscle and embedded in the flesh, as distinct from the external skeletons of the crabs, etc.

Pre-cambrian Era

Duration

From the origin of the earth to the beginning of the Cambrian Era, which started six hundred million years ago approximately.

Early Life

The earliest abundance of recognisable fossils occurred in what is known as the Cambrian Era, but for completeness we propose to look briefly at the pre-Cambrian age first. The rocks of this pre-Cambrian age contain no fossils that can be recognised as such without shadow of doubt, though a few traces of animal life have survived in the least altered pre-Cambrian strata, such as traces of the imprints of jelly-fish, horny brachiopods and worms. Very little can be deduced from these traces but the frequent presence of carbon in the form of graphite and limestone gives evidence of the probability of algae (pond scum, seaweeds) or some analogous form of life.

Cambrian Period

Duration

100,000,000 years (from 600 to 500 million years ago).

Geographical Conditions

Most of Europe and Asia was covered with shallow seas. Africa and South America were probably joined together in one large land mass referred to as Gondwanaland.

Plant Life

The only kinds of plants at present known to have existed in the Cambrian period were seaweeds. Easily decayed, they were poor subjects for preservation as fossils, but some of them had developed a calcareous and coral-like framework.

Animal Life

From this period clearly recognisable fossils in large numbers and varieties have come to light. All these are varieties of sea invertebrates, animals not possessing a backbone. Here there are seaweed, sponges, sea cucumbers, worms, brachiopods, trilobites, and crustaceans. The organisation of most of these animals has been described above. The extinct trilobite (Fig. 1) was the dominant and most highly organised animal of the time. The average specimen was about 1 in. long, but there were some giants 18 in. long, and some no bigger than the head of a large pin. Many were scavengers crawling in the mud of the sea floor but some were swimmers. These belong to the phylum arthropods. The unicellular protozoa phylum is

represented by Radiolaria. We have, in fact, in this era, small and simple representatives of all the major phyla of marine invertebrates.

Ordovician Period

Duration

60,000,000 years (from 500 to 440 million years ago).

Geographical Conditions

Towards the end of Cambrian times the seas began to retreat, and areas of the sea-floor became dry land. The Ordovician period began with a new spreading of the seas enveloping large tracts of land. In some regions, such as Europe, this break in the continuity is recognisable in the strata and serves to separate the two periods.

Plant Life

All known Ordovician plant remains represent various kinds of seaweeds (green, red and other algae). Those which encased their cells in lime are often well preserved.

Animal Life

Fossil animals in Ordovician rocks show that marine life was varied and relatively abundant, and that each environment had its characteristic fauna. The commonest animals were brachiopods (Fig. 2), trilobites, corals, clams, snails and cephalopods.¹⁰ The latter were rare in Cambrian times. In addition, Echinoderms, such as sea urchins and starfish appeared in this period.

During this period the first evidence of vertebrate animals is found, consisting of fragments of the bony armour of fish-like creatures, rather more like cartilage than actual bone.

Silurian Period

Duration

40,000,000 years (from 440 to 400 million years ago).

Geographical Conditions

During Silurian times the long submarine troughs or depressions in the sea-floor which began to form in the Cambrian continued to deepen and, at the same time, to fill up with sands and muds. Because deposition kept pace with subsidence the water never became more than moderately deep in these geosynclines—as such marine depressions are called. In some regions there was a periodic alternation of level of land and sea; new land areas were slowly emerging and new mountain ranges were beginning to form. There was less volcanic activity than in Ordovician times. The climate appears to have been warm and equable over the greater part of the world, but there are indications of desert conditions locally.

Life in the Seas

Conditions in some of the shallow seas favoured the prolific growth in lime-secreting organisms, such as algae, corals and brachiopods. Where these grew in great profusion they formed reefs or mounds on the sea-floor. The main reef-builders in the Silurian seas had massive skeletons capable of withstanding buffeting in rough water. In the crannies, and in the deeper water around the reefs, were more delicately built creatures, including sea lilies, cephalopods, clams and snails, together with trilobites and brachiopods. These last were probably never more abundant than in this period. Silurian reefs were small compared with modern atolls, but large numbers were dotted about over wide areas of the sea-floor. Their remains have been found in the Wenlock Limestone of Shropshire and Worcestershire, and in the widespread Niagara formation of the U.S.A.

Marine and Land Plants

Seaweeds with limy skeletons (either green or red algae) were abundant in the shallow seas and assisted in the formation of limestones and reefs. By the end of the Silurian period a big advance had taken place in plant form and structure. The earliest known land plants which have been found occur in the Upper Silurian of Australia.

Vertebrates

One of the most primitive known fossil vertebrates, *Jamoytius*, was found in estuarine shales of late Silurian age in Lanarkshire. It is similar in many respects to the living *Amphioxus* or lancelet.

Devonian Period

Duration

50,000,000 years (from 400 to 350 million years ago).

Geographical Conditions

At the close of the Silurian period, earth-movements, accompanied locally by volcanic activity, caused gradual elevation of mountain ranges and of land areas where formerly there had been sea. This mountain building continued during the whole of the Devonian period. The weathering and wearing down of the newly formed mountains produced huge quantities of pebbles, sand and mud, which were deposited in inland basins and in vast coastal deltas. These freshwater and deltaic deposits formed the "Old Red Sandstone" of north-west Europe, notably developed in Scotland and in the Welsh borderland. Elsewhere, for example in Devon and Cornwall, sediment from the land was deposited in the sea as dark muds, later consolidated into shales, or locally compressed into

slates. Away from the muddy deltas, coral reefs flourished in clear shallow water, and deposits of lime accumulated. The climate in north-west Europe, and over a large part of North America, appears to have been warm and semi-arid, with heavy seasonal rainfall.

Land Plants

Rocks of this period yield evidence that the land was partly clothed in vegetation. Most of the early Devonian land plants, like those of the preceding period, were either smooth (*Hostimella*), or spiny (*Palophyton*), or had spine-like "leaves" (*Drepanophycus*). Some of the important characteristics of living land plants were present in plants of this period. Thus the stems had well-defined sap tubes and a continuous transparent cuticle with minute breathing pores. By late Devonian times the character of the flora had undergone a marked change, and included various kinds of ferns, horsetails and seed-ferns (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3

Land Invertebrates

This period is notable for the first appearance of fossil land animals, invertebrates of the air-breathing type. These included millipedes, mites, spiders, crustaceans resembling wood-lice, and wingless insects. Remains of the last two occur in the Rhynie chert, also the earliest known freshwater mussels have been found in Upper Devonian rocks in Ireland and in New York State.

Vertebrates

A very remarkable feature of the Devonian period was the appearance and spread of the back-boned animals. It is often called the "Age of Fishes." The heavily armoured ostracoderms, jawless but fishlike (e.g., *Cephalaspis* and *Pteraspis*), abounded in some rivers and estuaries, and by the middle of the period true fishes of many kinds had appeared. Some, for example, *Cocosteus* and *Bothriolepis* had bodies covered with bony plate. Others such as *Osteolepis*, were coated with scales. Some of the scaly fishes had lungs and paired limb-like fins and so were able to crawl back into the water when they became stranded on the banks of tidal rivers or estuaries. Many groups of fishes invaded the open sea during Devonian times, including sharks which became increasingly abundant.

Marine Invertebrates

Corals flourished on the floors of the clear, shallow parts of the sea, in some places building reefs. On some sandy seabeds there were remarkable sponges with lacy skeletons of silica (so called "grass sponges" comparable with the Venus' Flower Basket sponge of the present day). Brachiopods were still the most common invertebrates in the sea, and were very diverse in form. Trilobites, snails and cephalopods continued to flourish. The early ammonoids¹¹ with closely coiled shells and marginally crimped internal partitions were an important new element in the marine fauna. Among ecinoderms sea lilies and starfishes were abundant.

1 Views that the majority of the fossils were deposited by the flood, put forward in the 18th century, when methods of dating of strata were almost unknown, were rejected when the evidence showed the rocks in which the fossils were found, were incomparably older. It is surprising therefore to find the idea resurrected in *The Genesis Flood* by Morris and Whitcombe, 1961. The idea however is unacceptable, even to the geologist who wrote the foreword to this book.

2 *Endeavour*, Summer 1964, page 14, Table 1.

