

The Endeavour

Magazine

A CHRISTADELPHIAN REVIEW

TWO SHILLINGS

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PAUL'S LETTER
TO THE ROMANS

No. 27

Spring 1968

MODERATION, A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

SOME men are born moderate. Some grow to be moderate. But most of us would confess that moderation is thrust upon us by the most painful and bitter experience.

Extremes come naturally to our human nature. Violent words and actions are dramatic and therefore attractive. We think naturally that passionate conviction carried relentlessly to its logical conclusion is the most admirable, and desirable, way.

It is therefore with some astonishment that we find the Apostle commending to us, of all things, moderation. "Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is at hand." Elsewhere he relates it to such delightful qualities as love, joy and peace: "The fruit of the spirit is . . . temperance."

As we ponder these things there seems to be a contradiction which it is not easy to resolve.

In this problem we are not alone. In the two thousand years since the Lord was on earth, Christianity has seldom seen a wise balance struck between zeal for convictions sincerely held and the expression of the love of Christ.

After the days of the Apostolic Church the chaos of the next few centuries was soon superseded by the authoritarian, Roman Church.

For a millennium of darkness the violence of violent men beat itself to death upon a thousand tide-washed shores. Excommunication was the order of the day, for offences mostly trivial or imaginary.

An ordinance of the 2nd Council of Carthage reads: "If any clerk or monk utter jocular words causing laughter, let him be excommunicated." The inclusion or exclusion of the letter "i" in a word split Christendom asunder for centuries, and bishops solemnly cursed one another in turns. In the literature of the times, anathemas abound and penal edicts are scarcely less frequent.

(Please turn to back page)

The Doctrine Of The Holy Spirit

The Present Day

(continued and concluded)

by George McHaffie

Laying on of Hands

In Acts chap. 8 we read how that Philip preached in Samaria and baptised those who responded. Yet the Spirit was not received. Later Peter and John went to Samaria, laid their hands on the baptised believers, and they received the Spirit. Also, in Acts 19:6, those who had been baptised in John's baptism received the Holy Spirit when Paul laid his hands on them. From these two incidents it is argued that the Holy Spirit could only be received by the laying on of hands of an apostle. Therefore, when all the apostles had died, there could be no more passing on of the Spirit and its manifestation would cease with the death of the last of the believers possessing it.

The principle behind "laying on of hands" is complex. References to it are not numerous, and no references define exactly what was taking place beyond specifying the effect. In order to assess the merits of the idea that only the apostles could pass on the spirit, a review of the practice is now presented.

In the church of the second and third centuries the laying on of hands was a universal practice after baptism. It was usually accompanied by a prayer that the new member might receive the Holy Spirit. In these "stock" prayers (as they often were) reference was made to incidents in Numbers and Deuteronomy which make a fitting starting point to a review of the meaning of the custom.

In Numbers 27:18, 19, God told Moses to "... take Joshua ... a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him ... and give him a charge ..." in the sight of Eleazar and the congregation. And at verse 20, "And thou shalt put of thine honour upon him" and so in verse 23 the action is carried out. In Deuteronomy 34:9, we have "And Joshua ... was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him."

The simplest view of this is that it is an appointment to office, i.e. as Moses' successor and leader of the tribes. Much more than an appointment is made, however. Joshua was also given the power to fulfil it. Moses' "honour" was put on him. This must mean that Joshua's character and abilities were empowered by the spirit to such an extent that the people could look up to him and account him as of the same honour as Moses. Similarly "wisdom" by Spirit power was given to him.

From this we see that God on certain occasions gives His gifts by the laying on of hands of certain individuals. The individuals concerned are of authority and worth in God's sight, and the laying on of hands signifies the imparting of their own status, abilities, or spiritual powers to another. We have, however, in Moses' time, an illustration of the receiving of spiritual power without the laying on of hands. In Numbers 11:25 we read of the appointment of seventy

elders "And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him (Moses,) and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease." The Spirit even came on two others who had not been present, Eldad and Medad (verse 26). The prophesying here is very reminiscent of the New Testament occasions: Pentecost, the Samaritans, Cornelius, John's disciples.

In the New Testament, the laying on of hands falls into the following categories:

(a) Bestowing a blessing

As an example, we have Jesus with little children, Matt. 19:13-15, "Then there were brought unto him little children that he should put his hands on them and pray, ... and he laid his hands on them ..." This type of action has Old Testament precedents. It can hardly be that Jesus was merely giving the children a benign pat on the head. When He prayed, He would pray that the child should grow up to serve the Lord, and by laying on His hands, He must have imparted some power to the child's life that it might grow up to this service. This idea is not without scriptural backing, for John the Baptist was "filled with the holy spirit even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15), and this doubtless caused him to grow up to be the Lord's forerunner.

(b) Healing

Jesus sometimes laid his hands on those he would heal (e.g. Mark 8:23, Luke 4:40). His disciples were to do likewise, Mark 16:17, 18, "These signs shall follow them that believe ... they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." In the Bible we get frequent association between disease and sin. The linkage between Satan, the Devil, the demons, sin and Jesus' use of the expression "Thy sins be forgiven thee" as part of the healing process, show how the diseased were considered to be in the power of evil and darkness. It is as though they had fallen by their sinful lives into this position. We see, therefore, One who had the spirit of righteousness and was therefore "whole" imparting His righteousness and wholeness by the laying on of hands to one whose life was broken, sinful and diseased. Healing then results. But as in the case of the Old Testa-

ment, laying on of hands was not a necessary act in the imparting of the gift. It could be done by simple command, "Take up thy bed and walk;" "Arise;" or at a distance, as the centurion's servant (Matt 8:5-13).

(c) Appointing to an office

In Acts 6:5,6, we read of the appointment of deacons among whom was Stephen "a man full of faith and of the holy spirit." "And they set them before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." In this case, no doubt, the especial gift of being able to organise the affairs under their care was imparted. Stephen was chosen by the multitude, and the choice confirmed by the apostles.

There are instructive examples of how appointments were made in later times in the epistles to Timothy. There it falls not to the multitude, but to those gifted with prophecy to point out by prophetic utterance those suitable as shepherds of the flock. When this was done the elders of the ecclesia laid their hands on the one chosen and a spiritual gift was imparted such as that of a "pastor" (Eph. 4:11) so in I Tim. 4:14, we read "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Paul also laid his hands on Timothy for the same or a similar purpose: whether at the same time or not is not clear (II Tim. 1:6). We have not many instances of this method of appointment, but it will be noticed that those appointed are already commended by their possession of the spirit, e.g. Joshua (Num. 27:18) and Stephen (Acts 6:5).

(d) Baptism

In Acts 8:17 and 19:6 we have two clear examples of the laying on of hands after baptism, that the spirit might be received. Great importance as such is attached to the laying on of hands in Heb. 6:2, where it is classed with repentance, faith, baptisms, resurrection and judgment. From the position assigned to it in the text, the laying on of hands seems to be that following baptism, though a wider interpretation to include healings, etc. is possible.

(e) Restoration of backsliders

The evidence for this rests on I Tim. 5:22 "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins."

This could refer to appointing to office, but the connection between this and "partaking of another man's sins" seems to imply receiving back into the church someone who was not fully repentant for the errors he had committed.

Following this review, it seems that authoritative members of the church in general, such as the apostles, or elders of a particular local church could by prayer and the laying on of hands, bring to others spiritual blessings and gifts. A similar situation will be found in connection with forgiveness of sins. The Jews were aghast because Jesus claimed to forgive sins. "None but God can do this" they argued, and it is easy for us to adopt the same attitude of mind. But Jesus had this authority, and He gave it to the leaders of His church. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (Matt. 18:18, John 20:23). The church at Corinth exercised this authority, and Paul "in the person of Christ" was prepared to stand by their decision (II Cor. 2:10). Whereas, therefore, the leaders of the church were able to pronounce forgiveness, it is clearly not essential to receiving forgiveness of sins that some such leader be present, and the pronouncement made. So it is with receiving the Spirit. Exactly why the laying on of hands was sometimes practised before the spirit was received can only be deduced. It may be that it was confined at first to occasions of solemn importance where new activities of the gospel were arising and the work required the endorsement of the church in its accredited representatives. There is no indication that the original apostles were the sole representatives for laying on of hands. Of the few instances we have of it being carried out in Acts, one is the case of Ananias who laid his hands on Paul that he might receive the Spirit (Acts 9:17). There is also the case of the elders in I Tim. 4:14.

The reason why it was necessary for Peter and John to go to the Samaritans appears to lie in the need for church backing in the work which was being done there. The "Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans," and the elders at Jerusalem may have taken a narrow view of

the new covenant which had been prophesied for "the house at Israel and the house of Judah" (Jer. 31:31). The "laying on of hands" at baptism and also on returning backsliders strongly suggests that it was an act of receiving into fellowship. God, therefore, appears to have withheld the Spirit from the Samaritans until the apostles as representative of the church at Jerusalem were prepared to receive them into fellowship. In the narrative in Acts chap. 8, the normal manner of receiving the Holy Spirit is stated. "For until then the Spirit had not come upon any of them" (verse 16, N.E.B.). When the apostles arrive, they pray to God that He might give the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans, which again indicates the real source, and apparently their feeling of inadequacy to do the work. Later, when Simon interprets the coming of the Spirit as attributable to the "magic touch" of the apostles, and asks to purchase the power, they rebuke him. He is not told, however, that he cannot have the power of bestowing the Spirit because he was not an apostle, but because his heart was not "right in the sight of God" (verse 21).

The general conclusions therefore are that the bestowal of the Spirit, Spirit gifts, leadership, healing and forgiveness were carried out both with and without the laying on of hands. Authority to lay on hands resided with the leaders and elders of the church. As the church grew, the custom of laying on of hands became general, and was reckoned as one of the foundation principles.

The receiving of the Spirit without the laying on of hands is from the Old Testament prophecies that which we would most usually expect. The prophets speak of it as follows. "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28). "Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high" (Isa. 32:15). "I will pour upon the house of David . . . the spirit of grace . . ." (Zech. 12:10). The New Testament shows this in action at Pentecost, and with Cornelius, but especially in Acts 4:31 "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were all assembled together; and they were all filled with the holy spirit. . . ." We are also led to expect to receive the Holy Spirit by prayer (Luke 11:13) and in Titus we read of the Holy Spirit being shed abundantly after baptism (Titus 3:6).

These testimonies leave no grounds for believing that the Spirit promises could fail on a technicality such as there being none of the original apostles living today. A parallel might be drawn between Moses and Christ. God took Moses' spirit and put it on the seventy elders that they might have some of Moses' administrative ability. So the Spirit of righteousness which is manifestly plain in the life of Jesus will God transfer to his followers if we have faith, repent, believe and ask.

Begotten by the Word

In I Peter chap. 1:23, we read of Christians "being born again . . . by the word of God." The word of God is taken here to mean the Bible. The book is then held to be the source of the new birth, and for us today the only way the Holy Spirit power is felt is in the reading of the Bible.

In order to demonstrate how short sighted this type of exposition is, we need only ask whether the people to whom these words were first addressed were re-born in this way. Clearly they were not. In the previous verse, we have "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the spirit" (verse 22). Those addressed were Spirit filled and cleansed people. Whatever applicability we may find in the passage for today, it must carry the same weight as when it was written.

The "word" in this context is not the Bible which normally describes itself as "the writings" — the

scriptures — the written word. The "word" is the gospel message. In I Pet. 1:25 it is defined "This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." In Acts 10:36, 37, Peter preaches this word "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all) that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea". The context shows what this word contains—how God worked with Jesus, gave Him the Spirit, through which He healed; how Jesus was crucified, raised from the dead, appointed judge and now invites people to repent, believe and have their sins forgiven. This basic message of the cross of Christ pricks men's hearts (compare Acts 2:37), and opens up the way for the Holy Spirit to bring a new creature to birth. This is done most effectively by a preacher using the spoken word. It is the normal method of bringing people to recognise Christ. It is still true, however, that the message can be read in the Bible, but the numbers of people who come to face the truth solely by Bible reading must be few indeed. The word or gospel message is not therefore the Holy Spirit. The word is what the Spirit uses. It is the "sword of the spirit" (Eph. 6:17). The words of Jesus bring spirit and bring life because they open up the understanding to receive these qualities (John 6:63). The words of a preacher accepted on trust bring conversion; real appreciation of the Bible generally following conversion rather than causing it.

Readiness for Religion

by

Paul
Pearson

TEACHING RELIGION to children is not easy. Today's children are not even brought up with a smattering of Biblical knowledge; they are not familiar with simple stories of David, Joseph or Samuel and have probably only heard of Jesus as someone who "started Christmas going". Perplexed Christians have thus no framework to build on or around, and find themselves often having to defend the hitherto unquestioned assertions of Christianity. Encouraging children to think for themselves critically and scientifically, educationists, lecturers and teachers have inevitably left the field wide open. Critical secular thought has added another stumbling block alongside poverty of religious knowledge.

This is not the only problem. It is not only a question of the Church versus society — with society at present prevailing — but the fact that the Church is a house divided against itself. The Church has no solid, clear cut, brand image. Purveyors of its goods range from woolly minded theologians to Bible-punching evangelists, militant sectarians to eclectic Christian humanists. Society's own uncertainty is reflected in Christendom with the general drift being towards a nebulously pseudo-Christian humanism.

Thus, with one eye on the problems posed by a scientific approach, and another on the public ignorance of religious education, research has struggled to produce a system of

SUMMER SCHOOL 1968

SATURDAY, 27th JULY-SATURDAY, 3rd AUGUST

Our Study Week will again be held, God Willing, in the house and lovely grounds of Fircroft College, Birmingham. The course will be run on similar lines to last year and will have the Book of Isaiah as the main study.

The cost of the week will be about £11 0s. 0d. Special terms for families and students. It is important to know the approximate accommodation required, and those wishing to attend should write as soon as possible to our business address:

The Endeavour Magazine, 104 Lady Byron Lane,
Knowle, Solihull, Warwickshire.

religious education more acceptable to the social ethos. In so doing the child's ability to grasp and understand the "grass roots" of religion has also been studied.

According to Dr Ronald Goldman in his book *Readiness for Religion*, the main reason for decline in religious observances is "simply the ineffectiveness of much current religious education". Research has found that children are only able to comprehend certain religious concepts at particular stages in their development. A child moves from a world of fantasy to a period of literal concrete thinking which engenders a crude anthropomorphism. This, according to many, persists far too long into adolescence for the child to arrive at a mature understanding of religion. In other words, "parables for infant school, narrative of the Exodus for juniors, and teaching of the prophets to pupils in the early years in secondary schools are items of an intellectual diet which research demonstrates as unsuitable for children". Dr Goldman makes a further point to the effect that the Bible is not a children's book, and that teaching it can do more harm than good.

Much rich Sunday School material is thus swept aside. Religion, once "nationalised" is now secularised. Dr Goldman's suggestions for religious education in our state schools will have an alien ring for many Christadelphian parents.

He argues for what he calls a child-centred religion. Here the value of human relationships is stressed; something in the "here and now" rather than the "there and then". Early childhood should be a time for communicating simple experiences of life in any lucid way; the actual use of religious terms is of little significance. Middle childhood—the early years in a Junior School — is a time when "life themes" can be developed (e.g. homes, friends, the seasons, beginnings and endings). Religion is allowed to be introduced by the back door. Late childhood and pre-adolescence involves a development of unified life themes — such as myself, creation, light, water in an attempt to "have some framework of meaning through which he (the child) can view the Bible". Various edited and revised translations can now be studied and whilst children can be taught about some aspects of Christ's life, "late juniors

still think of Jesus as some kind of master magician".

Adolescence comes as a time of decision. Often there is a feeling of betrayal, in that deeply ingrained anthropomorphic ideas are not harmonious with the real world. At a time when many become ready for religion they reject it. To overcome this their education in life themes prepares them for Bible teaching and discussion about the life of Christ, the Acts and the Epistles, the spread of Christianity, allied to problems of friendship, sex and marriage, snobbery, money, work, leisure, prayer, suffering and death.

These are the suggestions. They are intended to show how religious truths should be imparted gradually, drawing primarily on the child's limited experience which evolves into a more complex or scientific appraisal of the meaningfulness of religion. A more mature, liberal attitude is encouraged, away from the diehard fundamentalism of former years. Religion is made active and relevant for twentieth-century man.