3 These are further sub-divided into classes, orders, families, and species.

4 Because of the millions of pores this phylum is technically called porifera, i.e., pore-bearers.

5 Coelenterate—Gk.—Hollow-Gut.

6 Asteroids.

7 Echinoids.

8 Holothuroids.

9 Crinoids.

10 "Feet from head." See foreground, Fig. 2.

11 Coiled cephalopods.

LETTERS

INSPIRATION

Brother Harry Whittaker asks. "Is it possible for the ideas of Holy Scriptures to be inspired by God without the words which express those ideas being inspired also?"

Where does one begin to answer such a question? The whole tenor of Brother Harry's letter, unless I misunderstand him, corresponds with Dr Thomas's claim that Scripture was "dictated" by the Holy Spirit. However strongly such a statement may appeal to our faith it will not, I think, withstand reasonable examination.

That when the prophets declared "The word of the Lord came unto me," and "Thus saith the Lord" they were delivering a message which they had been commanded to proclaim, we would all accept. At what stage the writer takes up and enlarges on the divine theme is less easy to determine.

But, consideration of individual style and literary quality apart, surely it is too much to claim that when the Psalmists praise God, not only the impulse, but the very words, are of divine origin. Must we believe that in the great prayers of the Bible we are listening not to the outpourings of men and women whose hearts were attuned to God, but to copy-book examples of how we should pray?

Was it not human historians, moved to write indeed by the Spirit of God, who tell us that "the acts of Rehoboam . . . are they not written in the book of Shemaiah?" Was Luke misled when, claiming to be an eye witness, he wrote "it

seemed good to me also . . . to write unto thee in order"? Was Paul setting down words put into his mind when he told the Corinthians "I know not whether I baptised any other"? When we hear him agonizing, pleading, exhorting, warning in the most personal phrases in the epistles are we not listening to the great apostle himself?

If the answers are as Brother Harry appears to think what do we know of those great men except that they were privileged to be the channels through which the Holy Spirit spoke? That they were thus privileged we know, but surely they enjoyed the additional honour of being servants trusted by God to give human voice to the thoughts from on high.

Is this an ignoble whittling down of the faith once and for all committed to the saints, or is it a plain statement of fact which accords with a proper interpretation of Scripture?

A mere speculative argument, but one which to my mind has some force, is that if it be held that the very words of Scripture were divinely inspired would it not be reasonable to expect that those words would be divinely preserved? That the ideas of Scripture have been thus safeguarded we know; equally we know that in not a few cases the precise words have not.

Again, to insist on verbal inspiration is, by implication, to invest words with a precision and constancy of meaning they simply do not possess.

When Brother Harry reads of Peter's vision of the great sheet

let down, does he think that the description was verbally inspired but that Peter's answer was dictated?

We Christadelphians are not always so consistent as we might be. In a recent book Brother Harry comments adversely on a believer in verbal inspiration who lost his faith on perceiving that in one gospel Christ was described as being arrayed in a crimson cloak, and in another a purple one.

I quote from memory — a dangerous practice — Brother Harry's comments. "Can we be sure that colours were clearly differentiated in the ancient world? . . . Might not the crimson cloak be lined with purple? . . . Could not the colour depend on the viewpoint?" Excellent arguments if we are dealing with honest human witnesses, but if we are dealing with inspired words how much force have they?

The slight variations between almost all parallel accounts in Scripture attest their independence and veracity. But only if we consider them to be the honest records of men divinely inspired to set down their own memories. Once we insist on a direct verbal inspiration they present difficulties which to minds unable to accept such an argument — if I may be permitted to be ironical — as that "when one account says it was blue and the other yellow, they are both correct because in fact it was green" are almost insuperable.

One last point. If the words were directly inspired how is it that the New Testament writers

were willing to quote not directly from the Hebrew original but from a far from perfect translation, and ought not we to make every effort to become familiar with the Hebrew and Greek originals?

Roger Attwell
London.

Brother Harry Whittaker's reply to Brother Gordon Hunnings in the last issue specifically asks for some one to explain a point concerning inspiration, and since I have contributed three articles on this subject recently, perhaps I may take him up. With one exception, to which I shall return, Brother Harry's letter shows an admirable spirit and merits careful consideration. I hope he will not be offended if I say his points on inspiration are difficult to grasp for lack of definition. There are, as Brother Gordon explained, two principle ways of understanding the plenary inspiration of the Bible. The one, to quote Dean Burgon, is that "every verse, every syllable of it" is "the direct utterance of the Most High." The other, to quote Brother Gordon, sees "the interplay between the divine challenge and the human response" in which the spirit of God blends with the human mind and character and so God reveals Himself through men. I do not say that no other opinion can exist, but basically it is a choice between these two. Brother Harry writes, "Is it possible for the ideas of Holy Scriptures to be inspired by God without the words which express those ideas being inspired also?" If by asking this question he means that either of the two views conforms to our basic beliefs, then I heartily agree. And if he means that no one should be obliged to probe further into this matter than to acknowledge the divine authority of the Bible, to this I agree equally. But if he implies that no one should probe further, then I object. Any of our friends who are being urged to read the Bible may easily ask how we can claim that the Bible is the Word of God, when the differing styles of the human authors are plain even in translation. To answer such questions the problem of in-

spiration has to be faced seriously. Apparently Brother Harry does not know that what his question asserts has already been stated in *Endeavour*, "since the Bible is inspired, the words which make it up are also inspired" (Winter, 1965, page 7). On my part also — and I know I am not alone — there is no desire to debar from fellowship those who subscribe to Dean Burgon's view, however unfortunate I consider it.

But some of those who subscribe to it do very seriously wish to exclude those who hold the second view. We hope Brother Harry will use his influence with such people.

Another point made by Brother Harry is that not one of those who adhere to extreme views of inspiration professes to know how it operated. Now it is a fact that there are those of our number who agree with Dean Burgon, whether they know it or not. One Brother, who is still living, once quoted the Dean's very words in my hearing with approval, and there are others who insist on prefixing to a quotation from e.g. Paul's Letter to the Romans, "God says: . . ." To hold this view and to deny knowing how inspiration operated is like saying that one does not know how a car works, though the energy comes from petrol exploding in a cylinder. If God gave every Hebrew and Greek word directly, then this is how inspiration worked, whether angels whispered the words into men's ears or the Spirit of God manipulated their fingers to write them. With the other view it is quite different: the Holy Spirit operated in some unknown way on men so that their whole sensitivity became attuned to the Divine, and in this condition they also received in certain cases particular items of knowledge from the Divine. The lack of certainty as to how is illustrated in that no clear distinction can be made in the Bible between that which is revealed, and that which is inspired but not revealed.

If Brother Harry should reply that the view of Dean Burgon is an extreme to which he cannot give his personal approval, then he would do well to make this clear,

and to avoid such ambiguous terms as "verbal inspiration," which mean quite different things to different people.

We notice with pleasure that division (if this is what is meant by "block disfellowship") is not approved of, but when Brother Harry goes on to denounce "a specious latitudinarianism which would encourage a man to change his *fundamental* beliefs whilst retaining the old forms which expressed them" we must ask to whom he refers. Could it be that he means the promoters of the *Endeavour Magazine*? If so, we fail to understand the charges. And would it not have been more acceptable to make any charge against us plainly and openly so that it can be equally plainly and openly replied to?

W. G. Lambert
Birmingham.

INSPIRATION — A REJOINDER

A series of articles on "Inspiration" by Brother Edward Whittaker began in *The Testimony* for May 1966, and they are intended as a reply to those of mine on the same subject in *Endeavour* (Summer, Autumn and Winter 1965). If the first one had made a clear statement of what we are both discussing, then the position could have been left for the judgment of readers. But in fact he sets out to put me right, though not admitting that our differences are only on details, while on general principles I cannot find that we differ. Thus I hasten to publish this note to make this clear. His first reply deals with my first article, in which I made one point only, that in the Bible we must distinguish between that which is revealed by God to man, and that which is inspired, though not revealed. In the latter class I put the historical books of the Old Testament such as Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, since their authors did not receive their historical knowledge by special revelation from God. Brother Edward accepts this principle in general

but engages in criticism of small points, a criticism often niggling and not touching the general principles on which (despite his silence) we agree.

The grounds for this criticism are not hard to discern. When confronted with the fact that parts of the Bible are compiled, not revealed, he is afraid; afraid that the authority of Scripture is being undermined. To me this presents no problem. Scripture, where compiled, was compiled by holy men working under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and to me this operation of the power of God guarantees the trustworthiness of Scripture. I need no further assurance. But Brother Edward is not satisfied with this. He does not see how the authority of Scripture can be maintained if, say, some uninspired work was laid under contribution in the Books of Kings. Therefore, he argues, in the compilation of Scripture only inspired works written by prophets were used. The first thing to be observed is that this is not a traditional Christadelphian doctrine. It is not contained, for example, in the chapter on "Inspiration" in John Carter's *Oracles of God*. Furthermore, no evidence is offered in support of this new teaching. We are told that "there is good evidence," but significantly none is given. It is true that Josephus makes some such statement, but his is an uninspired testimony long after the event, and there is nothing at all in Scripture to prove this point. Indeed, it is limiting the power of God to assume that an inspired book could only be compiled from inspired histories. This is telling God how He should have written His Bible. And what are we to say about Paul's quotation from the Greek comic poet Menander in I Corinthians 15: 33, "Evil communications corrupt good manners"? Does this mean that Menander—and Aratus and Epimenides, other Greek poets quoted by Paul—are inspired prophets? If we admit that Paul in a wholly inspired letter can quote a Greek poet, what was to prevent a Hebrew writer guided by the Spirit from using an uninspired history in the compilation of his inspired work?

Brother Edward asserts that it cannot be proved that any uninspired source was used in the compilation of the Old Testament. No. Nor can it be proved that all the sources were inspired. This is entirely in the realm of speculation. In the same vein, Brother Edward writes, "What if one single fact that God required to be recorded 'for our admonition' could not be derived from contemporary sources?" Precisely, "What if?" I have no objection in principle to the idea that God may have revealed historical facts to inspired men, but until some cases can be proved, this too is pure speculation. The suggestions about the work of New Testament prophets are as interesting as they are devoid of substantiation, and the enterprise in Higher Criticism (making Luke's prologue to his Gospel only intelligible as an epilogue) shows scant respect for Luke's competence as a writer inspired by God, and is something for which no evidence can be advanced. The natural and obvious way of taking the section, as accepted by virtually everybody from the earliest times to the present day, has to be got rid of if one will not admit the possibility that with God's help even uninspired sources can be used in the compilation of inspired history.

The disagreement with what I wrote on the Psalms is an unfortunate example of many words to no purpose. We are in fact both agreed that the Psalms are inspired, but are not spoken in God's name. I expressed this by saying, "They are not by God but to God. Yet they are inspired writings." Brother Edward quoted the first of these two sentences, omitted the second, and then in due course corrected the first in these words, "the words of the psalm were both 'by God and to God'." I still prefer my formulation as clearer, and more appropriate to what Brother Thomas used to call "the simplicity of the Truth." To say that Psalms are both "by God and to God" comes dangerously close to what Brother Thomas called "confusion worse confounded."

I would, with respect, suggest to Brother Edward that in his

following articles he should (i) make clear where we agree on fundamental principles, though we differ on interpretations of them, and (ii) that he should refrain from using such strong language when, as I have shown, so much of what he is saying is entirely in the realm of speculation.

W. G. Lambert

FELLOWSHIP

My attention has been drawn to the Editorial in the Spring 1966 issue of *The Endeavour Magazine*. You have quoted me quite fairly, but as I do not altogether subscribe to your thesis, may I please make my own attitude clear?

I agree, of course, that it does not necessarily follow that anyone who differs from us on some detail of the B.A.S.F. is outside the pale of God's salvation. I agree that "withdrawal" is a drastic step not lightly to be undertaken. And I agree that it is by no means an easy task to decide exactly where the line should be drawn when it comes to a question of fellowship (and this applies no less to conduct than to doctrine).

Having said that, however, we must recognise that the law of Christ does demand that we should "withdraw" in certain circumstances. Unless, therefore, we would disobey our Lord, we must make the attempt and draw the line somewhere. I would maintain that the B.A.S.F. is a soundly based attempt to draw this line, that it has served us well, and that it should not lightly be abandoned. Indeed, I do not see how it can be abandoned without producing chaos.

From that one is led to consider why the Lord should have placed us in this position, i.e., a position where any endeavour to obey his command must inevitably result in a situation where, theoretically at least, we could be excluding from our fellowship some who may be in the Kingdom of God. As a tentative solution to this problem, I would suggest that the Lord's aim was to draw together in a "fellowship" those of like faith, and so provide a climate in

(Continued on page 8)

COUNT HIM NOT AS AN ENEMY

With regret we have withdrawn from Brother X, who holds views inconsistent with the Statement of Faith.

We have sorrowfully accepted the resignation of Sister Y, who declares that she no longer subscribes to all items in the Statement of Faith.

THESE are not actual extracts from *The Christadelphian*, but are typical of many which occur from time to time, and will no doubt occur again.

WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal of fellowship is rightly regarded as serious, and not to be lightly applied. We are glad that, in the spirit of increasing tolerance in the religious world generally, it is less common than it was a generation or two ago. Brethren and sisters are not so often disfellowshipped for "disorderly walk," "long absence" or "marriage out of the truth"; this article, however, is not concerned with these, but with the case of Brother X or Sister Y who does not subscribe to all items in the Statement of Faith.

THE STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith was drawn up long years past by brethren of unimpeachable integrity, after much prayerful thought and deliberation. It has been critically reviewed at times, and must be respected. It must also be realised that for any religious community some creed or statement is necessary to define the terms of that community's convictions. But, however worthy the document, however carefully worded, and however near the ultimate truth, no one claims it to be divinely inspired. He would be a bold man who asserts that it contains "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." For surely we must en-

dorse the words of Pastor Robinson to the Pilgrim Fathers 350 years ago:

The Lord hath yet more light and truth
To break forth from His word.

This is especially true in these latter days of new discoveries and scholarship.

DOUBTS AND DIFFICULTIES

Happy is the man or woman who accepts the elaborate detail of the Statement of Faith with never a doubt, either by thorough conviction of its absolute truth, or through thinking, albeit subconsciously, that good old Christadelphians have come to these conclusions, have proved them implicitly, and who is he or she to question them? Not so happy the one who, with perhaps a naturally more enquiring mind, doubts and ponders, and in his heart cannot more than assent to one or more of the items. And assent is not belief.

For obvious reasons, the peace-loving brother might keep his doubts strictly to himself. This is a pity, for airing one's doubts and discussing them with others will often clear the issue and solve one's difficulties. When I confessed to my dear old father many years ago that I had doubts, his wise reply was, "The man who never doubts never thinks." Yet all too often in the brotherhood the questioning mind is not encouraged to go further, and the brother keeps his doubts to himself. If he does raise them with others, or asks questions at the Bible Class, he may receive evasive answers until, if he is honest with himself, he has regretfully to offer his resignation—if indeed he is not actually requested to do so.

INTO THE WILDERNESS

So Brother X goes out into the spiritual wilderness. What then is his position? It could

be argued that the apostle Paul said of one who might "obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thess. 3: 14-15). But this advice concerns those cited in v. 11: "some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies." Brother X has not been guilty of such misdemeanour, but of failure to agree entirely with one or two items of the Statement of Faith. In any case it might be noted that he should still be given "friendly advice, as one of the family" (N.E.B.).

A brother who went out into the wilderness because he could not entirely accept the Statement of Faith remarked ruefully that "it is very cold outside," and at the risk of being accused of special pleading for the wanderer I want to describe such a position as best I can. Do the ninety and nine contentedly grazing sheep "in the shelter of the fold" give enough thought to the one who is "in the night so dark and cold," and that not because of wilfulness but for the sake of conscience? The censorious may say "It's his fault; he went of his own accord." But did he? And if he did, is he wrong to be honest with himself?

Usually the ninety and nine, or some of them, do try to bring back the one who is thought to have strayed. But there are ways of doing so which are intensely irritating to the wanderer and may do more harm than good. For instance, it is useless to start trying to prove by familiar texts that his ideas are wrong; the conscientious, studious, truth-seeking brother has been through all this before. Some may ignore him, some patronise him, and some—all honour to them—realise that there may be something in what Brother X now affirms; perhaps there is more light and truth to break through from God's word, and perhaps Brother X is on the trail of it. Therefore there is no other course than to seek out Brother X and get down to the problem humbly with him.