For many it would be euphemistic to say that Dr Goldman's book is disturbing. Not only in its implications is it foreboding but in its implicit value-judgments. With his more basic suggestions, the "life-themes", he is aware of possible criticisms. He agrees that with no set pattern of lessons to be followed, no ground to be covered, they may be woolly and vague. (It could be argued that these suggested alternatives are more perplexing than the effects of 'crude' Bible Stories.) He adds, significantly, "a small but vocal fundamentalist section of teachers will find both the methods and content of my approach quite unpalatable."

Christadelphians are not fundamentalists in the recognised sense of the term: we do not subscribe to orthodox views of hell, the devil, the immortal soul, etc. Yet we do have a fundamentalism which holds the Bible up as the only court of appeal, but which is becoming increasingly sensitive to the borderline between literal interpretation and metaphor.

Throughout his book Dr Goldman assumes that literal, anthropomorphic views of the Bible — ones that we hold on many doctrines — are immature. He has difficulty in sowing the good seed of the Gospel and at the same time sowing the seeds of

doubt. Not only that; such a statement as "any stories about God or Jesus cannot be thought of as false or inaccurate to the late junior" come as a tragic witness to much contemporary religious thought. What specifically he means by this is not clear, but he seems equally worried by God's unpredictable justice in the Old Testament and its relationship to God's all embracing love in the New. Hence it is necessary to play down the historical events and accentuate their spiritual meanings. Characteristic of the Bishop of Woolwich school, it appears that whether or not the Bible states that an historical event really happened does not matter a great deal and can be accepted or rejected according to one's predilections and prejudices. On the positive side the book does provide much useful information as to what extent children can comprehend religious statements at different ages. Dr Goldman's earlier book *Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence* contains a lot more material and outlines the various theoretical approaches to child study as investigated by psychologists and educationalists. This really forms the basis for the present book where an attempt is made to bring children to religion rather than forcing religion upon them. It is surely commendable to feed the right food at the right time to the child and not be left with a mass of undigested material. No doubt a good number of Christadelphian Sunday School lessons are unpalatable and much indeed proves fairly heavy going. A child must learn to swallow before it can ingest.

Inevitably where the book falls short is its primary assumptions on the interpretation of the Bible, and although it is laudable in its aims, from a Christadelphian's viewpoint it is lamentable in its recommendations. It serves as another indication that religion is selling out to humanism; where religious education is reduced to little more than nature lessons for future well meaning agnostics, or social study lessons for benevolent atheists.

Even the terms "religious education" (n.b. not instruction) may not be meaningful two decades from now. Truly in some sense there is always a "readiness for religion," but what kind of religion?

"Une religion sans Dieu! Mon Dieu, quelle religion!"

The Earliest Civilisations of the Near East

A Factual Record of the Major Discoveries

ALTHOUGH THE STORY OF MANKIND occupies only a tiny part of the whole story of this planet, to us, in a later age, its beginnings lie far back in the deeps of time. Others have told the early history of the earth, until, finally, man appeared, the peak of the animal kingdom, and with him civilisation. It is here that archaeology can take up the tale, although it can tell all too little, a shadow of countless lives of man, the briefest outline but, nevertheless, enough to establish a continuous development into historical times.

Archaeology is dependent upon finding material objects associated with men. An odd skeleton or a collection of human bones will tell the excavator practically nothing unless accompanied by some other object—pottery, ornaments, or tools, however primitive—then some picture of the kind of life these men lived begins to appear. So one must start when men began to use things other than their bare hands and to live on one spot for a period of time, perhaps only a matter of months, but long enough to leave such refuse as would form a slight occupation level. The earliest of these occupation levels so far found is in Turkey, where the evidence for human occupation now appears to go back well beyond 8,000 B.C. Unfortunately this has not yet been fully published and as the evidence from Palestine begins to appear only a little later, we may as well begin the story there.

Palaeolithic

In some of the many caves on the slopes of Mount Carmel have been

found the earliest traces of civilisation in Palestine, if "civilisation" is a just word, for in these caves, during the Palaeolithic period, there lived nomadic hunters about whom little or nothing can be learned from the scraps of food and other odds and ends which survived them.

Mesolithic—Natufian, c. 7800 B.C.

After them, there settled at Mount Carmel another people, less nomadic than the first but still very primitive. Their occupation level follows immediately upon that of their predecessors, at the time when the Ice Cap was retreating from Europe. Because the traces of these forgotten men were first found in the Wadi en-Natuf, they are now known as the Natufian culture. They developed a way of life quite new in Palestine, where they were probably indigenous, although similar to other, later, Mesolithic groups in Europe. They hunted gazelle and fished with bone harpoons and bone fish hooks but there is the suggestion of some attempt at cultivating food (the earliest attempt of its kind known to archaeological research in the world), for portions of sickles with the flint blade trimmed to a ridge to fit into a V-shaped groove in a haft, have been found. Two complete hafts came to light made of bone with the head of a beast carved at the end. The burials of these people were rather elaborate. The dead bore many ornaments of shell and bone, but what rites and beliefs accompanied such ceremony cannot now be guessed.

Jericho

The Natufians lingered long at Mount Carmel but that was not their only dwelling. A related group lived at the same time at Jericho and it is in this once great city that a continuous development may be seen through many lives of men, until it was abandoned after the Israelite invasion.

Today, the mound of ancient Jericho stands 70 feet above the plain, a tall knoll behind the palm groves of the little town clustering below it. For nearly 7,000 years men have lived there, drawn by the perennial spring of Ain es-Sultan which, rising at a now hidden source, flows out through Jericho, to lose itself at last in the salt flats of the Dead Sea.

In 1958 bedrock was finally reached at Jericho and there, at the lowest level, a small shrine was found by which lay clearly Natufian objects—a small flint lunate and bone harpoon heads, such as were found only in the lowest Natufian level at Carmel and must therefore suggest a parallel date for this, the first known occupation of Jericho. Fortunately for us, this Mesolithic sanctuary (probably dedicated to the spirit of the spring) was burned down, enabling a carbon sample to be taken, which produced a Carbon-14 dating of 7800 B.C. $\pm$ 210 years.

Proto-Neolithic

The forgotten wanderers, who worshipped by the spring, must, eventually, have decided to settle there and for many generations they lived

in flimsy houses not much different from the night shelters of their nomadic fathers. The existence of these proto-neolithic people is now represented only by 13 feet of innumerable layers, found towards the centre of the mound, between the Neolithic level and the bedrock and each bounded by a small ridge, being all that remains of their slight, hut-like dwellings. The depth of this proto-neolithic level shows how very long it was before some ambitious person branched out and built a more solid house, thus unwittingly introducing the pre-pottery Neolithic A period.

Pre-pottery Neolithic A, c. 6850 B.C.

This period is a direct and uninterrupted development from the Natufian culture, having the same flint and bone industry. The houses, made from hand-moulded bricks and built on the pattern of the primitive shelters, seem to have been popular and are found at this level throughout the whole 10 acres of the mound. It is, incidentally, here in Jericho that the transformation of hunters and wanderers into members of a settled community is first seen. Long and varied was the history of this pre-pottery town. Three times the inhabitants built their town walls and three times they were destroyed. Yet they remained still standing to 12 feet high and 6 feet 6 inches wide when they were unearthed in the 1950s. On the western side, the men of Jericho raised up a great white tower, within the fortifications, which can still be seen today standing 30 feet from the ground. Inside, a long staircase winds up through the thickness of the wall at the foot of which were found the skeletons of two men. When the town defences fell for the last time, the houses inside the wall were burned and the carbonised material from these gives a Carbon-14 dating of 6850 B.C. $\pm$ 210 years.

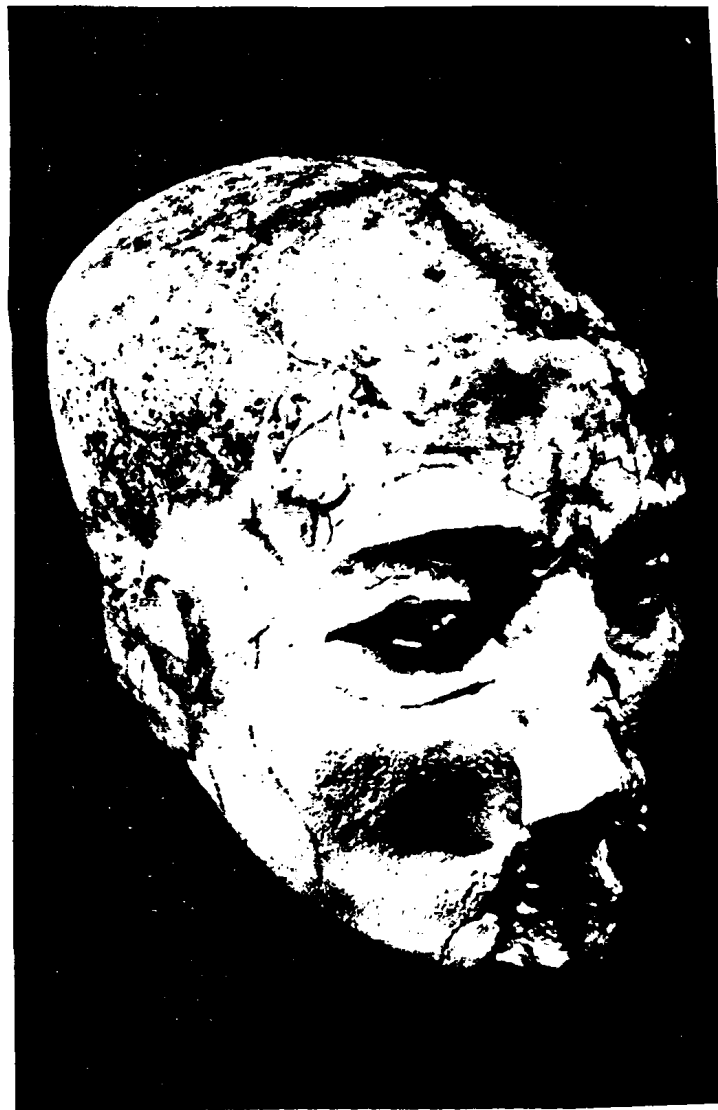
Pre-pottery Neolithic B, c. 6000 B.C.

To what end the pre-pottery Neolithic A people came, finally, is unknown for immediately upon the debris of the third town comes that of a greater town—the town of the invaders, who, taking Jericho for themselves, established the pre-pottery Neolithic B culture. These were a people differing much from the former

inhabitants. They rebuilt the burned city with large, many-roomed houses of rectilinear plan, obviously developed during a long settled occupation elsewhere. At Jericho there flourished a large community, self-sufficient and prosperous, whose many remains indicate farming, hunting and the rearing of some livestock. The physical appearance of these people is revealed in the strange beauty of the plastered skulls found beneath a floor in one of their dwellings. Two Carbon-14 dates were taken which give some indication of the chronology of the phase, dating it to c. 6000 B.C.

Parallel Developments Elsewhere

The transition from nomadic to settled life is, perhaps, seen most clearly at Jericho but parallel developments were taking place elsewhere. Many folk lived in small village communities in the north of the Fertile Crescent, from the Iranian foothills to the Mediterranean coast. They show variations of culture but they were alike in being firmly attached to one spot, generation succeeding generation in the same village. They all used pottery—simple, handmade pottery, particularly a dark-faced burnished ware whose original home seems to



Plastered skull from Jericho, Neolithic
(Courtesy Palestine Exploration Fund)

have been the Syro-Cilician plains. Unfortunately all the sites where this ware appears were excavated before the use of Carbon-14 dating but the mid fifth millennium date ascribed to them seems to fit in well with the succeeding stages down to the beginning of the historic period. In Iraq, too, another line of development can be traced through a series of preceding stages showing the development of these villages from the final food-gathering stage.¹

Jarmo is the earliest permanent village. It covered about three acres with solid rectangular buildings and, like early Jericho, the inhabitants did not, apparently, use pottery. As the architecture and tools of the Jarmo people are quite different from those of Jericho, there can have been no connection between these people and so we see a parallel development taking place independently in different groups. Jarmo was one of the first sites in the Near East to be dated by Carbon-14. A series of six tests all gave dates of c. 4750 B.C. for the latest dates of this settlement and, though Professor Braidwood has suggested an earlier date, the mid fifth millennium date still seems to be the most likely. But here the date is not so important as the fact that in the Near East there were clearly several independent lines of development which ultimately gave a very diverse background to the resultant village communities.

Pottery Neolithic A

The life of these Neolithic, pottery-using villages is again typified in Jericho. The pre-pottery Jericho people seem to have come to an untimely end and with their passing, culture waned in Jericho. Their successors preferred burrowing to building and they riddled the pre-pottery occupation level with pit dwellings in which were found innumerable pieces of broken pottery. The pottery was primitive but obviously they arrived in Jericho knowing how to make pottery, if nothing else, although their other possessions were much more crude than those of their predecessors. What is of greatest interest is that examples similar to this distinctive Neolithic A pottery have turned up elsewhere—at Tell Duweir in South Palestine, at

Wadi Rabah in central Palestine and a little at Megiddo. This suggests that these folk established themselves over much of Palestine.

Pottery Neolithic B

There came a change in Jericho, a change which was probably gradual, almost imperceptible, to the first pottery-using Jericho folk, for even now the break between the two groups is not clear. The newcomers, who must first have arrived in small groups, quietly settling at Jericho and then in ever-increasing numbers until, finally, they dominated the population, are distinguished by the superior quality of their pottery. These more sophisticated, better-worked ceramics are really all that remain of the pottery Neolithic B people at Jericho, because at this point the town was rather badly denuded and of the free-standing houses and town wall which they apparently built, very little remains. It is the cultural link which this level shows with other sites rather than the level at Jericho which is important. Pottery very similar to that of the Neolithic B at Jericho has turned up in the Jordan valley at Sha'ar ha-Golan, and also at Byblos, together with dark burnished ware, like that of the Neolithic villages of the northern fertile crescent. The isolation of the individual groups in Palestine was, therefore, at last beginning to break down and we can see a way of life building up over the whole of Palestine.

Chalcolithic

The introduction of metal working drew people together even more, for the sources of copper are geographically restricted and necessitate a regular trade supply. The change came, of course, very gradually, but it is reflected in the growth of widespread cultures and eventually the amalgamations of isolated groups into a cultural whole. It was, therefore, between the end of the Neolithic and the beginning of the Bronze Age that the transition came about: the Halafian culture as it is called, being first identified at Tell Halaf in northern Iraq. The way of life exemplified at Tell Halaf spread from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean coast with very few variations. Its most characteristic feature was the

pottery which bore red geometric decoration on a light ground. It was thought, at first, that such influences did not spread as far as Palestine, but now there do seem to be groups which correspond, particularly that of Teleilat Ghassul in the Jordan valley, north-east of the Dead Sea. It is thought that they were newcomers, settling in the Jordan valley in the time succeeding the pottery Neolithic B at Jericho. When Teleilat Ghassul was first excavated in the years 1930-1938 by the Pontifical Biblical Institute it seemed to be an isolated phenomenon but later, when other discoveries had been made, and earlier ideas reassessed it was seen to be only a part of a culture spreading throughout Palestine. Its characteristic pottery has been found in sites as far apart as Affuleh in the plain of Esdraelon and Beersheba in the south. There is, so far, no direct evidence for a precise dating of this intermediate period but from the evidence as a whole, the first half of the fourth millennium seems probable.

Palestine at this time, therefore, was a populous land in which a number of people of diverse origins lived side by side in comparative peace. But they were living at the dawn of a new age.

The Bronze Age

The first indications of change came through the apparent invasion, or at least intrusion, of a new group in the last third of the fourth millennium. This group is distinguished by its tombs which have been found widely spread throughout the land, although the evidence for settlement is slight. For the first time in Palestine rock-cut tombs and natural caves were used for burial. The tombs must have been used for many years because they contained multiple burials of three or four hundred persons, with whom were placed many offerings. It is possible that these new people came from the north and east, for there is very little evidence, so far, for their presence in the south, except at Gezer. Six tombs of this type were found at Jericho and the type of pottery found in them has appeared at a number of other places.

The City States of the Early Bronze Age

The third millennium before Christ was the dawn of history as against

¹ R. J. & L. Braidwood, *Journal of World History*, I, 1953.

pre-history. Written records now began to be used and so historians are no longer dependent upon pure archaeology in studying this period. The great empires of the world were beginning, which meant an increase of communal organisation and a need to keep some kind of economic record—the beginning of writing. Both the Nile and the Tigris—Euphrates valleys had developed a writing system by the third millennium and as both these valleys lacked many raw materials, a great impetus was given to trading, which brought a further stimulus to the breakdown of isolation and, eventually, to the establishing of empires, the histories of which began to be documented by contemporary sources. The areas which lacked this trading stimulus tended to be left behind and so, while Egypt and Mesopotamia were rapidly progressing, a sedentary agricultural population was steadily building up in Palestine.