And what of Brother X himself? He has not departed from the "Truth" lightheartedly,

especially if he has been brought up in the Christadelphian faith, still more if he has attained full maturity and is maybe an exhorting, lecturing and arranging brother. If he is discouraged from discussing his doubts, and of talking about his ideas, he has necessarily turned in upon himself in a welter of arguments. He cannot be blamed for this. Only those who have in such circumstances left the fold know the endless deliberations, the sleepless nights, the intrusion of the problem into all other activities, the intense loneliness of soul as it grapples with it. Such struggles have even ended in nervous breakdown.

Another real and intensely difficult factor is the possible effect upon friends and admirers of Brother X or Sister Y. If Brother X has been a leading figure in the brotherhood, or even only in the ecclesia, his "defection" is bound to have repercussions upon his associates. He has no desire to influence anyone else, or to force his revised ideas. But his action is bound to upset some of his friends, and he has no desire to draw them away with him. This is a delicate and extremely active problem with him, probably more worrying than his own position.

LONELINESS

When after the painful struggle Brother X ceases to be a member of the brotherhood, what is he to do? Having spent all his life in the fold, he has made few friendships outside. He has now to face a serious rift with his old, beloved and trusted friends, perhaps even with his family. His life suddenly becomes blank and meaningless. He is not debarred from attending the meeting, but he is not allowed to break bread and thus experiences the humiliation of having the emblems passed by him. He might for old times' sake go to an evening meeting or to a fraternal. One of the most precious things about the Christadelphian body is the sense of fellowship, the strong bond which binds members of all ecclesias, so that everywhere there is someone who knows someone. If Brother X has the courage to attend such a meeting he has almost inevitably the feeling of being an outsider; he feels self-conscious and faintly unwelcome.

Because he has all his life worshipped on a Sunday morning, and broken bread at the Lord's table, he feels a deep need to do so still. Where can he go? The Church of England will not accept him unless he has been confirmed, and the service is strange to him; most non-conformist churches will accept him without question, as their table is open to all who "love the Lord"; even there the service is strange to him, though much more similar to that which he has been used to. He knows no one, the hymns are unfamiliar; the sermon may be prosaic and uninspiring and he cannot discuss it with anyone. The loneliness bites into him like a serpent's tooth. If he feels that after all he cannot face the ordeal he may go nowhere to worship, and then is liable to sink into that most dangerous of all states, apathy. Then if Brother X has, as indicated, been an active member of an ecclesia, he feels that his talents are wasted; he does not know where to use them and sorely misses his old interests and activities.

This is a dreary picture, but all too near the truth for many like Brother X and Sister Y, who have "departed from the faith" not through apathy or disinterestedness, but for conscience sake. They still hold to the rudiments of the faith—God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Second Coming, the sacrifice of Christ and baptism, and the all-important key to the gospel: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The picture is given to emphasise that, whether we approve of Brother X or not, he has not withdrawn fellowship without thinking for himself, without a strong conviction that his conscience must be obeyed, and no one goes into the wilderness without that conviction.

To change the metaphor, Brother X leaves the known way for a dark, oppressive, frightening tunnel, full of stumbling blocks, and desperately

lonely. The struggle through the tunnel may almost break his spirit and his heart. Happily, in most cases, there is a light on the other side of the tunnel—a different kind of light perhaps from the one he has left, and his heart often yearns for the old familiar service, the old beloved faces. Yet through his difficult experience he learns that the Light is ever with him, the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Whatever new experiences he encounters, pleasant or otherwise, he knows that the Friend that "sticketh closer than a brother" has been with him all the way, strengthening his faltering footsteps hearing his agonised prayers, and he will be judged by Him who knows him better than he knows himself, and certainly better than his earthly brethren know him.

CONCLUSION

This article is written from sober experience, to ask those still in the fold to try to realise the tremendous mental strain borne by every brother and sister who departs from the "Truth"; to ask them to remember that Brother X may perhaps have grasped some spiritual truth which they have so far not seen, and that serious, humble converse with him may help them as well as him. He will welcome inquiry from them, not asked censoriously, but in genuine request for knowledge and judgment. Above all, he must not be patronised.

One last question. What do you call the ex-Christadelphian? "You can't un-brother a man," said an old brother. Whether you can or not, he would probably prefer to be called "Brother" still, unless you are on Christian name terms. He wants to continue friendship with his old associates, and still regards them as his brethren and sisters. Brother X is still your brother.

We can compromise for long enough but the time comes when a man must stand up and be counted, if he wants to sleep at nights.

KERMIT ELBY,

WHERE IS THY FAITH?

THERE is much to be gained by the student from the Old Testament wisdom writers. Quite often we find that the words of instruction given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ had been given by the writers of the Old Testament to the inquiring minds of days long past.

We find in Luke 21 warnings and instruction concerning the trials and tribulation which the disciples of Christ could expect to face in their lifetime. In verses 14-15, "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."

To parallel the words of our Lord we find in Proverbs 3: 5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

In effect, we are told not to prepare a set defence of the scriptures nor of our faith, but that Christ will give us both words and wisdom with which to resist our adversaries and defend our faith. There is a direct parallel in these words:

"... I will give you a mouth and wisdom..."

"... he (the Lord) shall direct thy paths."

The implied parallel is to trust in the Lord and not in ourselves.

Most of us have probably found that our greatest defence is to place our trust in Christ. Whether we face the ruling power portrayed by the draft board or are faced by missionary workers of another faith, if we have read and studied the scriptures daily, the words of our defence flow smoothly; but if we have written our defence and prepared it in an orderly fashion we have difficulty in presenting our views, and

in answering questions for which we are unprepared. If we place our faith in Christ we need have no fear as to what to say or what to do.

Unknowningly most of us, perhaps even all of us, tend to place our faith in ourselves or in our own opinions, or in our own concept of the way things ought to be.

Take for instance the meaning of a simple statement which we use too often and to which we rarely give true consideration. This statement is, "I am disappointed."

(1) Does this mean that someone or something has not met our personal expectations?

(2) Does this mean that someone has not accomplished some standard or level of performance which we have set for him?

(3) Does this mean that we have lost some of the faith we had placed in someone?

Given the proper consideration, the statement, "I am disappointed," really means:

(1) We have set our expectations too high.

(2) We have determined an ideal standard or level of performance. Or last, and most important,

(3) We have placed our faith where faith does not belong.

In our search of the scriptures we find there are only two in whom we are to put our faith. In Galatians it is written: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3: 26.)

In I Peter we read: "... but (Christ) was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." (I Peter 1: 20-21.) We are never told to place our faith in any other than Christ and God.

Perhaps you will say, "My faith is in God and Christ alone; here is where my faith is and nowhere else."

A condition ought to be stated before we continue, namely, that faith always implies certitude, even where there is no evidence or proof; but a belief does not have to imply certitude because of its dependency upon human understanding, and thus its tendency to change.

Consider your beliefs of those things which must "shortly come to pass." Consider your personal beliefs as to:

(1) Russia, Israel, Britain, the United States, Turkey, and the Middle East, in the near future.

(2) The return of Christ, the resurrection, Christ's mode or method of conquest and rule.

(3) The coming kingdom, and how it shall come.

Consider your personal beliefs as you look closely at the disciples of Christ at the time of Christ's arrest. Observe the disciples, who knew Christ and lived with Christ, who received the word, the plan of God from Christ's very lips, and were given first-hand testimony as to what they could expect, and as to what would shortly come to pass.

At the arrest of Jesus (Matt. 26: 50-56) we find that Simon Peter took a sword and smote off the ear of a servant of the high priest for which he immediately received rebuke. How then would the scriptures be fulfilled? A multitude came out to take Jesus; and Jesus humbly submitted to their will. We are told, "... all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled."

The disciples forsook him and fled, being confused and not knowing what to do. They did not know what was about to take place. They did not know that Christ would die; thus their expectations were not met.

Let us look at the humanity of the disciples. First we observe the ambitious James and John. In Mark we read (Mark 10: 35-37):

"Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire."

"What would ye that I should do for you?"

"Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory."

We know the desire could not be fulfilled, but the case shows their lack of understanding of the kingdom. As to the feelings created in the other disciples by the request of James and John, Mark relates: "... they began to be much displeased with James and John." (Mark 10: 41.)