In Mesopotamia the Sumerians and, later, the Babylonians, compiled their own historical records purporting to look back to their own dim beginnings. Although this may not be strictly included under "archaeology" a brief look at such evidence may be instructive. The Sumerians pondered on their antecedents and, like the Egyptians, compiled long lists of fore-going kings. These lists were, in fact, several copies of a single compilation, the King List, which was probably given its final form at the end of the first dynasty of Isin in c. 1794 B.C. What is of interest to us is the mention of a flood in the King List, dividing it into two parts—the pre-

diluvian period, the kings of which had fabulously long reigns, and the post-diluvian period of 20 dynasties. It is impossible to place the pre-diluvian kings in any certain archaeological context of southern Babylonia but recent observations upon the sites of several cities, Ur, Uruk, Kish and Shuruppak, have revealed a barren stratum between two periods of occupation, which appears to be water-laid. The most impressive flood-stratum was found by Woolley at Ur, and he placed it strategically in the Al-'Ubaid period and suggested that it might be the remains of the Flood, although other interpretations can be put upon the evidence. However, it seems clear from both literary and archaeological evidence that a catastrophe was experienced in Southern Mesopotamia of such proportions that it remained a shadow on the edge of memory long after the actual events were forgotten. In Southern Mesopotamia only, however, for no break appears in the surrounding cultures at a comparable date. The Al-'Ubaid period may be dated c. 3400 B.C. and the continuity of culture at this date in Palestine (to name only one example) is well documented in the pottery using Neolithic A and B levels at Jericho. To adopt Bishop Ussher's date for the Flood, 2349 B.C., as some still do, is even more unhelpful because there is no evidence at all for such a catastrophe at this date—rather the reverse, for as the third millennium progresses we find that the historical picture becomes clearer and clearer. In Southern Mesopotamia the Uruk period followed that of Al-'Ubaid.

and was first found by excavations at Warka, 40 miles north of Ur, a city known in the Bible as Erech and in Babylonian texts as Uruk. The transition was not marked by violent conquest, but, rather, the new folk mingled with the earlier peoples grafting their own arts and crafts on to those already existing. The third stage was the Jemdet Nasr Period, named after a mound east of Hilla where their pottery and some clay tablets written in an archaic script, were found. Again the new peoples probably came by infiltration rather than conquest (they are first known by their many graves) and the break in culture between the two periods is not sharp. The Early Dynastic Period succeeded that of Jemdet Nasr and to this period belong the royal tombs of Ur. The Early Dynastic Period ended with the rise to power of Sargon King of Akkad in Northern Mesopotamia, whose date was approximately 2370 B.C. But the might of Sargon did not long outlast him and the dynasty of Agade fell to the Gutian invaders, c. 2250 B.C., who in their turn fell before a revival of Sumerian rule—the Third Dynasty of Ur.

Few now doubt the extreme antiquity of our race. The story of mankind, though dim and confused at times, is there for all to read who will, and is yearly becoming more clear. Though there has been disaster, grief and failure of promise, never has the seed of man failed or been cut off throughout the whole earth, but it has continued, springing up and flourishing in times and places unlooked for.

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Was there an Apostles' Creed?

by Herbert Adams

WHAT DEGREE of understanding of Christianity was expected by Christian preachers in New Testament times of those whom they admitted to the church?

First, some subsidiary points:—

1. Many of the conversions of which we read in the New Testament seem to have taken place very quickly—so quickly that the preachers had no time even to propound an elaborate system of doctrine, still less to examine the hearers' understanding of it. Three thousand were baptised on the first day of the apostles' preaching; a proselyte was baptised after a chariot journey of, at most, a few hours. It is true that these all had a Jewish background, and needed little more than to believe that the Messiah had come, and to revise their ideas of what the Messiah should be. But it is not stated that the jailor at Philippi and his family were Jews, or proselytes, or God-fearers, yet they were converted and baptised between midnight and morning.

2. Was this Jewish background altogether an advantage? Jewish doctrines in the first century were certainly corrupt. belief in Satan as a supernatural being was very common, and belief in the immortality of the soul, if not universal, was widespread.

Christians associated with Jews in worship in a way which is surprising to us, who will have little to do with those from whom we have come out. In spite of the Jews' false doctrines, and their rejection of Jesus, the apostles continued to pray in the Temple, and to worship in the synagogues: indeed, Jesus predicted that the severance of Christians from the synagogue would be the Jews' doing, not the disciples'.

3. It would seem intolerable to us that there should be no agreement about which books of the Bible were inspired by God. Though disagreement on the authority of some books would have little effect on faith or practice, acceptance of, and reverence for, a fixed canon seem to us to be indispensable. Yet even the Hebrew canon was not fixed till late in the first

century; and those who read the Old Testament in the Septuagint had very different versions of some Old Testament books, and additions to the Old Testament which Palestinian Jews did not acknowledge. At this stage nobody seemed bothered by small differences of opinion about which books were authoritative.

To argue in this way is not to claim that immaturity of understanding or errors of doctrine were thought not to be important. Undoubtedly the apostles expected that more detailed teaching would follow baptism (1 Cor. 3: 2; Heb. 6: 1-2). It is clear, nevertheless, that many, when they were baptised, had a very imperfect conception of their new faith.

How may we account for this? Was there a period during which allowances were made for Jewish prejudice and Gentile ignorance, and a lower degree of understanding was accepted than was later thought proper? Or did the authoritative teaching which followed baptism justify baptism at a comparatively early stage of instruction? It would be difficult to find evidence to support these assertions: much more evidence exists to support the inference that the apostles used a summary of their faith in their preaching, and on their acceptance of this "creed" converts were baptised.

The best-known exposition of this view is by Professor C. H. Dodd, though he was preceded by some continental scholars at the beginning of the century. In *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* he prints a table showing a series of themes common to the early speeches of Acts and some of Paul's letters. The preaching in Jerusalem (Acts 2-5), Peter's address to Cornelius' family (Acts 10), and Paul's at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13), together with passages in Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians and Romans, fall into a common pattern:—

The time predicted by the prophets has come; the prophecies have been fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah. He was of David's line; he died according to the

Scriptures; he was buried, and rose, according to the Scriptures. He is now exalted as Lord, and will come again as judge. Therefore repent, believe, and be baptised.

This summary made some assumptions: it built on Jewish monotheism and Messianic hope. But to those with this background these facts constituted the Christian gospel. The response we find to this preaching in Acts implies strongly that when a man had reached this level of faith he was acceptable as a Christian.

One may, of course, assert that the apostles actually demanded a far more detailed knowledge of Christianity than these summaries suggest, even to the extent of teaching and requiring acceptance of the 60 or so positive and negative definitions of doctrine and conduct with which we are familiar. The evidence, however, certainly does not justify such an assertion. On the contrary, Acts 16: 20 and Romans 10: 9 suggest that the Christian confession of faith was only brief. (The western addition, Acts 8: 37, confirms this if, as is probable, it reflects the baptismal confession of a time not long after the apostles.) Whatever allowance we may make for what is implicit in these confessions, it can only be gratuitous to say that they imply acceptance of the elaborate body of doctrine which, with much subtle argument, we have extracted from the complete Bible.

Anything which genuinely destroyed this faith was heresy, and against heresy and apostasy the apostles fought vigorously. The heresies condemned in the New Testament all undermined this fundamental teaching:—

1. Reverting to the law invalidated the work of Christ, by making salvation depend on something other than faith in him. This was especially true of the particular form of Jewish and gnostic-type beliefs at Colossae.

2. Errors about the resurrection—that there was no resurrection, or that it was past already—contradicted the historical facts about Christ, and the significance of his return.

3. The deceivers and antichrists of John's letters denied that the Son of God in heaven was identical with the human son of David.

There was an early legend that the apostles agreed among themselves on the words of a creed, but though the evidence alluded to above suggests that there was an accepted range of topics which summarised the Christian faith, there is no evidence that these were embodied in apostolic times into a precise formula—what we now usually mean by a creed. The most that can be said is that some New Testament fragments sound like familiar, oft-repeated statements, perhaps used in catechesis, or quoted from hymns (for example, I Cor. 8: 6; 15: 3-4; I Tim. 3: 16).

In later decades some patterns recur often, suggesting that there was an accepted formulation of doctrine, but still without any fixed form of words.

The first definite creed of which we have precise knowledge is a baptismal creed of Hippolytus. He was a stickler for tradition, and although the words in their present form may be his own, he is probably reproducing an agreed form of doctrine which existed at Rome about A.D. 200. This creed most likely originated a few decades earlier. The earliest form which can be reconstructed is as follows:—

I believe in God the Father almighty;
and in Christ Jesus his only Son,
our Lord;
who was born from the Holy Spirit
and the virgin Mary;
who under Pontius Pilate was
crucified, and buried;
on the third day rose again from
the dead,
ascended to heaven, sits on the
right hand of the Father;
whence he will come to judge the
living and the dead;
and in the Holy Spirit, the holy
Church, the remission
of sins, the resurrection of the flesh.

This, with the possible exception of the last clause (which the Fathers defended against the more scriptural "resurrection of the dead"), is a transparently accurate definition of New Testament teaching, and is clearly in the same line of tradition as the New Testament passages quoted earlier. It has been commended for dealing with *facts*, rather than *ideas*—a contrast which may be seen by comparing it with the Chalcedonian Definition or the Athanasian Creed. It is as good a summary as any of the fundamentals in which Christadelphians believe.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Circumcision

A READER in the eastern counties writes, "There is a question which I would like to have discussed in the magazine. . . . Experts tell us that ritual circumcision (apparently with a strong religious significance) was practised commonly . . . in the area of the Near East. We get the impression from the Bible that the Jews were marked off from other nations by the rite of circumcision. . . ."

Answer:

The inquirer is correctly informed that ritual circumcision was widely practised in the Near East. It was established (at least for priests) already in predynastic Egypt (before 3,000 B.C.), and was practised generally among the Canaanites, Aramaeans and Arabs both during and after the periods of the Old and New Testaments. The Babylonians and Assyrians, being largely influenced in cultural matters by the Sumerians, who preceded them, did not cultivate this practice, and the Philistines, one of the "Sea Peoples" who came down from the north into the Near East with their own customs, similarly did not use this rite. Thus on the Hebrews' borders only the Philistines did not practise circumcision, and the Hebrews accordingly spoke disparagingly of them as "uncircumcised" (I Sam. 14: 6, etc.).

When every allowance is made for the approximate character of dates for early Egyptian history, and for the problems of Biblical chronology, it is quite impossible to put Abraham, to whom the rite was assigned by God as a token of the covenant with him, before 3,000 B.C. It is, then, a fact that circumcision was not new with Abraham in the history of mankind. If this fact is a problem, it is one of our own making. We have assumed that any institution of divine appointing would necessarily be quite new. This idea is not anywhere stated or adumbrated in the Bible. It is a merely human idea. Its validity can be tested by comparing other divinely appointed institutions to see if they are always totally new. Baptism, the rite of initiation into the New Covenant, is a comparable institution. It was not, as a rite, new when the early church began to use it. For some time back it had been a rite of initiation into the Jewish faith for a proselyte. As such, it was not divinely appointed. Between the

Testaments the Jews had elaborated every aspect of their Law, and they had decided that every proselyte must no doubt in his earlier life have contracted ritual impurity by not observing the Law of Moses. When Jews became ritually impure, bathing in water was prescribed as part of the purification rites. Proselytes were, therefore, required to undergo this ritual bathing as well as circumcision in order to be accepted into the Jewish faith. The bathing as such was of course laid down in the Law, but the extension of its use to an initiatory rite was one of the "traditions of the elders," not a regulation of Scripture. Yet it was this, humanly devised rite, that was employed by the apostles as the proper means of joining the Body of Christ.

These are well-known facts, and if they seem to create a paradox for us, it would be well to remind ourselves that Christian baptism is not simply a dipping in water, but is "an appeal made to God by a good conscience." The mere dipping in water is nothing of itself, and that others dip the body in water in the course of religious rites is a matter of no consequence. It is the spirit in which the dipping takes place that gives validity to Christian baptism, and that spirit was unique and quite new when the early church as established by the apostles insisted on this as the proper way of entering the Christian community.

The same applies to circumcision. The mere physical rite of itself is nothing. Many civilisations from the dawn of history and onwards have used it. But the covenant of which it was the seal to Abraham was something unique to him. Everything depends on the attitude one brings to the matter. From a purely anthropological standpoint Hebrew circumcision is just like any other, and on this basis it is hard to see how God could have prescribed something that was already well known. But as a token of a unique covenant, seen from a Biblical standpoint, its distinctiveness is obvious.

If other readers have comments on this point, we should be happy to receive them.

W. G. L.

A Report on a Christian Project

Reflections on "Life Line"

from Australia

"LIFE LINE," by Alan Walker, is available as a paperback in the Collins Fontana books. It is a story of ordinary men and women who decided that if they were going to call themselves Christians they ought to *do* something. It is a story of an efficient organisation which salvaged the wrecked lives of men and women who cried for help. It demonstrates how modern techniques, from radio cars to psychiatry, can be used in the Name of Christ.

Life Line, now a world-wide organisation, is a challenge to all Christians to get up and go, to stop talking and start living.

As an organisation Life Line originated with the author of the book, Dr Alan Walker, who is superintendent of the Central Methodist Mission in Sydney. Concerned with the number of phone calls he received from people in distress, and yet unable to meet many of their needs personally he conceived the idea of a "Mantle of Christ" over Sydney. Years before, John Flynn had cast a "mantle of safety" over the lonely inland of Australia, by the introduction of pedal wireless sets at the isolated homesteads, and aeroplane headquarters for the Flying Doctor Service.

Dr Walker asked himself why could not another "mantle of safety" be cast over the deep hidden loneliness to be found in a great city.

As the radio and aeroplane brought fulfilment to John Flynn's dream, so the telephone and the untapped resources of many a church congregation began to bring to fulfilment Alan Walker's dream.

A central telephone reference centre was established which was planned to work for 24 hours a day. It opened for business on Saturday, 16th March 1963.

Vast preparation was put into the opening of this service centre. Almost five years elapsed from when the idea of Life Line was first conceived until it was finally put into action. Money had to be raised, buildings planned, and volunteers recruited and trained. In June 1962 the first training courses were held. One hundred and fifty-two people enrolled at Sydney's College for Christians. Three study sessions were held every Tuesday night. From 6.30 to 7.15 there was a biblical lecture, from 7.15 to 8.00 discussion groups were held, and from 8.00 to 9.00 there was a course on counselling.

Telephone counsellors were to be only contact people, but they had to have enough insight into the seriousness of need they would meet to be able to cope with their work. Some of the problems would be—the breaking and broken home, the alcoholic, the compulsive gambler, the lonely, the depressive, the potential suicide, and the man and woman in physical need.

Telephone counsellors are still trained and they have to abide by rigid rules of conduct, e.g. they must always remain anonymous, must recognise that the supreme purpose of Life Line is to lead men and women to Christ, and must urge people to come to the Life Line centre for interviews whenever possible. Often the telephone call is a therapy in itself for the caller, but more often the caller is obviously in need of further counsel and help.

Behind the telephone counsellor is another counselling staff. Trained people in various fields, full-time and part-time, accept counselling appointments. Social workers, doctors, psychiatrists, marriage-counsellors, and ministers, work constantly at Life Line. There are also panels of professional helpers, who in an

honorary capacity, are available to assist, e.g. doctors, youth advisers, business and financial advisers.

As well as these, there are referral agencies in Sydney, such as government hospitals, psychiatric services, Alcoholics Anonymous, the Salvation Army, night refuges for the homeless and many more.

As an agency of the Sydney Central Methodist Mission, Life Line seeks to bring people to Christ through the art of caring. It offers friendship and help until a person is completely restored to normality, just as the Good Samaritan offered it when he gave money to the inn-keeper and said, "Look after him, and if you spend any more I will repay you on my way back" (Luke 10:35).

Life Line recognises the truth that many problems could be overcome if people did not feel so lonely, and if they realised how many others are facing the same problem as themselves. Therefore, at Wesley Centre, in Sydney, groups are formed to offer fellowship to people in certain types of need, e.g. A Gambler's Liberty Group is held, and a group for unmarried mothers. Other groups are the Business Women's Club, Young Marrieds' Club, and the Teenage Cabaret, in which Christian teenagers seek to befriend and eventually evangelise those who are not Christian.

The differing kinds of need to be found in a big city are analysed in this book, and a clear, statistical classification of problems is to be found. It is sufficient to say here that in the third year of the existence of Life Line, up to March 1966, 11,130 counselling contacts were made. To show the kind of problems Life Line has to deal with, here are three examples. One was a telephone call from a young married man of 35 years of age, who had two young child-

ren. He had just learned that he had cancer and had approximately six months to live. In his case the telephone call itself, and the communicated faith of the telephone counsellor were all that were needed to help that man.

Another case related is that of an old man living alone, frail and fearful. He phoned Life Line at Christmas 1965. He told the counsellor that he had broken from his family as a young man and had seen nothing of his three brothers and a sister since. A member of the Caring Division of Life Line went to see him. She searched the electoral roll and telephone directory and rang every person with the same surname until at last a contact was made, and eventually a lonely old man was reunited with his family.

These two stories are commonplace enough to illustrate the kind of problems which abound in our big cities. The third story is more dramatic, but just as true. John was an unhappy young man who became a thief. On his release from jail he began stealing again. One day he tried to kill himself on a beach in South Australia. Lacking the necessary courage he went to a phone box, intending to give himself up to the police, but instead he saw the telephone number of Adelaide's Life Line and so he rang Life Line instead.

Life Line helped, and John went straight for six months. Then he robbed the church and people who had helped him! Finding from them forgiveness rather than condemnation, John was suddenly overwhelmed by the wonder of God's love. He knew that God wanted him, no matter what he was like, and out of gratitude for this love John is now working and paying back, week by week, the money which he stole. More than this he is preparing to offer himself as a candidate for ministry in the Methodist Church.

It is clear from reading this book that, sickness, loneliness, bereavement, guilt, the sense of absence from God, the inability to pray, are all reasons why people ring Life Line. Dr Walker is sure that it is because it is a Christian social service that people use it. He feels that in general the Church is far from the people, yet people still have spiritual desires which need to be fulfilled.

Often the Church is insensitive to the real needs of many people, and, ignorant of what to do to make contact with the Church, it seems to be the last place to which people turn for help.

This is the place where we could do some soul-searching. Dr Walker considers that many congregations are just bodies of worshippers. The act of worship itself is the end of many a congregation's aspirations. He observes that the

Church that worships only, will die. That is because worship should lead to service.

When he founded Life Line he discovered that in many an apparently stagnant congregation was a great well of talent lying hidden. It only needed the type of purposeful service which he planned for Life Line, to reveal a hidden ardour for Christ and His Cause.

He found in his denomination, as we may find in ours, that there was only work available for a few, for example in Sunday School teaching and lay preaching.

In our meetings we are often reminded of how lukewarm we are, but sometimes we may ask, where is there a need for our service? Brethren may do public speaking but sisters cannot. Not all brethren are suited for speaking, or are happy doing it.

Some may do mission work overseas, some may be Sunday School teachers, some may work at the nursing home or at old people's homes, but what service can the majority of us that are left perform? We know that our own private lives call for constant unselfishness and striving against worldliness, but what can we do together, as a community to show our love for our Lord and our faith in Him? Should we try to serve as a community?

Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."

He also said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Think—how the story of the thief. John, in Adelaide, demonstrates the glorifying of God through the forgiveness and acceptance of a group of Christians.

In general, how often does a potential suicide, an unmarried mother, a lonely child left alone in a house at night, turn to the Church for help? How often do they turn to us? Why have we, the Body of Christ, failed them? We know that suffering people were attracted to Christ during His earthly ministry. Why are they not attracted to the Body of Christ, the Ecclesia, now? In Sydney, at least, many of them are attracted to Life Line.

The Methodists of Sydney had the advantage of owning a city block, and the untapped resources of a large denomination behind them when they started Life Line, yet the whole idea started in the heart of one compassionate Christian man. We should never be discouraged because we are few in number. It has been proved many times that God can do great things through a few dedicated lives given wholly to Him.

The kind of service that Life Line represents, is not worldly, humanistic

"do-gooding". Its ultimate aim is to evangelise each soul that applies to it for help, although help is never refused to anyone. A very high standard is expected of counsellors. After rigorous training and selection by staff members, a prospective member of the movement must take a five-fold pledge, the first two parts of which are:

1. "I accept Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord."

2. "I seek by personal piety and corporate prayer to grow in holiness and be a channel of God's grace."

Such is the high standard and deep dedication of those in the Life Line movement now, that the city of Sydney has accepted it with gratitude. Its telephone number is listed with the fire brigade and other emergency services in the telephone directory.

Once we grasped the Life Line that God has thrown to all men. We came, by Christ, out of the mire of our sin and weariness, into the Light of God. Now we must show to others that God Himself has thrown out the great Life Line in sending His Son into the world. What better way of preaching the Gospel is there than the way of compassion and friendship?

In His lifetime on earth, Jesus drew all kinds of unlikely people to Himself, including prostitutes, divorcees, thieves and maniacs. In honesty, can we say that we draw these people to ourselves? Surely now, at the end of the age, Jesus is making a last plea for repentance, to all men, through us.

Whatever your opinion of Alan Walker's book, I am sure the reading of it will make you examine the quality of your own service to the Lord, as it made me examine mine.

We have all sinned. We are all responsible for some of the suffering of the world, and for the curse on the earth. Should we not help to relieve some of the pain and degradation, which but for the grace of God we might be experiencing?

And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?

But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Matthew 9:10-13).

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

by Ralph Lovelock

5

The Power of Faith

HAVING EXAMINED the relative positions of Gentile and Jew before God, and reached so devastating a conclusion, that the "chosen people" were no more acceptable as individuals than the nations around them, Paul turns to the basis of their claim: "What then are we to say about Abraham, our ancestor in the natural line?" It was because God gave an unconditional promise to Abraham that his "seed" should inherit the Land that the Jew counted himself as a people with an assured future in the purpose of God. The next three chapters, four to six, develop his answer to this claim, an answer as scandalous to the Jew as were the contents of the first three chapters.

In chapter four he expands the short argument of the third chapter of Galatians. The entry into the Jewish community was marked by the act of circumcision, and, to be a Jew in the complete sense, a man had to be circumcised; even if he was not born into the natural line of Abraham, circumcision could give him full access to that privilege. Paul now points out that Abraham was not circumcised at the time when the promise was made, and hence that circumcision is not an essential prerequisite to becoming an heir to God's Kingdom. It was on the basis of his faith that Abraham was acceptable to God, and when he was circumcised some years later, that act was only significant towards God because it was one of the responses of that faith. Furthermore, where in Galatians he had argued from the singular "seed" that all nations were to become heirs through Christ, he here adopts a second argument that the plural "nations" in

the promise indicated the same thing. We have already noted the answer of John the Baptist to the same Jewish confidence: "Prove your repentance by the fruit it bears; and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father.' I tell you that God can make children for Abraham out of these stones here" (Mt. 3: 9).

We have also noted already the teaching of Jesus that the true children of Abraham are those who "do as Abraham did" (Jn. 8: 39). It is this teaching which Paul now takes up when he says that "he is the father of all who have faith when uncircumcised . . . and at the same time he is the father of such of the circumcised as do not rely upon their circumcision alone, but also walk in the footprints of the faith which our father Abraham had. . . ." Thus he says that circumcision is only one mode by which the essential faith may be manifested; he doubtless has in mind that under the new covenant an even more acceptable mode was baptism. As the exponent of God's acceptance of the Gentiles however he would also be aware that just as Abraham's faith made him acceptable before circumcision, and eventually led him to it, so also the faith of Cornelius made him acceptable before baptism—"Your prayers and acts of charity have gone up to heaven to speak for you before God"—and eventually led him to that new rite of entry into the family of God.

To a twentieth-century reader the terms in which Paul develops this argument can sound artificial; that God "counts" faith to be righteousness in a man's life. It almost sounds as though God is baffled by the inability of man

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to come to the essential state of righteousness, and sets an artificial substitute which He will pretend is the other thing. What we miss at this time is the well-developed teaching about Abraham which was current throughout the Jewish branches of the Christian Church. Our most revealing glimpse of this foundation on which Paul was building is to be found in the second chapter of the Epistle of James, and it will help us in this direction if we consider it briefly, together with the account of Abraham's life in the Old Testament.

There is no disagreement between James and Paul such as Luther thought to exist, and much of the latter's weakness can be traced to his lack of appreciation that both men were leaders in the one Church, and that the teaching of each can supplement that of the other, and lead us to a clearer understanding of it. James is here at one with Paul in teaching that Works are unable to win righteousness, and that faith is essential. He is also at one in principle when he says that the faith must be real and living. Paul, who had just demolished the trust in a circumcision which made no effective transformation in a man's life, would have been equally destructive towards trust in a faith which was a mere mental acquiescence without effect upon the life.

The core of James's argument lies in chapter 2, verses 19-22: "You have faith enough to believe that there is one God. Excellent! The devils have faith like that, and it makes them tremble. But can you not see, you quibbler, that faith divorced from deeds is barren? Was it not by his action, in offering his son Isaac upon the altar, that our father Abraham was justified? . . . Here was fulfilment of the words of Scripture: 'Abraham put his faith in God, and that faith was counted to him as righteousness.'" When we remember the words of Joshua that Abraham and his family were pagans when called out of Ur (Jo. 24: 2), and trace the record of his progress through the pages of Genesis, the operation of the power of God upon faulty flesh and blood becomes apparent.

We see the hesitation, when he reached Haran, and the upsurge of faith sending him on to the Land when Terah died. We see the weakness of the growing faith when danger threatened in Egypt, and he sought to evade it by mere human subterfuge; and we see the intervention of God when human resources failed, with consequent strengthening of faith. We see faith struggling again when no child is born, and once again he tries by human wisdom to help God along with His purpose. We see that faith rising triumphant when the human solution proves to have failed, and the promise

of the true seed is made. But this worry about the child who should inherit was the "Achilles heel" of Abraham, and in the offering of Isaac we see the final abandonment of all trust in the flesh, and the willingness to trust in God alone. At last, as a result of his walk with God, he had come to a complete trust in God. The walk with God was only possible because of the faith, and that faith as a result had grown until it had worked within the life of the man the beginnings of the righteousness which was so essential to inheritance of the Kingdom.

Thus, the righteousness, which God counted to Abraham at the beginning, was a righteousness which faith was able to work within his life before that life came to an end. It was no pretence by God, but an element of the divine foreknowledge that, resulting from such faith, would come growth in the spiritual man, and the transformation of character which the Christian Church named "salvation." This is what James is saying, "Here was fulfilment of the words of Scripture," and this is what he says when he comments on the offering, "our father Abraham was justified." What James says literally is that in this act Abraham's faith came to an adult status of full growth, and that Abraham became righteous in fact. This is the Scriptural comment on the power of faith; the transformation in the life of Abraham came through the operation of the power of God in his life, but that transformation could only operate while he walked with God, and only through the living activity of faith within him could he continue so to walk. The argument of Paul in Romans is directed towards Hebrew Christians, and this is the background of thought about Abraham in the Christian Church, upon which that argument is founded.

On this basis we can follow the implications of Paul that Abraham was dead spiritually when called by God, and was made to live by God because of the full life which faith should eventually work in his experience: "This promise, then, was valid before God, the God in whom he put his faith, the God who makes the dead live, and summons things that are not yet in existence as if they already were." He names the decisive turning point in the development of Abraham's faith as his acceptance of the promise that Isaac should be born, and parallels that with our acceptance that God has raised Jesus from the dead: "Those words were written, not for Abraham's sake alone, but for our sake too: it is to be 'counted' in the same way to us who have faith in the God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." He continues (in chapter five) to speak of us as being "justified" through faith even as Abraham, and as

looking forward like him "in the hope of the divine splendour that is to be ours." But even as Abraham had to develop further until his son was offered and his last element of trust in flesh had gone, so also in our case, "suffering trains us to endure," and only thus can our full growth come to completion: "endurance brings proof that we have stood the test." Just as the final renunciation by Abraham was the fulfilment of that righteousness which had been counted to him, so also we must continue to grow in grace that we may eventually be fully justified. "If we confess our sins, he is just, and may be trusted to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every kind of wrong" (1 Jn. 1:9).

It is in the light of this justification by faith that the following context is to be read. Paul is not seeking here to unfold a complex metaphysic about "sin in the flesh" and the legal figment of condemnation. He is talking about the practical everyday life of a man who trusts in God and is slowly transformed by the power of God made available through Jesus Christ. Just as the first sin by Adam, based upon the scheming of the flesh which grasped after an equality with God, led to a way of life which trusted in flesh, hence resulting in sin within every individual, and in a consequent death, so the victory of Jesus was to lead to a walk in faith which would result in life. "Thus death pervaded the whole human race, inasmuch as all men have sinned," and even those who were not under law to God led the same kind of life, and died. We have inherited Adam's way of life and walk "after the flesh," but if through faith we now adopt that of Jesus, we shall walk "after the spirit." "For if by the wrongdoing of that one man death established its reign, through a single sinner, much more shall those who receive in far greater measure God's grace, and His gift of righteousness, live and reign through the one man, Jesus Christ."

Paul draws a precise parallel between the two key "men". "It follows, then, that as the issue of one misdeed was condemnation for all men, so the issue of one just act is acquittal and life for all men." It was because the disobedience of Adam resulted in sin by all men that all must die; it is because the obedience of Jesus will result, through the power of faith, in righteousness within all men, that they will live. "For as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous." The subject of discussion is faith; and coupled with it the operation of "grace," manifested in the willingness of God to count faith as acceptable to Him in place of righteous-

ness because it will eventually be able to work that righteousness by virtue of a walk with God. Were Paul here dealing with a genetical law of generation as some have mistakenly supposed, the parallel would not hold. Instead of a parallel, there would be a contrast between our relationship to Adam and to Jesus. It would not be "As through . . . so through . . ." but "Although the . . . yet the . . ." The Law which brought legal condemnation was seen by Paul in this context as a further manifestation of grace. Its purpose was to force man to recognise his hopelessness, and thus encourage a turning to God in faith and a complete reliance upon Him alone.

It is at this stage (ch. 6) that Paul turns for the first time to the subject of baptism. Circumcision was the seal of an entrance into the hope of Abraham, with an acceptance of his faith and his way of life; unless that faith and way of life went with it it was an empty and valueless thing. The Christian life was based upon an acceptance of the faith and way of life of Jesus, and baptism was the seal of this acceptance; unless it involved this change in life, it too was of no value. Just as Abraham manifested a repudiation of trust in the flesh, so circumcision was seen as a figurative "cutting off of the flesh." So, also, the faith of Jesus led to a giving of his life for others, and baptism was seen as a figurative dying that we might live again, and live a new kind of life, that of the resurrection.

We, who had been slaves of sin, must not now obey its dictates. We must not only hope in God, we must obey Him. Our faith must be alive, it must work a very real righteousness in our lives day by day. Grace was freely available to call us out of sin into righteousness; it is powerful only so to call, and cannot save by itself. Only when that grace has aroused faith can it be effective to save us; the salvation will come through the living power of faith working in our lives to produce righteousness. Even the faith will be powerless unless it is allowed to live and work; only the righteousness resulting from a walk with God can make us able to enter the Kingdom. "But God be thanked, you, who once were slaves of sin, have yielded wholehearted obedience . . . and emancipated from sin, have become slaves of righteousness . . . I mean, as you once yielded your bodies to the service of impurity and lawlessness, making for moral anarchy, so now you must yield them to the service of righteousness, making for a holy life." But, and here is the practical problem which Paul has faced in his own life, how may a man with all his inbuilt habits to sin be freed from its slavery? It is to the contemplation of this problem that the next two chapters are directed.

(Continued from front page)

At the Council of Trent, it is recorded, the argument at one stage became so furious that one bishop succeeded in detaching another bishop's beard from his face (Salmon, *Infallibility of the Church* (1953), p. 112).

Those were the days when weapons were an early resort in religious discussion, and on an even darker side were the torture-chambers of the Inquisition, and the fiery scaffolds.

Protestant divines responded in kind when the power was theirs. Enthusiasts on all sides killed one another, all for the love of Jesus. "I beseech you," said Cromwell to the religious dogmatists of his time, "think it possible that you may be mistaken."