In Luke, we find their strife for precedence: "There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." (Luke 22: 24).

All were human, all ambitious. And finally, after the last supper Jesus spoke to Simon Peter, as recorded by Luke:

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22: 31-32.)

We see that up until the arrest of Jesus strife existed among the disciples, and their faith was not yet complete. Peter himself was not yet fully persuaded as to the beliefs he held in Jesus Christ.

In Luke 21, and scattered throughout the gospels we find Jesus' prophecies of warning concerning the immediate abomination of desolation, and, further in the future, the travail and tribulation that was to be expected in the times of the Gentiles. We could go on citing the general teachings given by Jesus, though never fully understood by the disciples until after the resurrection of the Lord: but let us review some specific lessons given by Him concerning Himself: the fact that He would be taken, that He would die but would rise the third day—facts we find of which the disciples should have been well aware. (Mark 9: 30-32; 10: 33-34.)

In Mark 9: 30-32 we read:

"And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, 'The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.'"

Again, in Mark 10: 33-34 it is written:

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock

him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again."

One would think the disciples would have understood and would have known what to expect. They had been told plainly by Jesus, concerning what would happen. Why then would they run and forsake the Lord?

It appears that despite all the knowledge and teaching which had been available to them, they were confused, and like Simon Peter not yet fully converted nor persuaded. They were human and weak, unable to understand the work of God.

There is no reason to lose sight of the fact that the disciples had faith. They had faith that Christ could give them power; they had faith that Christ would rule. They believed in Christ, and yet their faith seems to have been in their opinion as to what was going to happen; their faith seems to have been in their concepts of the way things should be; thus the need for Christ's return for forty days.

What of us who do not have Christ at hand to tell us the answers to the questions we have concerning what is in the future? How well can we be prepared? How much greater is the chance that we will turn, run and forsake the Lord, when we become confused and do not understand what is happening, or why things are not following the pattern we have decided they ought to follow?

At the arrest of Jesus, the disciples were confused more than disappointed, but nonetheless they were disappointed. The arrest of Jesus was a time of the end. But what of the greater time of the end? Will we be confused, will we be disappointed, will we lose some of our faith when we find that our opinions, which we have professed as steadfast beliefs, have not been fulfilled in the manner we have so dogmatically or pedantically professed?

Have we placed our faith in ourselves, in our opinions? Have we placed our faith in our interpretation of Christ's words, in our interpretations of the future and the past — or do we place our faith in Christ and in God?

The disciples of Christ had been warned time and time again of the coming events and of how they should deal with them; these warnings combined with the warnings given by the inspired writers of the Bible ought to be an example for us. One such warning to which we should give consideration is found in Phil. 2: 21: "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

Do I have the strength to ask myself: "In whom is my trust — in Jesus Christ or in myself?" Can I face the question and answer in both word and action, "Where is my faith?"

The answer must be: "... nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."

J. A. G.

Many may shake their heads over controversial items which may appear; but if they are wise they will understand that a religious magazine which never has anything disturbing to say, which does not promote argument, or even the faintest irritation, is unlikely to be worth reading.

L. J. A. BELL.

TOWARDS UNITY WITH INTEGRITY

By George McHaffie

WITHOUT integrity social life begins to disintegrate and human relations turn sour.

Modern communications have brought the ways and thoughts of politicians under scrutiny as never before. We hear ringing clarion calls for action, renewed effort, new dynamics and so on. We listen to rounded denunciations of opponents. But are we not also familiar with the resounding but empty policy speech? Are we not tired of the prepared statements issued after important conferences which sound good but tell nothing, or the press handout, perhaps on foreign policy, which distorts and hides, rather than reveals, the truth? See, too, in these interviews how neatly the practised politician, by a clever screen of words can evade the real problem and give no answers!

Much the same picture can be seen in the church. The controversy about Bishops in the church in the Anglican/Presbyterian negotiations has issued in a fine crop of press handouts, prepared statements and evaded questions all of which have been trounced by one or other leader of the two communions.

This article is not, however, written to protest about politicians or church leaders but in the belief that as Christadelphians we, too, must consider our position.

In theory, all would subscribe to the idea that what matters in the last analysis is the truth of any particular topic. To find out what this is we have to search around among various possibilities. Having found our answer we ought then to proclaim it with duly supporting evidence. If we reach a position in which we find it necessary to evade questions or merely denounce opponents we ought to have the integrity to realise that we had better look again at our ideas. If we are unable to match up to this challenge then a big question hangs over us. How long can truth of any useful kind and the witness for Christ persist without integrity?

If any traditionally minded Christadelphians have read this article so far, they may well feel

assured. After all, while others may have weakened (as they see it) before the blandishments of science and the passage of time they have kept (as they believe) the original Christadelphian position in mint condition. In an ocean of problems and challenges there is something comforting in clinging to a long established position. But can this guarantee integrity, too?

A totally objective view of this is not easy as many members are kindly and well meaning, yet vague and unsure of issues, but the following assessment may not seem far out.

- (i) All too many react irritably to any challenge.
- (ii) Too many fall to berating their brethren, calling in question the honesty and sincerity of young members particularly.
- (iii) They are, on the whole, lacking in answers to current problems, preferring to expostulate emotionally about the "errors" of others.
- (iv) They are usually unwilling even to try to give a careful description of another's views or to give credit for seeing genuine difficulties. Everything has to be met in a context of a "latter day apostasy," with themselves, by implication, as the angels of light.

The four points above do not add up to integrity of Christian witness. The irritability is normally associated with feeling unsure of oneself or of being afraid that there may be a crack in one's armour. Refusal to hear the other side of a case tends to confirm this diagnosis. Majorities which feel themselves numerically strong often think that they can destroy criticism by ridiculing the critics. Such majorities look very small to succeeding generations.

The strongly conservative brethren are also prone to exaggerate the trivial and by-pass the important. Though the response to our preaching has been declining, little time is devoted to seriously

searching out why. But great energy can be channelled without difficulty into emphasis of, say, the literality of a serpent.

All this is the outcome of a related fault — lack of trust. It seems that it is believed by a good number that a small chink in the armour inevitably leads to the defeat of the whole warrior. So we are advised that if we give up, say, the literality of the serpent we are sure, before long, to give up believing in the Bible, Christianity and God. But this does not seem to show much trust in the case for the Bible, Christianity and God.

There are yet other niggling questions. Is it possible that this position is due to laziness and to the reluctance to follow other than well beaten tracks? Having thus become unprepared how much pride is inhibiting an admission of lack of knowledge or experience? In this condition one is not far removed from not wanting to know the truth on any point at all. Issues then become merely pawns in the game of "find the most faithful and root out the rest." If we truly want to discuss an issue we will ourselves advance a positive aspect for consideration. But if we merely ask questions demanding specified answers or assurances we do not ask with honest intent. We are not seekers of a good answer though we may present ourselves as such. Our purpose is incrimination and prosecution. However "Remnants" and "Households" may otherwise interpret, the ship of the former Berean Fellowship of 1924 vintage was broken into its many fragments on this hidden and dishonourable rock.

Can the real Christian witness be defended by unchristlike methods?

The pull of the majority has always been a strong magnet for some people. Improvements in a majority outlook, however, take place slowly. If the voice of the prophet is unheeded it is true also that the call of old paths is largely without effect. This can give rise to an unhappy situation. Leading brethren may, by virtue of the pressure to produce addresses and to write, from time to time stumble across small or perhaps larger points which put them out of relation to what the slower, unthinking majority may believe. After much heart searching, checking on points and conscientious sifting of evidence the devious view may be found to be beyond dispute. What then is to be done?

In one form or another this usually results in a split between private conviction and public utterance. Several justifications may be given for this, some overt and some covert.

- (i) It may be said that as majorities are slow to react, caution is needed in introducing

new thought as otherwise the simple faith of some might be upset.

- (ii) The best approach is to expound one's point of view to picked company in private and so prepare the ground for future changes.
- (iii) Too rapid a disclosure of the necessity of change provokes an emotional reaction which is sometimes divisive in intent.
- (iv) The frank position may, however, be that one does not wish one's social connections, popularity, speaking appointments or possibly even fellowship to be upset.

Some of the above justifications could be marginally accepted within the context of integrity. It is true that the faith of some may be upset by the removal of what to others may appear irrelevant props.