And so to rather less violent times, the Victorian era, when the instruments of torture and violence had been discreetly abandoned in favour of wordy battles. Violence acquired a thin veneer of respectability.

Violent language was now the expression of religious disagreement. The tongue, that unruly member which is set on fire of hell, was let loose. The dictionaries were ransacked for derogatory adjectives to describe one's opponent's person, ideas and ideals. The smaller the disagreement, the more violent the language, in inverse proportion.

So at last we come to our own century, The Age of Unconcern. The violence of the violent has indeed played itself out. Now nothing matters, we are told. All streams lead irresistibly and with undeniable equality to the sea. There is a vague, thoughtless tolerance, and many feel like Molière's Don Juan, who thought that there was nothing true but arithmetic.

No doubt there is some element of reaction against the violence of the preceding centuries. By its immoderation in the past, Christianity fought itself to a standstill, and brought reasonable discredit upon even the mildest of definite convictions.

How can we learn to steer a prudent middle course between the excess of enthusiasm which destroys others and itself, on the one hand, and the dullness and depravity of indifference on the other?

There are three kinds of reaction to religious disagreement: they are provocation, moderation and indifference.

The first of these is the natural reaction of the mind. The temptation of humanity is so easily to provocative violence of actions, words and thoughts, to immoderation—as we see from the whole of religious history and from the world at large. Caution, it has been said, never yet stormed a fortress, and

we think that moderation is a plain, unexciting, and ultimately false quality.

Here a further sentiment reinforces our natural emotions.

We see Jesus and the Apostles denouncing evil and relentlessly following good. Everything seems to be coloured in black and white, with no shades of grey and with reason we desire it to be so. It is implicitly a courageous and honourable attitude. Something of the magic of those years captures our hearts, and we wish them back again.

Yet how different it is with the frail, uninspired humanity that we are, and the tangled chaos which is our thinking! Our judgment is warped, our aim inaccurate, our perception blurred. Sometimes only our confidence is unimpaired.

It is essential that in rejecting the violent, provocative action which is our nature, we should not confuse the other two possible reactions.

Moderation or temperance, which are commended to us by the Apostle must not for a moment be confused with indifference. Moderation is the true middle course between the excess of violence of Christianity's past, and the excess of indifference which is its present.

As we think about it more deeply, we realise that true moderation springs from a greater depth of conviction than do the excesses of both violence and indifference.

It involves self-control and self-discipline; it is not usually a natural quality. It is a *restraint* which we learn with difficulty, because it is nearer to the heart of Jesus than to our own. It is not evasion, nor is it unconcern, but it is an enforced patience, which is not of man but of the Lord.

It requires much *more* thought to be moderate, and not less. The ways of indifference and violence are equally simple and easy (and equally disastrous). The way of moderation, a more excellent way, involves the most profound consideration, and a supreme care of thought and word. It requires a deep, indeed a passionate, belief in the superiority of restraint over satisfaction of the natural violence of our emotions. It is the calm, steady, and much deeper reality which stills our rash impulses and wild desires.

So, in the pursuit of moderation, the more excellent way, we will spare no effort to ensure that our facts are right. We will make allowance for differences of temperament, of environment, of language. "East is East and West is West," we are told. "Never the twain shall meet." Often we see the same dissimilarity of outlook much nearer home. Such differences of emphasis are natural, and not at all undesirable, in a Body which is not all hand or head.

Differences in the understanding of a mere word are an easy setting in our frailty for a reaction of explosive violence. Before we know it, irresistible force meets immovable object. A word, or a phrase, is used, a slight extreme created, and an opposing greater extreme reacts to form an antagonism and an ever-widening gulf.

How often would the Lord have said to the violent dogmatists of other centuries, and many times to ourselves: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."

We will also make allowance for the complexity of truth, and while carefully avoiding the dullness of indifference which destroys, realise the futility of denying an infallible pope, only to set ourself up in his place. We will therefore not be taken captive by that kind of false perfectionism, which defines all things out of existence by its exactness, and which can never admit that it does not know.

It is so easy to create differences where none exist, to exaggerate those that do, and to deal rashly with situations calling for the utmost tact. Here the pursuit of moderation will guide us, that our zeal may not outrun our prudence. We will not be tempted to cut a knot which can be untied. We will not be inclined to imitate the Romans of old, who made a city a desert, and called it peace.

So to all of us on every side, whatever the problem, comes a realisation of the need for this supreme thoughtful care, that we destroy not the Church of the Lord, "which he purchased with his own blood."

Thus the shadow of the Cross falls once more across our violent hearts and bids them be still.

† JAMES WHITE.

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The

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HOW IS PROPHECY
FULFILLED?

No. 28

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It has been said that most people can stand little truth. The author of this saying meant of course truth about themselves. No matter how easily and impartially we weigh up others, their weaknesses and their strengths, their virtues and their vices, it is entirely another matter to use the same impartiality on ourselves. We are too much involved emotionally for such an exercise to be easy, or even possible. There is something in the human make-up which does not permit us to stand outside ourselves for a moment "to see ourselves as others see us" (much less how God sees us). Self-respect is necessary for almost any human achievement, and since we all have failings of one sort or another, self-respect is usually achieved by glossing over our failings. The man of God can overcome this by putting into practice the dictum of Paul, "Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord," that is, our self-respect is no longer based on exaggerated notions of our own grandeur, but is derived from association with God. We can be proud, not by overlooking our personal failings, but in the fact that God has chosen us, though we deserve it not. Such a transference of the centre of self-respect is not, of course, always achieved. Disciples may still be unable to face the facts about themselves squarely.

The inability to be frank with ourselves can also occur in a community. Groups of people may be unwilling or unable to assess themselves rightly. Politicians often exploit such situations for their own benefit. A party leader who dwells on national failings is unlikely to become a national leader, but one who encourages people to view the national scene through rose-tinted spectacles may well secure many votes thereby. Nationally such self-deception can be rudely shattered, since it does nothing to fill the exchequer, and no amount of wishful thinking can create material prosperity out of a deficit.

Religious communities risk dangers of a somewhat different kind. They are not usually exposed in the same degree to political

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The Life and Times of John Thomas, M.D.

(I) Introduction and Early Life

by Brian Tighe

It is paradoxical in a community such as our own, which places much weight on the traditions laid down in its early history, that little is generally known of the life and experiences of the man whose efforts led to its development. It might even be argued that appreciation of the bald facts of his biography is practically impossible for anyone born in this century unless they have a special knowledge of life in the Eighteen Hundreds. This is, on reflection, not surprising. Robert Roberts started work on the biography of Dr Thomas before the latter was dead, and finally published the work in 1873 under the title, *Dr Thomas: His Life and Work*. At that time no explanatory comments relating to historical context were necessary. They would, in fact, have been outside the intended scope of the work, for as Robert Roberts wrote in the first chapter:—

The history to be set forth is the history of a work rather than of a man. For this reason, it deals more with the fortunes of "questions" and principles, than with personal incidents and characteristics.

In the 90 odd years since the book first appeared it has been revised only twice, by C. C. Walker (1925) and by W. H. Boulton (1954). In the preface to the second edition bro. Boulton explains why it differs only marginally from the first:—

It was originally intended to remodel this book somewhat on the lines of *Robert Roberts: An Autobiography*. But the interest lay so much in the long contro-

versial letters of Dr Thomas that this was found to be impossible. The original style of the book has therefore been preserved, and the "condensing and revising" have been much less than was originally proposed.

The 1954 edition differs significantly only in the chapter divisions and in the fact that the last 20 years of Dr Thomas's life occupy 40 pages instead of four. This period, including as it does his last two visits to Britain and experiences in the American Civil War, is in many ways the most interesting, and certainly the best documented, in *The Herald* and *The Ambassador*.

It becomes obvious on reading this additional material in the third edition that bro. Boulton has a tremendous sympathy with his subject. He writes in the preface that he had learned to know Dr Thomas in a way he never did before. He goes on to say: "The reading of his own words recording his journeys and his doings has revealed him in a light that was not shown in his original biography." It seems unfortunate that the 1954 revision could not have been more drastic. Certainly bro. Boulton could have presented a better understanding of Dr Thomas to his present-day readers, had he been uninhibited by the framework of the 1873 edition.

Because of this imbalance in the published accounts of the life of John Thomas the present series of articles will deal mainly with biographical details set in the context of the history of the period. It is felt

that this approach helps in gaining a deeper understanding of his problems and achievements as well as illustrating some of the factors which influenced his thoughts and actions.

Dr Thomas is often thought of as a Victorian. In fact, as the accompanying Table shows, almost half his life was spent in the reigns of George III, George IV and William IV. Some of the contemporary events shown in the Table had a great bearing on the pattern of his life, for instance, the circumstances influencing his father's decision to emigrate to America. The Industrial Revolution, which took place in the last half of the eighteenth century, brought about a drastic change in the social life of this country. In both agriculture and commerce the owner-worker was gradually disappearing, being replaced by two distinct groups representing capital and labour. The increase in efficiency which new agricultural processes brought about meant that fewer men were needed to work the land, the result being that the surplus population moved to the towns, where they were accommodated in insanitary and overcrowded dwelling places. The government, basing their policy on the law of supply and demand expressed in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, did little to control the situation, but rather by such legislation as the Combination Act, actively prevented workmen from joining together to better their lot. Thus, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the "labouring poor" formed a large and ever increasing proportion

of the population. The resulting social unrest, aggravated by the side effects of the Revolution in France, led to the riots and insurrections which had become commonplace at the turn of the century. Typical of these were the "King and Church" riots in Birmingham, which led to the complete destruction of many fine houses (among them that of Joseph Priestley)—the riot finally being quelled by the militia.

Unhappily the situation was not destined to change during the early part of the century. Although Britain's success at war had led, by increase in colonial acquisitions, to increased exports and thus wealth, its distribution was partial. During the years of the Napoleonic Wars the number of the population rose from 10 to 13 millions, and this rapid increase kept down the wages which would naturally have advanced in a corresponding degree with the increase in the national wealth. The situation was aggravated by the ruin of a number of small trades which were carried out at home and the pauperisation of families who relied on them for support. This was the result of the introduction of *machinery* and led to the Luddite riots, which broke out over the northern and midland counties in the winter of 1811. These again were only suppressed by military force. As the war progressed, imports of foreign wheat were cut off, bringing a rise in the price at home, increased wealth to the farmers and landowners, and famine and death to the poor. With this increase in poverty came one inevitable result—an increase in crime.

The abject condition of the poor was not improved by the peace which followed the Battle of Waterloo. Heavy taxation, the national debt (which, as a result of the war, had reached £800 million), markets at home and abroad becoming glutted with unsaleable goods, and the disbanding of the immense forces employed in the war effort, led to an unprecedented slump. The scarcity caused by a series of bad harvests was intensified by the selfish legislation of the landowners in Parliament. Conscious that the prosperity of English agriculture rested on the high price of corn resulting from the war, they prohibited by an Act passed in 1815 the introduction of foreign corn

until that produced at home had reached famine prices. Once more a formidable increase in riots and crime of all types followed. England was ripe for reform.

The death of George III in 1820 and the accession of his son, the Prince Regent, as George IV only added to the general disturbance of men's minds. He is said to have been one of the least attractive figures in English history: he was a recognised expert on flowered waistcoats and scented hair-oil, who complained that "naval officers never looked and never could look like gentlemen." A contemporary Tory politician, who knew him well, declared that "a more contemptible, cowardly, selfish, unfeeling dog does not exist." So unpopular was he among the nation at large that in the first year or two of his reign many people thought the monarchy was in grave danger of being abolished in favour of some form of republic.

Two or three examples will serve to illustrate the relevance of conditions in the nineteenth century to the work of Dr Thomas. First of all we might consider the examples of recent disturbances in this country which are quoted from time to time to illustrate that we live in "troubulous times." Typical of these are disturbances caused by "teddy boys" — seaside riots involving "mods" and "rockers"—and early in 1968 the Grosvenor Square demonstration. The results of these were quite insignificant compared with the damage done by rioters in the early nineteenth century, for example, the gatherings of the newly formed unions at Newhall Hill, Birmingham, in the 1830's. Imagine the effect, today, of an event like the "Cato Street Conspiracy", which occurred when John Thomas was a medical student, and the object of which was to assassinate all the ministers of the crown at a single blow. This facet of life in Britain deserves careful consideration.

A second point which seems to be of relevance is the structure of society in this country. The conditions outlined above began to change during the "Great Reform Era" of the 1830's, which saw the beginning of the emancipation of the working classes. From their ranks emerged the tradesmen, craftsmen, skilled and semi-skilled workers of

the latter part of the century. It was largely from this group, who were seeking education and enlightenment, that Dr Thomas made his converts. This is illustrated to some extent by the occupations recorded for Christadelphian converts in the year 1883/4—some 10 years after his death. Of 180 converts approximately 150 come into the category mentioned, as compared with four teachers, four professional men, five shopkeepers, 12 clerical workers and five labourers. The same point can be made in a different way. The geographical areas in which the population were most anxious for reform and received radical ideas most gladly corresponded to the centres in which labour was required and employment was available following the industrial revolution. In fact it was said of William Cobbett, one of the most famous of radicals of the day, that "his writings were read on nearly every cottage hearth in the manufacturing districts of South Lancashire, in those of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham." It was in these latter areas that Dr Thomas, visiting Britain in 1848, found his first audiences, and in which the early Christadelphian communities were established.

The third point may be briefly mentioned now and subsequently enlarged at appropriate places in the narrative. The nineteenth century was characterised by a rapid increase in the ease of communications, the construction of roads, bridges, canals and railways illustrated the growing skill of the engineer. Mail was still travelling from London to Birmingham by stage coach (and at the mercy of highwaymen) long after John Thomas had emigrated to America. Fortunately, however, the speed and efficiency of the postal services from America to various parts of Britain improved considerably in the following years, a factor which became very important to the young Ecclesias in this country. These are some of the more general aspects of life in Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century. This was the background against which John Thomas spent his early life and from which the conditions surrounding the embryonic Christadelphian Ecclesias developed.

The birth of John Thomas in Hoxton Square, London, on 12th

April 1805, anticipated the battle of Trafalgar by almost six months. Of his mother little is known except that she was a "religious and amiable lady". The most detailed comment appears in *Herald of the Future Age*, where Dr Thomas refers to her in his "Confession and Abjuration". He writes:—

Our moral training at the hands of a kind and pious mother, was the best her education in the Calvinism of the Scottish Kirk could enable her to give. She instilled in us a profound veneration for the Holy Scriptures, which we retain to this day. *Herald III* (1846) p. 72. His father is referred to by Robert Roberts as being aristocratically descended, high spirited, proud and talented; although, peculiarly, reference to aristocratic descent has been deleted from the 1925 edition alone. Dr Thomas refers to him on several occasions and it is interesting to expand the material found in his *Life and Work* by reference to these. The more one reads of his father (whose name was also John Thomas)

the more one detects apparent similarities of temperament. They were both undeniably impulsive although Dr Thomas considerably more so than his father, as the following account will show.

John Thomas (senior) was originally in the civil service of the East India Company, but becoming bored with the routine, left to attend Hoxton College, where he graduated as a preacher at the age of 20. Being unable to obtain a "call" immediately, he returned to his former employers until he was invited to preach for an Independent congregation in London. He stayed in this situation for some years, until, in fact, a disagreement amongst the deacons, and the resulting unpleasantness led him to seek another position. As a consequence of this the family left for Huntly in the north of Scotland, John Thomas being at this time seven years of age. They had returned to London within a year, this time because John Thomas (senior) disliked the country and the neighbourhood. In addition he felt

that the community was too small.