It may be suspected, however, that reasons (iii) and (iv) above form a disproportionate justification for the diplomacy in our present day ecclesial life. Some brethren even achieve a measure of equilibrium by speaking up loudly in support of, or against, some other cause in a way which they believe the community would as a whole approve, and so their devious thinking may not come to light or may be ignored.

In other fields of study — scientific, technical, literary and historical — the danger of inadequate theories and ideas is kept at bay by the self, and mutual, criticism which is customary. Any published theory is immediately subjected to informed and detailed criticism so that the only elements which can hope for a degree of permanency are those which can withstand this rigorous scrutiny.

In ecclesial life, however, these safeguards are not given opportunity to operate.

Indeed, many brethren and sisters appear to live out their faith in such a state of dogmatism that they appear to imagine that everyone is like themselves. So scientists are credited with the ability to foist any unfounded theory on to the public, and higher critics are thought to have some unified and concerted teaching whereby they irresponsibly dogmatise whatever suits their fancy. This impression probably throws more light on the inner attitude of the conservative than the real motivation of scientist and critics. The most serious fault in the situation does not, however, arise from the dogmatism of the conservatives.

When any brother has difficulties about commonly accepted points of view, the first inclination is to cease to offer lecture subjects on these points. At the same time there is an avoidance of becoming involved in any public discussion on the issue.

As a result of this process it may be noticed that there is, for example, widespread avoidance of the detailed prophetic count-down lectures with all the 'atest excitement from whatever the popular press has chosen as its latest, and ephemeral, sensation. Instead we may have somewhat vague personal appeals, emphasis on the Cross or Christian living. The rationalisation that this is merely redressing the lack of this type of address in the past is no doubt partly, but only partly, true.

This situation is also a great generator of the equivalent in ecclesial circles of the press handout and the prepared statement. Instead of a reasonable and thorough discussion of an issue we may be presented with a wordy but evasive statement in an appeal for patience and unity. Although most realise what is happening or can find out if they are so minded, few want any fuss and accept it that way. Generally it is the conservative brethren who are most put out by diplomatic statements but it is their own attitude which forces more moderate brethren to adopt this procedure.

The main effect of this virtual withdrawal of many leading brethren from the field of discussion is to create a vacuum. The majority of listeners may still wish to have the comfort of hearing the old ideas. This gives a wide open field for brethren who have not given adequate thought to many issues to come forward and fill the breach. The presentation of the older ideas do, of course, suffer in the process and brethren find themselves encouraged and applauded for shallow, dogmatic, cliché-ridden and, often, confused addresses. Since criticism of even the wildest inadequacies of the conservative outlook is liable to involve the critic in a statement of his own position, few who are competent to do so attempt it.

The effect of this is to create unresolved tensions within the community. This saps spiritual vitality. The general apathy noticed throughout ecclesial life appears to be largely the result of loss of conviction. It is useless in these circumstances merely to rail at the apathetic or exhort them to double back on the very road which has led to their current position. At the same time the situation is productive of bitter disputes. Any small issue is likely to form a focal point for a gathering of ill feeling and angry contention.

At this point some may be inclined to ask whether it all matters very much. After all, come what may, the ecclesias somehow or other seem to get by, periodic upsets blow over, and, except on the part of a few awkward people, are soon forgotten. When, however, we think of the magnitude of the responsibility laid on us by witness for Christ, we

must surely look for something far better. What then are the life-sapping features of the situation?

- (i) If someone has unresolved conflicts in his mind he becomes undecided, probably physically tired, and may have no drive left in life. Much the same applies to a community. A constant state of tension running below the surface results in loss of vision and failure of mission.
- (ii) The relative silence of competent brethren leaves the way open for conservatives to speak their minds freely, and for brethren who can give out what they know but who seldom, by means of deep reading, take in any more, to play the leading roles. It may in many quarters give the impression of a small minded, prejudiced, dogmatic and ill-informed group. It may lead to the discouragement and loss of competent but sensitive people. The picture created leads, also, to the loss of potential converts among young people of independent judgment who will quickly lose confidence in the integrity of the community.
- (iii) By giving way to pressure moderate brethren are merely allowing a minority, the least fitted to do so, to decide every issue. In this way outmoded ideas, which moderates know in their hearts have no future, are kept alive.
- (iv) This leads to a suppression of genuine study among us. This works on the simple principle of adulation for conformity but sharp criticism, even abuse, for any view expressed which is out of keeping with established traditions. This has a decided effect on our preaching. If one is used to internal affairs being conducted on prejudiced lines, then those champions who will be able to proclaim the faith where integrity or argument is paramount are not encouraged to develop. For the same reason it can be said that the number of brethren and sisters who are sympathetically aware of the problems of those to whom we try to preach today is very small. With lack of conviction and/or lack of knowledge we need look no further for the failure of our special efforts. Exhortations are also affected. How often do we listen to neat verbal figures being expounded which bear little or no relation to real life? How often do we have woolly fraternal gathering themes and addresses which convey no urge to action except in the most general terms or else are

aimed at the suppression of any new thought? How many Bible classes do not permit discussion for fear of what might develop, or where only platitudes are expressed?

- (v) Some seem to pursue what amounts to a scorched earth policy. While we can admire their stubbornness of purpose they appear determined that if they cannot have it their way, nobody else will have it theirs either. This situation must be reversed soon or there will be a rapid weakening of the strength of the community. The present age structure of many meetings is such that unless a fresh approach to the challenges of our time emerges soon, the community may be numerically too weak to support a vigorous recovery.

It must be recognised of course that problems differ in kind and in intensity in various parts of Britain and throughout the world. The principles outlined in this article have also a general application beyond the Christadelphian world. The same tensions have been experienced by most other communities. The established churches are at present going through a stage of re-appraisal which may well lead to a renewal within the context of their own basic message.

If a renewal with all its inspiring possibilities is to be effected in Christadelphia, recognition of certain leading points becomes necessary.

- (i) A true diagnosis is essential. The superficial diagnosis is that the introduction of "new ideas" is the cause of the trouble. The real source of trouble lies in the inability of the community as a whole to meet new challenges or absorb new knowledge without generating all the frictions, tensions and loss of integrity described in this article.
- (ii) The situation cannot be helped by drawing the curtains and hoping no one will see the obvious. Merely taking action to suppress whatever the current issue is, or pretending it is not there, will accomplish nothing. To imagine, for example, that by getting rid of *Endeavour* and all who similarly raise points for discussion, will bring troubles to an end is to misjudge the situation. A new

generation would simply stumble across all the unresolved questions and, unless the protest began again, integrity would be a final loss. It is all the more essential, therefore, that sober and mature thinking should prevail now.

- (iii) There will, of course, always be a small number of individuals who seize hold of some out-of-the-way points, exalt them to prime importance and go round with a perpetual feeling of grievance because no one will share their enthusiasm or perhaps even consider their pet theme. This situation must be carefully distinguished from the larger issue of the failure of a community to meet real challenges.
- (iv) The ideal of a static community which has finally fixed all the answers should be recognised for the unrealisable goal that it necessarily is. Knowledge grows, customs change and new challenges come. Failure to take an honest account of this produces repeat performances of the same kind as was seen with Galileo and the Medieval Catholic Church.
- (v) Through the greater part of Christian history a radical baptist movement has managed to maintain its vigour even in transitional periods. This same grand tradition of which we are part can be just as potent today as ever. There is every reason to believe that people would respond to it. Indeed much that finds expression in contemporary Christian writings points in this direction. No vigour can, however, come to any movement which spends its time decrying what it does not understand or is more concerned with what it conceives to be its image than with truth.
- (vi) The first step to remedy the present difficulties is a simple one. It is to reassert brotherliness in ecclesial discussion and to cultivate a moral tone in the community which would enable all to see that others besides themselves have a sincere point of view and could possibly be right. In short it is an exercise in real Christian love which is sorely needed and without which no man may be called His disciple.

FEMININITY, ANCIENT AND MODERN

By Ruth McHaffie

INFLUENCES FOR GOOD AND BAD

THROUGHOUT the ages feminine influence has played a large part in human affairs. That influence has sometimes been good and sometimes bad. It has sometimes been welcomed and sometimes resented. But come what might it has persisted. In our day, women are not confined to the house and the nursery as once they were, but, with our universities and most professions open to women, their influence in the world is, perhaps, greater than ever before.