His occupation on returning to London was neither pastoral nor clerical. He became a schoolmaster, opening a boarding school in Lambeth. Within 12 months he had moved again, but this time only to more spacious premises (a large house with grounds attached) in Clapham. Here the boarding school became an "Educational Establishment for the Sons of Dissenting Ministers". The venture prospered, but some four years later, in 1818, he decided that pastoral work was preferable to the drudgery of an educational institution. Unfortunately he was cheated out of a considerable sum of money in the course of the sale of the school, the situation being somewhat reminiscent of that in which his son lost the proceeds of the sale of a farm in America. On leaving the boarding school the family moved to Richmond, where John Thomas (senior) became pastor of a small Independent congregation, a position he retained for almost a year. He next moved

EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF JOHN THOMAS, M.D.—CONTEMPORARY EVENTS RELATING TO SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN GREAT BRITAIN

1805	Born 12th April, Hoxton Square, London.	George III (1760-1820).
1812	Moved to Huntly (Scotland).	Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815).
1813	Returned to London.	Abolition of Slave Trade (1815).
1818	Moved to Richmond, Surrey.	Corn Laws passed (1815).
1819	Moved to Chorley and began medical studies in 1820.	Accession of George IV (1820).
1823	Returned to London.	Death of Castlereagh (1822).
1825-28	Studied at St Thomas's, London.	Railway Construction commenced (1828).
1829	Obtained M.R.C.S. and commenced medical practice at Hackney.	Accession of William IV (1830).
1832	Emigrated to America. Ship ran aground on Sable Island. Arrived Cincinnati. Baptised, joined Campbellites.	Reform Era (1832-38), abolition of slavery.
1833	Travelled to Philadelphia via Wellsburg and Baltimore.	Parliamentary Reform Bill, Poor Law, Factory Acts.
1834	Married. Published <i>Apostolic Advocate</i> , moved to Richmond, Va.	Fox Talbot: first photograph (1834).
		Accession of Queen Victoria (1837).
		Electric Telegraphy patented (1837).
		<i>Oliver Twist</i> , Dickens (1838).
		Era of Gladstone and Disraeli (1840-90).
		Penny Post (1840).
		Mines Act (1842).
1839	Migrated to Illinois, purchased farm.	Abolition of Corn Laws (1846).
1842	Moved to Louisville, published <i>The Investigator</i> .	Chloroform first used as anaesthetic (1847).
1844	Moved to Richmond, published <i>Herald of the Future Age</i> .	Public Health Act (1848).
1846-7	<i>A Confession and Abjuration</i> . Re-baptised and went to New York.	Crimean War (1854-1856).
1848	Visit to Britain. Lecture tour, <i>Elpis Israel</i> .	<i>Origin of Species</i> , Darwin (1859).
1851	Returned to America, published <i>Herald of The Kingdom</i> .	
1861	Outbreak of American Civil War. Publication of <i>The Herald</i> suspended.	
1862	Second visit to Britain. <i>Eureka</i> , Vol. I, published.	"Cotton Famine" (1861-1862).
1868	Final visit to Britain.	Antiseptic Surgery (1865).
		Second Parliamentary Reform Bill (1867).
1870	Returned to America.	Education Act (1870).
1871	Died 8th March following an attack of peritonitis.	

to Chorley in Lancashire, presiding over an Independent congregation there for about four years. The incident which led to his resignation of the post shows a temperamental similarity to his son.

The year was 1821 and preparations were being made for the formal coronation of George IV (something has been said previously of his accession to the throne in 1820). Celebrations in Chorley included a procession of Sunday Schools. In the programme the Independent Schools were assigned a place behind the Catholics, who were to walk immediately after the Church Schools, who were, in turn, the head of the procession. This greatly offended the Protestant sensibilities of John Thomas's father, and he refused to allow his Sunday School to walk in the procession at all unless it came after the Church Schools. Furthermore, he read a protest to this effect at the Market Cross. A considerable crowd of people, many of whom were Catholics, heard him and a disturbance ensued. Much to his disgust one of the deacons, whose business interests depended largely on his many Catholic customers, took their part. There was some division in the church over this and the deacon in question, having a large party of supporters, was able to procure a considerable reduction in the salary which John Thomas's father received from that church. This, however, was compensated by the poor of the congregation, who met and subscribed £80 to make up the deficiency. This state of affairs could hardly be suffered for long, however, and John Thomas (senior), being a man of considerable pride and dignity, made arrangements to return to London. Having had his fill of pastoral life, he returned to his first occupation, procuring an appointment as clerk in the City Gas Office, a position he held for seven or eight years.

John Thomas was 16 at the time his father left Chorley, and remained behind to continue his medical studies with a private surgeon under whom he had been placed. Although he had been a member of his father's church, he resigned his membership six months after his father left and had no further connection with theology for 10 years.

(To be continued.)

Reviews

Honest to the End

A review of *In the End God*, by John A. T. Robinson (Fontana Books, 1968, 3s. 6d.)

EVER SINCE *Honest to God* there has been the feeling amongst concerned Christians and humanists that the Bishop of Woolwich can put forward a better case for atheism than for Christianity. Those who think this should pause to consider his latest Fontana paperback, *In the End God*. This book, a revised edition of an earlier work, re-interpreted for 1968, deals with the Christian doctrine of the Last Things—not only death, judgment, heaven and hell of traditional eschatology, but also the resurrection of the body, the Second Coming, and the ultimate time when God will be all in all. Some of these concepts are not unfamiliar to Christadelphians, even though our brand of eschatology is of a different variety from the Church's.

Like a latter-day Alice, having found himself not in a theological wonderland, but in a godless wilderness, the Bishop sees his task as trying to make sense of a modern secular world so that he can preach to it a relevant message of God and Christ. He sees the solution in the area of Christian faith which relates to the hope for the End, but certainly not in the literal and physical sense we would expect.

When the Bishop is asked whether he believes in the Second Coming of Christ in any literal sense or any form of life after death, he declares, "On many things I am a Christian agnostic. But that means a Christian who does not know." Yet he goes on to say (before the reader's suspicions are confirmed), "On the fundamental trust of which these

'beliefs' are projections I am unshaken." So we sigh with relief that the Bishop still believes something even though we do not quite know what it means.

As a Christian humanist, Dr Robinson sees the value of eschatology in man's experience here and now, and not as a system of doctrine embodying a theological hope. It is this living experience of God which gives meaning to the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and resurrection to life everlasting; not the other way round.

But what does the rest of society believe? If God is dead, then the Last Things are dead also. Yet the end of the world is more of a possibility today than it was for our Victorian forefathers. In times past it was thought that man was working to a purposeful end, the last generation being the most highly favoured. Today's conception of history as teleological is lacking; the last generation will simply be the unlucky one.

"In matters eschatological, perhaps more than in any other department, the modern generation believes neither in the inerrancy of Scriptural statement nor in the validity of metaphysical thought. . . . The dark paths of the future have been abandoned to the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators (Is. 47: 13) who together with the Theosophists, Spiritualists, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, British Israelites, Christadelphians, the Panacea Society, and the rest, have stepped in to answer for the modern man Kant's third great question, "What may I hope for?" to which Kant himself first caused men to doubt whether there might be a rational answer" (p. 32). Thus whatever the Bishop

hopes for, it is not to arise from the next Arab-Israeli conflict. Or the one after that. Statements about the future are such stuff as myths are made of. "they are neither inerrant prophecies, nor pious guesswork. They are necessary transpositions into the key of the hereafter of knowledge of God and His revelation to men giving the revelatory encounter of present historical events." But how are simple souls to know this?

Having placed theological statements on this nebulous and for most people abstruse level, he describes God as one who acts in history, not outside it. The Hebrew prophets' assurance of God's presence strengthened the hope of future deliverance and material fulfilment of time-worn promises. Visions of the future later come to be coloured by the expectancy of a "vice-regent Messiah" and that ultimately God would be all in all, outside the historical order. A God whose thoughts are not our thoughts nor His ways our ways could not dwell in a world of corruption and evil. Therefore, the prophetic hope gave way to the apocalyptic vision of a divine purpose fulfilled beyond the end of history.

In seeking a solution to some of the problems posed by prophecy and apocalypse, Dr Robinson considers the distinction between "kairos": time considered in relation to personal action, determined by reference to ends to be achieved in it and "chronos": time that ticks on objectively and impersonally whether anything is happening or not. The former relates to an understanding of time as controlled by God: "moments of opportunity appointed by Him and decisive for men, in which His design is either advanced or retarded," whilst the latter is time removed from reference to God and regarded as self-determining.

The difference between these two ways of determining the End in reference to Mark 13: 32 Dr Robinson illustrates by using an example from the British political system. The date of a general election is a matter for the Government alone. The dissolution is fixed by the Prime Minister when the time is ripe to appeal to the country, and not at an "arbitrary date that could be calculated in advance by the Opposition if it discovered the formula." Many events may occur

in the interval and although Parliament must be dissolved before five years are up (chronos-determination) the final decision is a personal one. Dr Robinson goes on to suggest that the common expectation of an immediate Second Coming in the first century was a misunderstanding in terms of a "chronos"-outlook of a message whose essential truth was bound up with the Hebraic attitude to time as "kairos." The urgency in the New Testament should be interpreted not so much as the immediacy of Christ's return, but as the necessity for making a personal decision "here and now."

Whilst not denying the importance of "future events" in the final consummation of God's purpose, we are confronted by the fact that since Christ walked this earth the last days have begun. The Kingdom of Heaven was, and is, at hand. The first half of the process has already begun and whatever aspect of the Christian life we consider, from the Eucharist to the Kingdom of God, all reflect the fact that the end has come and the fact that the end is yet to be.

But what is yet to be is defined in terms of myth—an interpretation which is concerned with spiritual as opposed to historical truth. And if the mythical character of eschatology is accepted Dr Robinson states the "Christian has no more knowledge of or interest in the final state of this planet than he has of its first. The illusion that the Bible vouchsafes him such information, if he can interpret it aright, requires to be buried as deeply as similar illusions about the beginning of the world derived from Genesis. One cannot say that the 'events' of the End will not literally take place any more than one can assert that an Adam and an Eve did not live in a garden in Mesopotamia. The Christian can only declare that he has no interest in these matters." The realities which a myth conveys go deeper than a correct interpretation of the signs of the times and all the elements in it are descriptions of truths of the here and now within the life of the New Age. "The Second Coming has happened in the return of Christ in the Spirit; the Resurrection of the body, in the putting on of the New Man in the Body of Christ. The Millennium has been inaugurated in the reign of Christ in his Church on

earth, the Messianic Banquet is celebrated whenever the wine is drunk anew in the Kingdom of God and the Last Judgment is being wrought out in every moment of choice and decision." Yet each of these elements contains a futuristic significance for their full importance shall only be realised in the consummation of the ages.

Having described the cosmic nature of eschatology, Dr Robinson turns to a study of "The End of Man" and deals with doctrines of survival, immortality and resurrection.

Firstly, survival after death is a universal primitive conception. Life goes on in a grey shadowy world with little hope and often despair. Similarly, the spirit of man has been considered as part of a divine eternal spirit and as such must possess immortality. This cannot be argued by logic only by faith, but "a faith which knows no personal God."

It is in discussion of the doctrine of Resurrection that the Bishop of Woolwich is the most Christadelphian. He asserts that men are neither divine nor immortal by nature, "God alone hath immortality." He recognises that his doctrine of the immortality of the soul, through a "universally cherished belief" is unscriptural, that man is subject to death and is entirely dependent on God for eternal life. Where we may differ from the Bishop is that he rejects the doctrine of conditional immortality, at least in one sense, whilst in another he says, "Immortality is available to all, but how few there be that find it." Eternal life is a result of God's unconditional love and not of any spark of spirituality in man.

He asserts that all men will be raised, not just the righteous, not just the soul, but the whole man. Referring to the Apostle Paul's use of the word "body" (*soma*) Dr Robinson states that the Apostle follows the Hebraic division of man into soul and flesh rather than the Greek division into body, soul and spirit. The Biblical usage of the word *soma* means, in contemporary terms, that man is a psycho-physical entity and yet he is part of the corporate solidarity—"the body of sin."

So far, so good. Yet here again another doctrine is interpreted in terms of myth, as with the Second Coming, so with the resurrection of the body. Furthermore, the doctrine of two resurrections — one for

Christians to a millennial kingdom, and after that a resurrection for all men must be seen as an attempt to harmonise two elements of the myth emphasising "that the meaning of history must be vindicated within history and yet the complete purpose of God must transcend history."

Thus there is one resurrection of the body, in the sense defined by myth. Yet this is not wholly future for "the resurrection of the body begins, not at death, but at baptism" (1 Cor. 15: 29) whence is continued the renewing of our minds in the body of Christ, the Church.

After a chapter entitled "The End of the Lord" in which Dr Robinson wrestles with the problem of a God of love and a God of justice, there follows a discussion of the questions raised by a God who is omnipotent, all in all, at the expense of man's freedom. God's love is a love to which man responds by service and "whom to serve is perfect freedom."

In his conclusion, Dr Robinson draws together what "the rediscovery of eschatology" in our day means. What it does not imply to him is a literal adventism; nor has it to do with the apocalyptic nature of events. What it does mean is that "the Christian lives not at the End of Time, but rather from the End and in the End of Time." Each day, each moment, is the time of decision.

He states that "it is one of the ironies of eschatology that its relevance is kept alive for most people only in cultural conditions which create the apocalyptic that discredits it," and continues; "for the time being at any rate most of us do not live in any apocalyptic situation." (!)

In view of this present ongoing secularity it is all the more necessary to have "an intelligent and valid eschatology." The Christian faith does not provide a blue-print for man's future, but evokes a response to a persistent call which echoes throughout history leading men to a new life, far from the sphere of their sorrow.

In the End God is a challenging book. The reader is made aware that not everyone is ignorant of the Last Things and the Second Coming (or the necessary verses to prove them). The book also places these doctrines into some kind of perspective, and points out some of the

pitfalls of a Christian faith lopsided by Adventism.

Significant by its absence is the doctrine of the Jews' return or anything relating to the future of Israel. Yet presumably it could be argued that the importance of the Jews lies in the historical past not in the beatific future. The material promises of an earthly paradise where the ploughman shall overtake the reaper and where every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, are superseded by a new life rather than a new world, where men worship God in Spirit and in Truth and where the kingdom of heaven is not eating or drinking.

The greatest difficulty the book raises is not in the formulation of doctrine, but in the communication of it. Myth is the medium of the message. Yet to a great many people, the Bishop of Woolwich's interpretation of eschatology (itself not a word heard down your street or mine) may be incomprehensible and misleading. Since the Bishop rejects much traditional orthodox doctrine as meaningless to the present day, it is strange that he should substitute for it a kind of explanation which is as hard to understand from the (mythical?) man in the street's point of view as the other is from a South-bank theologian's. No doubt his safaris into existential territory have in the recent past helped to keep Christianity alive in a godless jungle, yet in letting his light so shine before men like that, the Bishop has allowed the agnostic headhunters to bask in its warmth whilst leaving the Christians outside in the cold.

PAUL R. PEARSON.

KNOW HOW

Marjorie Lowe. *Know How*. Auxiliary Lecturing Society. Birmingham, 1967. Price: 6d (post free).

AT LAST a Christadelphian writing has authentically reproduced the normal language of young people

today; the writer is obviously well informed on their basic outlook on life and religion. *Know How* is one of the best in the ALS series so far, with good illustrations and an attractive cover. It is written for teenagers with a background of school Religious Instruction lessons only, and it aims at encouraging Bible reading. This is done by examining the life of Jesus, and the atonement, and showing that these have relevance today, and are therefore worth studying.

A pleasing change is that whilst modern conversational idiom has been freely used, the trap of inserting a fictitious conversation has been avoided. (In Christadelphian usage these consist of one character feeding in the appropriate loaded question and the other reciting the appropriate response.) In *Know How* the right, awkward, questions are posed, and are honestly not answered if they cannot be. Thus the whole booklet rings true—we gain greatly by not having the correct and only answer for everything, especially where young people are concerned. Indeed, even some adults may perceive that those who claim to know all in fact know nothing. So the method used by *Know How* to explain, for example, the death of Jesus, the lack of positive proof, or indeed of an explanation, is not a weakness but a strength.

Trying to update Jesus presents difficulties, and this booklet has not been completely successful: we are solemnly informed that the five wise bridesmaids would have carried spare batteries for their torches if Jesus had been telling the story today! But rather surprisingly only two of the slang expressions used are obsolete so far. In the main it is, though, a commendable attempt to interest young people in religion. Herein lies the difficulty: the distribution problem. The only suitable outlets for *Know How* seem to be via CYC members and possibly Bible exhibitions. Thus the booklet, excellent in itself, is really of limited use.

Finally, why not have people write for the address of their nearest youth group instead of applying for yet another book, *Youth at the Crossroads*? Surely the personal contact gained would be the more effective?

MEL CARTER.

True Worship

by Ruth McHaffie

WHETHER OR NOT our worship of God is true worship depends upon whether or not we understand the true character of God. Men have worshipped throughout all ages but so often that worship has been vain and useless.

A lot of time has been spent in Christian communities arguing about the nature of Christ. His physical attributes seem to have received more attention than the attributes of His character. And yet, if we fully understand the character of Jesus Christ, then we would understand the character of God, for Jesus was the perfect revelation of Him.