In our community women have seldom played an openly influential part. They have not been prevented from adding their contribution to the thinking of the community but, in many ecclesias, they have received little encouragement to do so. Though their alleged universal susceptibility to beguilement has generally disqualified them from any public utterance they have been encouraged, with peculiar inconsistency, to preach from door to door, and have been urged on all sides to influence the young in Sunday School and Youth Circle.

Their various ways of "guiding the house" have been a means of influence upon the community. We all know that there are many husbands who would be better brethren if they had better wives, and that there are many husbands who would not be so effectual in the work of God if it had not been for the influence at home. We all know that many of the decisions made overtly by the brethren have previously been influenced by discussions with their wives. We would like to think that the influence was good, but this has not always been so. Never has it been more true than it is today that "it is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling (contentious) woman in a

wide house," and that "a prudent wife (one who acts wisely) is from the Lord."

JEWISH ATTITUDES

In the Old Testament we find two opinions on the character of women, or perhaps we should say that two kinds of women are depicted. In Ecclesiastes "the preacher" with characteristic pessimism says that he can find only one man among a thousand who is upright, but he cannot find even one woman, though later we find him exhorting his reader to "live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest . . ." as though, after all, there must be at least one woman here and there who could bring joy to her husband. Again, in Proverbs, the young man is warned of the evils and guile of the "strange woman," but, finally, a lengthy description is given of the virtuous woman, whose price is far above rubies. And then we have those characters who are well known to us for their evil ways such as Jezebel, Athaliah, Gomer, together with those known to us for their virtues — Naomi, Ruth, Hannah, Huldah and others.

During the time between the Testaments women joined in the resistance against the Greek influences which threatened to extinguish the Jewish faith. When Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C. put into action his fierce persecution of the Jews, we find women who, against his edict, had circumcised their children, being murdered with their babes hanging about their necks (1 Macc. 1: 60-61). With a shudder we wonder if our 20th century faith would be so strong. This resistance movement of which these women were part was led by the Hasidim (the pious ones) from whom it is believed the Pharisees descended.

When we turn to New Testament times about two hundred years later we find the Jewish woman having a low standing in the official sense, though her value in the home was given due regard. While men went to the Synagogue to learn a woman only went to hear. She was not allowed to teach children of any age in a school. Professor William Barclay quotes from a Rabbi, "Everyone that talketh much with a woman causes evil to himself, and desists from the works of the Law, and his end is that he inherits Gehenna." It was improper for a Rabbi to speak even to his wife, daughter or sister in the street and there were some "pious ones" known as "The bruised and bleeding Pharisees" who would shut their eyes should they pass a woman, and, as a consequence, they bruised or cut themselves by walking into a wall. We hope the women of those days had a sense of humour, even if those who passed them by had not.

JESUS AND THE LAW OF LOVE

It was into such a milieu that Christianity was born, and we find evidence in the New Testament of the circumstances we have described. In John's gospel the writer tells us how Jesus spoke to a woman at the well of Sychar. When the disciples found Jesus doing this they were "in a state of amazement that He was talking to a woman" — and a Samaritan at that! A Rabbi might lose his reputation for such an act, but the holiest Man of all sat beside her, sinner though she was.

It was Jesus who gave the pattern of holy relationships in family life. Under the Law a man could divorce his wife and marry another merely because it was his whim to do so. But he was not to commit adultery. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus showed that the putting away of a wife for any frivolous reason and the marrying of another was wrong. In fact, it was adultery. The followers of Jesus are no longer under the old Law, but their lives are governed by a higher and more demanding Law — the Law of love. The old Law went part of the way: the Law of love goes to the end of the road.

The disciples, so schooled in the old way of thought, found this teaching difficult to understand and even more difficult to accept. They suffered from the hardness of heart to which Jesus referred — the hardness of heart which had caused Moses to allow a divorce such as God had never intended should be practised (Matt. 19: 8). And in answer to this Law of love which Jesus laid before them, all the disciples could think to say was, "If that is the position with husband and wife, it is better to refrain from marriage." It is not surprising that in the incident which is recorded as immediately following, the disciples, still in their blindness, thought it their duty to rebuke those, presumably mothers, who brought young children to Jesus that He might bless them.

THE LIVING WORD

A feature of the inspired writing of Scripture which makes the Word so real and living to us is that throughout the work of each writer we find the stamp of his individual characteristics and circumstances. So, in the writings of Amos and Hosea we find a contrast, though both are moved to cry against the same evils in the same city. Amos reflects the austerity of his early desert upbringing and in his writing there rings the coldness of one who stands detached from the city, hurling upon it his denouncements of its wickedness. But in Hosea we find a warmth of love, the anguish of a man who himself belongs to the city and who is pained at the evil he finds there, who bears the sorrow of a husband who still loves his faithless wife.

In the New Testament, also, we find this same reflection of character and circumstance. In keeping with current opinion it was the custom for a Jewish man to pray in the morning thanking God that he had not been made "a Gentile, a slave or a woman." It is not surprising, therefore, that of the synoptic writers, Matthew, Mark and Luke, it is Luke the Gentile who wrote his gospel with more Gentile and less Jewish emphasis than is found in Matthew and Mark. It is Luke, also, coming as he probably did from Macedonia where women had more emancipation

than elsewhere, who gives the greatest prominence to the activities of the women who were associated with the life of Jesus. He, alone, tells us of how the coming of our Lord seemed to Elisabeth and Mary His mother, and to Anna, the prophetess.

IN THE EARLY CHURCH

When we turn to the epistles we find the apostle Paul seeming to view women and marriage in two different lights. He sees women, on the one hand, from the Jewish angle in keeping with his early training. He says of himself, "To Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews." On the other hand he sees women in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He sees marriage on the one hand as a concession to human weakness and as a preventative of sexual licence but as a drawback to spiritual progress, and, on the other hand, as being on so high a level as to be compared with the relationship between Christ and the church.

The followers of the apostle Paul, throughout all time, have tended to lean toward either one or the other of these aspects, and which aspect they have preferred has often been coloured by their own experience of married life and of their own wives. Those who are very much dominated by their wives, or who find them spiritually irresponsible, are often those who prefer to think of women as undesirable influences. Or, sometimes, they feel this way because they are a little dismayed lest any feminine ability or spirituality should seem superior to their own.

The women among whom the apostle Paul moved and worked were not dissimilar in character to the women of today. There were those who had "cast off their first faith," who "learn to be idle, and worse than idle, gossips and busybodies, speaking of things better left unspoken" (1 Tim. 5: 13 N.E.B.). But we also find those who laboured in the Lord — Phebe, Priscilla, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Mary and many others. There were then, as now, those who added to the spiritual tone of the church in deed and thought, and those who detracted from it.

THE APOSTLE PAUL AND MARRIAGE

In I Cor. 7: 9 the apostle Paul writes to the unmarried and widows concerning marriage, "If they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." Today no Christian marriage could ever be contemplated for that reason. We are revolted at the very thought. The apostle writes also that "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." These words, we find, are not true to every experience. A married woman may or may not care less for the things of the spirit than a single woman, and, in the truly Christian marriage, she could not please her husband unless she cared more for spiritual things than for material. In many marriages spirituality blooms vigorously and both husband and wife strengthen and uphold one another in their union together.

When, however, we turn to Paul's letter to the Ephesians we find him giving a different picture and a different view of marriage from that which he gives in his letter to Corinth. No more beautiful likeness could be given to the relationship between husband and wife than that which Paul gives here — the likeness to Christ's relationship with the church. As the "followers of God" the brethren and sisters are exhorted to submit themselves to one another and to Christ, and in the same way wives are to submit themselves to their husbands. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for it. The word which Paul uses here for love does not refer to the sexual relationship but it is the love which sanctifies that relationship. This quality which husbands are to show is the Christian love which alone can stir in their wives the reverence or respect which the apostle stresses. It is the love which cannot fail to have that effect upon one who longs to find in her husband the reflection and character of Jesus Christ. It is the love which is patient, kind, unenvious, never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude, never selfish nor quick

to take offence. It is the love which has no limit to its faith, its hope and its endurance (I Cor. 13: 4-7). It is the love which worldly marriages lack.

When there is a union such as this, where husband and wife are not only "one flesh" but also one spirit it will not be difficult for the children of that marriage to do as the apostle asks of them, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother."