Some of us have read over and over again the prophets of the Old Testament, and yet quite often there is misunderstanding as to their message. This may be because we have looked at these men as those whose main purpose it was to reveal future events instead of men who were, first and foremost, the conscience of their nation, men who had a deeper understanding of the character of God than had the average man, men whose aim it was to convey to those who would worship what He was like and what kind worship He desired. They were not able to reveal the nature of God wholly; only Jesus could do that, but they were able to show what true worship really meant. And their greatest value for us does not lie in their condemning words about Israel's enemies, Tarshish and the king of the north, but in their condemnations of lip service and misunderstanding of God's requirements of man.

The religion which was practised by those surrounding Israel had little ethical content, that is, it was not much concerned with doing good and avoiding evil. It was a religion which

often went against the very conscience of a man. The false gods were believed to make demands upon men which caused them to do evil. They were expected to pass their children through fire, to have drunken and sexual orgies and to practise all kinds of superstition. Religion was based on fear of what might befall men. The god was supposed to be always ready to show his anger and men must be ready to appease him. The god was capricious: one day he would smile upon his worshippers and give good weather for their crops or victory for their battles, but the next day, for no reason at all, he would be wrathful and destroy them. His morals were lower than those who worshipped him, and true worship of this kind of god involved a lack of morality.

The Israelites were by no means untouched by those around them and the religion of Canaan was particularly debased. Once upon Canaan's soil they felt the need to worship Canaan's god, for each god or baal was regarded as having his own territory. This did not mean that they ceased to worship the God who brought them to this land, the God of Israel. They merely adopted into their religion the practices of other religions and so there came into being a mix-up of worship—the Israelites offering to God worship which was appropriate to foreign gods. In other words, their religion became syncretistic. They became less and less aware of the nature of the true God and less and less aware of the nature of true worship.

So the need for the prophets. They came as a reform movement. They came as one writer has expressed it to "identify God with the good."

All of this seems to be far away

from ourselves, back in dim past ages. And we wonder if, apart from historical interest, the study of it has any meaning for us. We, after all, are not likely to start sacrificing our children, or join in orgies and vile revellings as part of our worship. But perhaps if we realise how deep the prophets' message was, how penetrating their criticisms were of human nature, we shall find something there which reveals our own weaknesses and which points to a true worship and a more holy way of life.

God, the prophets taught, never changes. He is not good one day and evil the next. He is not kind one day and unkind the next. He is consistent: He does not *want* men to kill in one age and to turn the other cheek in another age. So we find that the God of the Old Testament is the same God as that of the New Testament. His character and the worship He desires have not changed throughout all time. It is men who change—not God. The men of the Old Testament were not, for the most part, able to understand what God was like. The Law of Moses had to come before the law of Christ, for men were not ready to receive Christ. We know that Paul said it was a school master to bring them to Christ. The old law was hard indeed, but it was mild in comparison with the barbarous practices which preceded it. We see in Hosea, especially, clear evidence of the deep perception of God which was characteristic of the prophets. We know how under the Law of Moses an adulterer was stoned to death. In Hosea we see how one who had sinned disastrously in this way was forgiven and loved. We see further direct evidence in the words of Micah, and also of Jeremiah, when they told the people that it was not sacrifice God wanted but mercy, justice and humility.

In the Old Testament details are given with regard to the construction of the tabernacle. Even more so when we come to the building of the Temple do we find precision in all its detail. Men needed somewhere where they could concentrate their thoughts on God, where they could forget the earthliness of their everyday surroundings and turn their minds to the glory and wonder of their Maker. But remember how Jesus spoke of the temple. Should the Jews break it down, in three days He would raise

it up again. His listeners thought He spoke of the literal temple but, in fact, He spoke of Himself. Jesus Christ replaced the temple where the presence of God dwelt, for in Jesus Himself was the spirit of God. And all those who are "in Christ Jesus" share this character of being part of the temple itself. As Paul said to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

It is not surprising, in view of the state of man's spiritual awareness, that we find in the Old Testament ceremonial worship playing a large part. The bad kings desecrated the temple and its ceremonies; the good kings cleansed and purified worship. The people were not yet able to understand a spiritual temple which had no visible edifice. They had not yet arrived at the stage where even the visible temple could be kept pure. King Josiah joined by Jeremiah had urged temple reform and we are told that there was never such a passover as that held by Josiah. But what happened when the temple was purified, when the clutter of images and vessels which belonged to the worship of other gods was thrown out of the temple and burned? Did men profit by having a purified temple?

That is just what they did not do. They thought that now they had a purified visible object as the centre of their worship God would preserve them. So long as they performed the right sacrifices, so long as they spoke the right words then all would be well. "The temple, The temple of the Lord," was their cry. So Jeremiah came to see the uselessness of sacrifice, the absurdity of formal worship when men's hearts were far from God.

Jeremiah, like the other prophets, was unkindly received by his fellow countrymen. His message was too revolutionary, too true for them. They liked their old comfortable ways. And so he suffered the usual treatment which men mete out to those with whom they cannot agree. They shut him out—out of the temple. And it was then that Jeremiah learned what true worship really is. It does not require an ornate building; it needs no altar; it needs no set form of speech; no ceremony. It is a close relationship between man and God, a close personal relationship, and it can be carried with man wherever

he goes. He can be cast into a miry pit, as Jeremiah was, but he can worship God there; he can be altogether cast out from his fellow men but he can still worship God.

Fanciful stories about God do not appeal to me much but one stays in mind because it brings out such truth. A negro, it is said, was refused admission to worship in a white church. As he wept at the side of the road he was approached by God. "Why are you weeping?" "Because I am not allowed in," the negro replied. "Do not worry about that," God said, "neither am I."

And that is just how it can be. It is so easy to think we are worshipping God when all the time we are shutting Him out.

At the beginning of our Christadelphian movement every effort was made to dispense with anything "churchy." It was perceived that the outward display which is found in church buildings was not the simplicity of the early church. I suppose we went too far and soon we were to be found meeting in dismal little rooms where the air was stale with smoke and where we gazed at a variety of pictures and miscellaneous clutter which happened to adorn the place, a setting far removed from the upper room which had been prepared.

Now, today, with a greater desire for more pleasing surroundings in which to conduct our worship, together with greater material prosperity among us, we are gradually worshipping in better and better meeting places. I should imagine that every one of us benefits in our worship if we can be in quiet, well ordered, well furnished surroundings. And yet the fact remains that the deepest and most profound worship of all is to be found in our hearts. The more spiritually minded we are, the deeper our relationship with God, the greater our understanding of Him, so much the less are we dependent upon our surroundings in our worship. If God is really in our hearts, then our worship goes on uninterrupted throughout our lives, and the outcome of that worship is seen in our characters and way of life. Whether we are quietly sitting in our own homes, whether we are working in the kitchen, office or factory, or even if we are meeting in the most depressing of meeting places, God is there for us to worship.

Jeremiah discovered that it was not

only the temple which could be dispensed with if one wished to worship, but also that worship could not properly be based on written laws or rules. It was during his time that the book of the law was found and it was this which prompted the reforms carried out by Josiah, supported by Jeremiah. But just as Jeremiah saw that the people cried, "The Temple of the Lord," as though it was some magic password for their salvation, so also they believed that so long as they carried out the letter of the written law then they satisfied the requirements of God.

This is a relevant lesson for us. We have realised the hypocrisy of ceremonial worship, but we have allowed ourselves, albeit with the best of intentions, to be tied by words, so that our faith runs the danger of becoming not a matter of the heart but a mere formality, something to which we pay lip service, not realising that our hearts may be far from God. There are many in our community who are only nominal members. We know them by their fruits. Spiritually they are very weak. But we do not turn them away so long as they give lip service, so long as they are willing to affirm that they believe this and that. Probably this inaction on our part is the right course, for it is not for us to judge who should or who should not join in worship. Yet surely it is wrong if we do turn away those members who do not assent to every jot and tittle of our written statements but who have in their hearts the true love of God. To say this is likely to bring down the wrath of many on our heads, but, be that as it may, we are taught in the Word of God that the New Covenant in Jesus Christ is not written on tablets but on the heart.

Both Old and New Testaments are quite clear on this. Jeremiah, speaking for God, says, "I will put my law in their inward part, and write it in their hearts." The apostle Paul clearly has the same message, "... written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." And again, "... but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament (that is, the new covenant of which Jeremiah spoke) not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

It is this spirit, then, which is to be the premise, as it were, of our worship. It is true, of course, that Christianity has become such a mixed-up affair that men have been forced to set down with pen and ink what they believe to be the main principles upon which Christianity is based. When we think of the Roman Catholics, the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, we realise that we must come back to certain principles and that we need to make our stand clear. But, as is the habit of enthusiasts, we have overdone it. When we start thinking it necessary to insist that brethren and sisters must accept the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith *without reservation*, so removing all opportunity of individual thought, just as the Roman Catholic Church has done, then we are back where Judah was, founding our worship on the letter and not on the spirit, making certain that we honour God with our lips and caring little that our hearts may be far from Him.

What is the object of our worship? True worship must be the lifting up of our hearts to God. But our worship may be directed towards the establishment rather than to God. For the Roman Catholics it is the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church. For us it may be the establishment of the Christadelphians. It is possible for us to care more for adoration of the community than for the adoration of God. Or we can fall into the error of worshipping the Bible instead of God. The Bible is a revelation of God's dealing with men but it must not be the object of our worship. That was the mistake of the Pharisees. They worshipped the law, not God. We are guided not only by the Bible but also by the spirit which is written in our hearts, and these two together lead us to worship God in truth.

Sometimes the person who is leading the worship becomes the object of devotion. There is not so much danger of this in our community where we do not have permanent ministers. But it can still happen. Sometimes we think a particular speaker is so wonderful that it is *his* personality which becomes the object of praise and not God. There is a complexity here, for it is true that we can be led to goodness of life and to true worship through the example of another. If we see in that person

the real love of God then through him or her we can be led to love God more. But there is always this danger of worshipping the human personality instead of the divine. This is more so if it is the cleverness, the quick answers to opponents in argument, the mere ability of the person which move us to admiration. But where it is true goodness and where we find true holiness then the result is less likely to be disastrous.

Why should we worship God? Unless we understand the reason we can hardly offer true worship. The majority of the people in the street do not have the slightest understanding of worship. To them it is merely a superstitious act on our part, all rather silly. Could we explain to them what worship means to us? Perhaps we like coming to the meeting, especially on a Sunday morning. But it could be that we merely like the atmosphere. Some of us have grown up in the atmosphere of Sunday meetings. Many will be able to look back to early days and remember how it all seemed to us. In childhood it seemed nice to me that we all put on our best clothes (this may not hold any attraction for boys!). I enjoyed the walk to the meeting (no doubt many youngsters today would prefer the drive). Then everyone at the meeting seemed to be kind and smiling. If the time during the service was spent counting how many red or blue hats there were, or how many *s's* were in a particular verse, it did not really matter for I was imbibing the atmosphere.

Now it is possible for our appreciation of the services which we attend to mean not very much more to us than all that: simply that we enjoy the atmosphere and the pleasantness of social relationships. But, of course, we ought to mature. Perhaps a child likes the hymns, at first because he or she likes the tunes and it is happy to join in and sing. But gradually, if spiritual growth is taking place the hymns are liked because of what they say and so there is more and more appreciation of spiritual matters.

We know this does not always happen with young people. Sometimes they begin to think it is all meaningless and they rebel against it. Worship just seems a stupid waste

of time. And this is why it is important that what is said from the platform should be of value; it should not be a list of texts or well worn platitudes. Ideally only those capable of leading worship in the very best way should lead it. But that is easier said than done, and sometimes we have to accept sincerity on the part of the speaker rather than his aptitude. If we had trained preachers, standards ought to be better, but this is not necessarily the case, and there are disadvantages. We have seen how the preacher, and not God, can become the object of worship, and, on the other hand, many a trained preacher is deadly dull in his presentation. Perhaps this point shows us again how important it is that we do not rely entirely upon external aids for our worship. If worship is something which takes place in our hearts, if it is a direct relationship which we have with God, then the quality of the preacher's presentation becomes of less importance. So neither a beautiful edifice, nor well furnished surroundings, nor written words, nor brilliant preacher are necessary for true worship. But few of us can do without these helps in some measure.

What is the purpose of our worship? Does God demand it? It is not, I think, so much that God demands it as that He is worthy of it. He is the source of all goodness, the source of our very being, the source of all the kindness we experience in life, the source of beauty, the source of love. We are apt to think of ourselves as being the centre of the universe, as though everything revolves around *us*. At times of worship we have the opportunity to pause and recognise how good God is, how small we are in comparison. We have time to realise how little this life is compared with eternity and we go away, or we should go away, feeling comforted that we are in touch with the only personality Who can understand us completely and in Whose hands we can trust our personal eternity. It is important that we see God as the personal love which He is. God *is* love. He is not an angry being. He is not wanting to destroy even the most wicked of men. It was because "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The wrath of God which is spoken of in the Bible is the inevitable outcome of man's wickedness: it is not wished upon men by God. When we are told to fear God, we should understand this as meaning to respect him, for perfect love casts out fear.

"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." "Be ye holy; for I am holy." When the children of Israel thought of holiness they thought of something which was untouchable; they thought of ablutions, of all the scourings of vessels, of the washings of garments. They were afraid of anything which was holy. They could not see that all the washings were intended to be but outward symbols of inward cleanliness. They observed the outward performances but ignored the inward purification. We remember how Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for washing only the outside of the platter. But true holiness is the character of the one and only God. His holiness does not consist of outward show and cleanliness but of perfect moral purity. And it is this perfect moral purity which we are asked to worship. Moreover men are invited to be holy even as God is holy. Unless our worship makes us nearer to that moral perfection which is characteristic of God, unless it makes us more loving as God is, more able to show men the beauty of holiness, then our worship is false, just as false as worship was in the days of Israel's and Judah's corruption.

By understanding the nature of God's love, by worshipping Him because of that love we, in turn, become loving people, not merely people who *talk* about love. Nor do we become people who are longing for God to destroy his enemies. We are desperately sorry, as He is sorry, for the evil people around us who refuse to respond to Him and we do all we can to show them the only way of life which can give them happiness.

"Who," asks the Psalmist, "shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false, and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of his salvation."

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

by Ralph Lovelock

6

The Life of the Spirit

ch. 7 and 8

WHEN THE BASIC "book of the covenant" was presented to the people at Sinai, they took a solemn oath to obey it, and received in return the blessing of membership in the household of God (Ex. 24). This covenant was sealed with blood, and they were all sprinkled with the half of it, the other half being poured out to God at His altar. Thus a solemn oath was sealed with blood upon both parties to it, and Israel as people were bound by that oath to the Law in their service towards God. The new-born baby, by his circumcision, was dedicated to that oath while under the control of his parents, and upon attaining years of discretion, when he first presented himself before God under the Law, he took upon himself the bondage of the Law which had been accepted at Sinai.

The breaking of an oath was abhorrent to God, and the Jew presented with the argument of Paul in this epistle might well have rejoined that even if he wished, he was not free to forsake the Law and enter into the new covenant in the blood of Jesus. It is to this objection that Paul first addresses himself in the seventh chapter. He takes up the symbolism of baptism as a dying to the present life, and the rising to a new one. Even under the Law, the most solemn of oaths between human participants, the life-long bond of marriage, was severed by death. He is not drawing an analogy, but

stating a principle; this is evident from the details. It is the Christian who has died, and the Law which lives on; but in the example cited it is the wife who lives on and marries again, the husband dies and vanishes from the case. There can be no parallel between the two cases, because it is only in Christ that the dead can live again, and the one who has died can take another partner. What Paul is saying, is not that the two cases are similar, but that the principle is identical: death severs the bond of even the most serious of oaths.

The parallel which he does press is that between marriage and the relationship of the believer to Christ. The outcome of marriage is the birth of new life; the relationship between the Jew and the Law also had fruit: "While we lived on the level of our lower nature, the sinful passions evoked by the Law worked in our bodies, to bear fruit for death." In contrast to this, "So you, my friends, have died to the Law by becoming identified with the body of Christ, and accordingly you have found another husband in him who rose from the dead, so that we may bear fruit for God." The Jew, therefore, even though under the bondage of the Law because of the oath which he had taken towards God, could free himself by the sacrament of baptism. This was not a selfish freeing of himself from the service of an oath, but the exchanging of one oath which

had no hope for the future for an even more onerous oath, but one which brought eternal life in its train.