THE INTERPRETATION OF NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

The passage quoted at the end of the last paragraph, together with a similar passage found in the epistle to the Colossians, lay down rules, as it were, for the running of a home. But the rules are rules of love and only while they remain so can they bring into being a really Christ-like home.

The apostle goes on to exhort the household slaves to share in this atmosphere of peace and love. Since today we have no slaves (and the word used means slave and not servant) his words are hardly relevant to our age. But they are of significant value in that they show us that Paul did not try to overthrow existing social customs in one great sweep. Neither had Jesus attempted to do this. The influence which Christ brought into the world was one which was slowly to effect mighty changes, and among those changes was the raising of the position of women as well as the emancipation of slaves.

New Testament teaching is not a static thing, but it is to be interpreted at all times in a way relevant to each age. What was still permissible in the 1st century, such as the practice of slavery, is not permissible in the 20th century, and what was not expedient in the 1st century might well have become so in the centuries which have followed.

MARRIAGE IN THE 20th CENTURY

With the passing of the centuries and especially with the passing of the last hundred years, husbands and wives have come to play

many new parts. Gone are the days when anyone in the church dare teach, as once it was taught, that assistance in procreation is all that was meant by being a "help meet for him" and that men better supplied any other kind of companionship. Gone are the days when the husband provided a home for his wife and when she was not, in many cases, any more than his possession. Now they buy their house and furniture (and pay for them) together. Now they buy their carpets and lay them — together. Now they buy their gloss paint or eggshell emulsion, "man" the ladders, and splash it on — together. Now they bath the children — together, and decide about their education — together. Christian marriage in the 20th century is a true partnership. This does not mean that husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, do not play their own distinctive roles in family life. How dull it would be if there were no contrasts! But it does mean that today there is much more of this sharing together of activities and interests than there was in most homes in former generations.

But when we turn to our spiritual lives, to those things which matter most, this sharing seems to be less active. We go to meetings together, we share the company of the brethren and sisters together, but it often seems that sisters are content to hide behind a wall of femininity and excuse themselves from doing much thinking. They become highly qualified for their professions, but apart from their careers their abilities are apt to lie dormant. This happens among our masculine friends, too, of course, but they have the deterrent of more or less being obliged to prepare Sunday and Bible Class addresses.

SISTERS IN A DISTRESSED COMMUNITY

Our community is passing through a time of distress. It needs to pray much and to think hard and long. There are sisters (and brethren) who are unable to follow the different discussions which are being pursued. So be it. A simple faith which beautifies our daily living is all that is needed to enter the Kingdom of God. But many sisters (and brethren) have keen, thinking,

minds — and they should use them to discover the ways of God so that they can present them, simply, to all who ask.

But we should not confuse simple faith with simple truth. Truth is not simple. It is highly intricate. There is a delight in searching out truth for we can come to know more and more, but no man or woman can ever, in this age, come to know the whole truth.

Some of us say, "I want to accept the Bible just as I find it. I want to believe exactly what it says." So do we all — but the difficulty lies in agreeing in what sense we believe it. And it is this difficulty which is troubling our community.

Accepting our reading of the Bible on its face value we not only have a strange animal in the Garden of Eden tempting Eve, but we find, too, some superhuman creature tempting Jesus in the wilderness. We find Jesus and the disciples apparently accepting that men were possessed with devils and demons who could cry out and speak. We find Jesus seeming to believe in a place of torment after death as well as a place of peace. But, of course, we do not accept all these things just as they are written: we interpret them intelligently so that they agree with our knowledge of what we believe to be true. And each individual has to determine for himself or herself how he or she will interpret.

MAKING DECISIONS

When we made our decision to become members of the Christadelphian community we had to choose between this community and others. Each sister considered herself capable of deciding that the Christadelphian faith was more in keeping with truth as she understood it than was the faith of the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist or any other church. If we find the discussions at present taking place in the community disturbing then have we not still the same ability to discern for ourselves, and to make our own individual decisions? Is this not what we must do or should we look for some infallible authority who can decide for us? Do

we really need to feel as the sister who wrote in *The Christadelphian* (August 1965):

What concerns me about the controversy on the Serpent in Genesis between all the brethren is: What are we sisters to tell our children growing up in the Faith, and our neighbours outside the Truth? Is the Serpent literal or figurative? Please give the sisters who are silent in "the church" a lead.

Might we not similarly ask for a lead as to which hymn book we should be using — the new or the old? Some brethren warn us of the dangers of the new book to our faith, while the majority tell us that it is superior and an aid to worship with which opinion I, for one, would enthusiastically agree. But then majorities are not always right. Had we thought they were we would not have joined ourselves to the Christadelphian body. In fact — there is no infallible authority in the church who can guide us. We must do our own thinking, and make our own decisions, seeking always the guidance of God.

HONOURABLE WOMEN

It is perhaps a little unfair to blame women for not using their scholastic ability for the benefit of the community. They are wearied of being told that they are more susceptible to deception than men. This must be particularly irksome to those sisters who are having to "carry" their husbands and whose families find little, if any, spiritual strength or guidance from their fathers. The assertions which are made do not cast a happy reflection upon our community since it is composed mostly of women, and, as an outsider observes, the body has been "more successful in retaining the allegiance of their daughters than of their sons." It may well be true that women are more easily influenced than men, though their numerically greater response to Christianity and their comparative paucity among juvenile delinquents in both Britain and America would seem to suggest that they are more likely to be influenced for good than for evil, and prison statistics show that they are less guilty of

committing crime than are their masculine counterparts.

None would deny that we have those sisters among us, like some in the early church, who detract from the spiritual tone of the body and who are more eager to be up to date with the latest trend in the fashion magazines than they are to make full use of the advantages which their position in the 20th century offers them for activity in God's work. But in the same way we have brethren such as Alexander and Diotrophes who bring disrepute upon the Name of Christ and who weaken the hand of the church. Yet even as we have many brethren of noble stature and Christ-like character so we have, too, many sisters who have been born again to a newness of life and who have that "unfeigned faith" which was in Timothy's grandmother Lois and in his mother Eunice, which was in all those women who in New Testament times laboured in the Lord. It must also have been found in Philip's four daughters who prophesied (or publicly expounded — *Young's Concordance*) and in Priscilla who, with her husband, helped to explain to Apollos the way of God more perfectly even though Apollos was a man eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures.

When the gospel was preached to the Bereans they went, as we know, and searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Those Bereans included "honourable women which were Greeks." We are not lacking in "honourable women" today who are more than capable of offering their contributions to the thought life of the church. There are many sisters who by their prayers, by their intelligent discussion and thought, by their encouragement of unbiassed reflection and by their gentleness can help to bring our body through its time of trouble, and who can help to build a balanced and vital community.

A PITY

This is not the day for veils and crinolines, for smelling salts and fans. It is not the day for embroidering samples in lavender filled drawings rooms, nor for swooning when the tempo becomes too quick for us. It is not the day for bathing machines and chaperones, for aspidistras and anti-macassars, nor even the day for suffragettes. It is the day when women are doctoring in hospitals, lecturing in universities, judging in courts, debating in Parliament, negotiating in foreign affairs. It is the day when women in the world are using their talents to the full, and often for the good of humanity.

What a pity if women in the church are "cabined and cribbed" by customs of the ancient world!

THE "WHY?" LEAFLETS

These leaflets aim to answer problems about Christian belief. They are simply written, and are attractively illustrated and printed in colour. Free samples will be sent to ecclesias interested in ordering further copies. Space is left on the back for over-printing of local ecclesial information.

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A PRAYER OF THANKFULNESS

FATHER, so often do we lay our difficulties before You,
So often do we pray for help in our hardships.

Help us to remember also the good things of life,
Help us to be grateful for its many blessings and joys.

We thank You for the sparkle of Winter, the exhilaration of Spring, the glow
of Summer, the richness of Autumn;
For the song of the birds, for the fragrance of the flowers, for all the beauties
of nature.

We thank You for the strength and vision of the daytime,
For the rest and stillness of the night.

We thank You for the comfort and the peace of home,
And for the love which surrounds us there.

We thank You for the inspiration of dear ones, for the faithfulness of friends,
For the consolation to be found in human relationships.

We thank You for minds which can commune with You,
For hearts which can receive the Gift of Your love.

Above all we thank You for Jesus in Whose Name we pray.

AMEN.