Having stated the case that the only outcome of service to the Law is death, a death which he has already stated in chapter five to be the outcome of sin, he asks, as the Jewish objector was likely to do, "Is the Law identical with sin?" The brief argument in the third chapter of Galatians, that it was through human weakness and not through any imperfection in itself that the Law brought only death, is here expanded and elaborated. The Law served to bring him to a realisation that sin was victorious within him. He poses the rhetorical question, "Are we to say then that this good thing was the death of me? By no means, it was sin that killed me, and thereby sin exposed its true character." He contrasts himself with the Law, which because it was an expression of the God who is Spirit, was itself spiritual: "We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am not; I am unspiritual, the purchased slave of sin."

This metaphor of bondage, or slavery, he now takes up in examining his own position before God while he was under the Law. The very knowledge of his own sinfulness which the Law forced upon his consciousness through his inability to obey it, put him in warfare with himself. The things which he knew to be good, and which with his mind he yearned to do, he was unable to accomplish; time and again he found himself having yielded to temptation, and having done that which he loathed and regretted. He found two desires struggling within him; the sinful habits of humanity, and the fervent love for the things of God. This inability to do anything but wrong he names a "slavery to sin"; as a slave he is unable to do what he most desires to do, and under the metaphor of slavery names this unrighteousness as the will of his master, of sin which is within him. Thus he summarises the lesson of the Law, that man is without the power to help himself: "Miserable creature that I am, who is there to rescue me out of this body doomed to death? God alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Thanks be to God! In a word then, I myself, subject to God's law as a rational being, am yet, in my unspiritual nature, a slave to the law of sin."

He opens the eighth chapter with an expansion of this idea of ransom from the service of sin. For those who are united with the Christ "there is no condemnation." To be united with Christ, is to become part of him. He has overcome sin in His own body, and is not under its power as we all are. If then we are part of him, "the life-giving law of the Spirit has set you free from the law of sin and death." This new life in Christ, which is not subject to sin and death, is the life of the Spirit, and without it we cannot escape the condemnation of sin. "You are on a spiritual level if only God's Spirit dwells within you; and if a man does not possess the Spirit of Christ, he is no Christian. But if Christ is dwelling in you, then although the body is dead because you sinned, yet the Spirit is life itself because you have been justified. Moreover, if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells within you, then the God who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his indwelling Spirit."

Thus far the principle of the new life, a life of the Spirit. But that this has not yet made us free from sin he freely admits. The universe was created subject to the vanity which we now experience; not because God desired a perpetual "vanity of vanities," but because in his wisdom righteousness was to grow out of this state of corruption: "yet always there was hope, because the universe itself is to be freed from the shackles of mortality, and enter upon the liberty and splendour of the children of God." Until now, from the very beginning, the universe has groaned in travail, and even now, we, to whom the Spirit has been given through Christ, still groan; still "we wait for God to make us his sons and set our whole body free." Christ has already died, already the victory has been won, and the freedom from sin assured, but the work of faith must continue with much travail within us before we are perfected: "For we have been saved, though only in hope."

All this however is not just an idea, there is a real practical working of the power of God within those who are "part of Christ." "In the same way the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness." This is a real activity; in prayer we do not know how to

gain the greatest benefits, but the Spirit within us makes so effective an utterance that the response of God is assured. "In everything, as we know, he co-operates for good with those who love God and are called according to his purpose." He is later to write to Philippi (2: 12-13), "You must work out your own salvation in fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will and the deed, for his own chosen purpose." The life of the Spirit is not just a repeat of the struggle under the Law; it is an effective intervention of the Spirit of God within our lives, to assure that victory over sin which had already been accomplished in Jesus. It is faith which will bring us unto Christ, and hence will be the agent through which we shall eventually obtain salvation; but it is the Spirit within us, which gave the victory to Jesus and raised him from the dead, which will work within us also to accomplish our resurrection.

It is in this connection that the difficult passage about "predestination" occurs. It is introduced to exhort to confidence. The purpose of God, existent before the foundation of the world, has always been the salvation of those in Jesus whom faith shall call. What Paul is here saying is that the purpose of God has always been the growth of man into "sons of God," and that purpose is so assured of fulfilment that he can speak of it as though it is already accomplished. Just as he could say that we "have been saved," though now "only in hope," so he can speak of us as "to those whom he justified he has also given his splendour." This he introduces here as an exhortation to effective faith in that which seems too good to be true, a protestation that we are foolish to doubt. It is paralleled by the similar assurance of Jesus (Lk. 12: 32): "Have no fear, little flock; for your Father has chosen to give you the Kingdom." The difficulties which we find in this passage come largely because we take it out of its context, and look upon it as a metaphysical statement of abstruse detail about God. Bracketed as it is here, joining the passage about the vanity which has ruled creation until now, with an assurance based upon the love of God manifested in the life of Jesus, it is obviously hortatory rather than expository. Since however he will return in much

greater detail to this question of predestination in the ninth chapter, we will leave further consideration of the question until we come to that passage.

In the final verses of this chapter he turns to the natural fears which may serve to break down the faith of the believer, and separate him from the effective working of the Spirit. "If God is on our side, who is against us?" The God who so effectively intended our salvation that he sent his Son into a world which he knew would kill him, "how can he fail to lavish upon us all he has to give?" So firm an assurance that the omnipotent God intends the salvation of man is our assurance also that "there is nothing in death or life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in heights or depths—nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." So complete is the list of all which human fear could conjure, that we do well to contemplate the one thing which he does not name, because it, and it alone, is able to separate us from that love.

The very fact that he is here encouraging and exhorting demonstrates that a failing faith in the individual can do this. His powerful exhortation in the First Epistle to Corinth (10: 12). "If you feel that you are standing firm, beware! You may fall," tells us that our salvation is not so assured that we can neglect it. In his own case he can say (I Cor. 9: 27), "For fear that after preaching to others I should find myself rejected." Later in this same epistle (Rom. 11: 20-21) he warns, "Put

away your pride, and be on your guard; for if God did not spare the native branches, no more will he spare you." It is the things without, which are powerless to separate us; but lack of faith in ourselves will be fatal. If we really want the salvation of God for what it is, and not some idol of our own imagination which we call by His name, it can be ours. Not that we can help in any way to give spiritual growth. All growth is from God; but the Spirit has been made available through Jesus to accomplish that which human flesh is powerless to attain. The love of God, and His willingness to go to the limit in our interests, has been so effectively demonstrated on the Cross that we are without excuse if we allow fears to weaken and kill our faith.

We are however called to be part of Christ; to be His body, alive with His life, performing God's will as He did, agents through whom the love of God may flow as it did through Him. If for the sake of man God was not willing to spare Him, we cannot find it a stumbling-block if He fails to spare us when our brother's welfare is at stake. The eternal lesson of the Cross is not only that the love of God will stop at nothing, but also that the life in Christ is not a life of selfish ease and perpetual rest. In the context of Christ's suffering Paul can mention also ours, "We are being done to death for thy sake all day long," and, "we have been treated like sheep for slaughter." These circumstances, those of personal suffering, are the ones most likely to enervate our faith, and it is against this weakness that Paul is exhorting.

Paul has here completed his first object, the treatment of the principles upon which the salvation of God depends, and the method by which His righteousness may come to fruition within man. But Paul was ever a practical evangelist. He is aware that many problems of everyday life remained, and were accentuated by this treatment. He turns now to the two greatest, to the working of God in history through the Jew, and to the working of the Spirit within the Church.

Positive and Negative

The Babylonian Talmud tells the following story of Shammai and Hillel, two senior contemporaries of Jesus:

A heathen once came to Shammai and said to him, "Accept me as a proselyte on the condition that you teach me the whole law while I am standing on one leg." Shammai drove him away with a yardstick that he had in his hand. The heathen went to Hillel, who accepted him as a proselyte. He said to him, "What is hateful to yourself do to no one else. That is the whole Law; all the rest is commentary."

There is no difficulty in seeing that the liberal Hillel was closer to Jesus than the strict Shammai, but even Hillel failed to teach the standard of Jesus, for the negative is not nearly so comprehensive as the positive. The difference is between an enlightened Rabbi and the Son of God.

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How Is Prophecy Fulfilled?

by Wilfred Lambert

THAT PROPHECY is fulfilled has been maintained by us for more than a century. How, and in what sense, are questions that have been virtually unasked. Nor has the meaning of "prophecy" been considered very much. The present time, when so many prognosticators are having difficulty in finding communist China and the U.S.A. in Bible prophecy, is surely opportune to ask if methods currently used are soundly based in the teaching of Scripture. "Prophecy" in Biblical use does not refer exclusively to predictions of the future, indeed only a small part of the prophetic books are that. Daniel is the exception rather than the rule. However, since in modern English "prophecy" does generally mean foretelling the future, in this article we shall use the word in that sense.

General agreement has existed in our community on two points. The one is that all prophecy either has been or will be fulfilled. The second, assumed more often than stated, is that the fulfilment does not have to be literal, e.g. Micah 4: 4 "they shall sit every man under his own vine and under his fig tree" has commonly been explained as a picture of peace and security rather than as a literal description of what every one will do in the millennium. A serious deficiency in our study of this aspect of Scripture has been the selective character of the material used. Our doctrine was formulated in the course of preaching, and for this purpose a selection was made, chiefly prophecies of the Messiah and those

thought to refer to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, while many others have been generally neglected, as not suitable for use in preaching. While the preacher needs a few simple, clear examples, the student must examine the whole. A short article cannot of course cover the whole Bible, so one well-known example will be taken, where both the prophecy and its fulfilment can be read in the Bible itself.

First, however, some general considerations. All predictive prophecy is, of course, based on the fact of a divine purpose at work in human affairs, and of God's revelation of this purpose by His prophets, His Son, and by other means. As Amos said: "Surely the Lord God does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets" (3: 7). The importance of this point is that predictions obviously fit in the general purpose of God's revelation and are not something unrelated to it. We shall return to this later. Prophecy, then, is one aspect of God's working in the human scene, and what is foretold may depend on the human response. The prophecy may be conditional. A prophecy of destruction may be withdrawn if those against whom it is spoken repent, or vice versa with a prophecy of blessing, as stated by Jeremiah (18: 7-10) and illustrated in the case of Jonah's prophecy against Nineveh. Clearly then not all prophecy will be fulfilled, even if it was worded unconditionally, since God's love and justice operate after the word has been spoken.

We would not, however, say that God's purposes could be frustrated by human response of any kind: there must be an absolute element in Scripture predictions. The difficulty lies in separating this element from the conditional aspects. To illustrate this a central theme must be taken, and none could be better than the theme of God's Son, the Anointed, son to David. In the well-known ch. 7 of 11 Samuel a son is promised to David. The circumstances were that David was now freed from pressing problems and considered how he lived in a luxurious house while the Ark, the presence of God, was protected from the elements by only a tent. He therefore proposed to the prophet Nathan that he should build a house for God. Nathan at once gave his blessing on the project, and presumed to couple God's blessing with his own. But in the following night he received an answer for David from the Lord, which contradicted what he had uttered. It covers 12 verses and essentially gives two distinct answers. The first is that so far from David's building God a house, God would build a house for David, that is, the Davidic dynasty (v. 11). The second is that David's son would in due course build the house for God, referring of course to Solomon's building the temple. The key verses are 12-16, and we print them from the RSV with the parallel passage from Chronicles and the paraphrase from Psalm 89:

I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; but I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

II Sam. 7: 12-16

I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons,

and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne for ever.

I will be his father, and he shall be my son.

I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom for ever,

and his throne shall be established for ever.

I Chron. 17: 11-14

I will establish his line for ever

and his throne as the days of the heavens.

If his children forsake my law . . . then I will punish their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with scourges; but I will not remove from him my steadfast love, or be false to my faithfulness . . .

His line shall endure for ever, his throne as long as the sun before me.

Psalms 89: 29-36

Samuel is pre-exilic, but Chronicles was written in the post-exilic period, and the Psalm was probably written during the exile, and in any case not earlier than the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. The version in Samuel is capable of the greatest variety of interpretations. Is the offspring Solomon, Solomon and his successors collectively, or Jesus Christ? Any one of these interpretations could be argued from Samuel. Chronicles, in the phrase "one of your own sons," clearly excludes a collective interpretation, but on this basis either Solomon or Christ would fit the wording. The Psalm, on the other hand, asserts a collective interpretation in the words "his line" and "his children." Some would no doubt hasten to assert that this is but another example of the words of Scripture bearing several meanings, but that does not touch the point that it is desired to make here, which is that when Nathan first gave the message to David, and presumably the version of Samuel is closest to what David heard, the sense in which the prophecy would be fulfilled was not made known. Whether David understood "offspring" as a single son or the collective line of his house, he could not have anticipated that his throne would be cast down and no descendant of his would rule in Jerusalem for several millennia. It has been argued that obviously David was not left in such ignorance by

God, and therefore we must suppose that in addition to the recorded message further explanations were given to him which have not been handed down. This suggestion is based on a gratuitous assumption of what God would do, and brazenly adds something to Scripture. In any case the Psalm contradicts these assumptions.

The Psalmist first reminds the Lord of his covenant with David (1-4), then praises God for his greatness (5-18), next paraphrases the promises made through Nathan (19-37) as referring to the line of David, after which he asks why God had renounced this covenant and cast down the throne (38-45), and finally he prays that God will relent from his anger and remember the promises to David (49-52). This line of reasoning makes no sense if the Psalmist knew that the overthrowing of the Davidic dynasty was only part of a chain of events leading up to a Greater Son of David who would in due time rule over the whole earth. The Psalmist would rather have looked forward to the fulfilment of that greater hope. As it is, he says, speaking under divine inspiration, "Thou hast renounced the covenant with thy servant."

The facts, then, are these. God's promise to David was to an extent conditional, just as Jeremiah explained the outworkings of God's purposes. If David's line had observed the will of God, then

presumably it would have continued to rule from Jerusalem indefinitely. In fact it was known to God from the beginning that it would not. Ultimately the wickedness of the kings required the dissolution of the dynasty: "For because of the anger of the Lord it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence" (II Kings 24: 20). At this point the covenant was broken: the prophecy seemed, even to the Psalmist, to be falsified. But it was not. Human sin had caused the breach. The love and wisdom of God healed this breach by providing a new and better covenant and a Greater Son of David. It may be objected that this turns God into little more than a superman, who improvises a new scheme when one breaks down. In the Old Testament God is often represented as being and working like a man: he has arms, hands, nostrils, etc., and in Genesis 6: 6-7, for example, we are told that God regretted having made man. It is not that God really has human parts and such human feelings as regret, but he is represented in this way to help simple people to understand. Though God foreknows everything, he has given freedom of choice to man, and were God to make known to every one the future in detail, it would only serve as a very real inhibition on one's freedom of choice. Hence David was not given full details of the dynasty he founded, and he could not have expected just how things would work out, namely in the person of Jesus Christ.

From this example—and many others which could be given—where prophecy has been fulfilled in past history, it can be seen that interpretation of prophecies as yet unfulfilled is necessarily a very hazardous matter. A conditional factor can exist even with prophecies about central purposes of God, factors resulting in the changing of the manner of fulfilment, of which the prophecies themselves give no hint. It is commonplace with many interpreters to ignore this plain Scriptural evidence and to press literally details and to find applications in the modern world. The frequent failure of prognostications has rarely discouraged such expositors from offering further forecasts.

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leadership, though the temptations to seek power and office by being "prophets of smooth things" are present, and however little the seekers may acknowledge their motives, this is political leadership, not feeding the flock of Christ. Religious bodies are more exposed to danger in the lack of any immediate and unmistakable sign that things are wrong. No businessman can ignore a deficit in his accounts and convince himself that it is not there. But there is no such simple way of knowing if a religious community is facing the facts about itself or not. More members, bigger collections, better buildings are not necessarily proof of a truly Christian group. One criterion for judging a religious community is the extent to which it can judge itself dispassionately. Good spiritual health increases the ability to judge oneself aright, and such failings as do occur can be frankly faced and remedies considered. When faith is weak, when much is wrong that could be right, then the mildest and most constructive of criticisms are liable to be met with outbursts of violent anger. A general feeling of uncertainty makes a community touchy, and unless a real effort is made to correct this, it may prevent necessary discussions on the matters which have led to the uncertainty.

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Surveying the Christadelphian scene no one will doubt that we have not been well prepared to meet the changing world of the twentieth century. We have kept out of sight issues that should have been faced until it has become painful to many even to ascertain what is involved. There has been an unadmitted feeling of uncertainty as we note that kinds of preaching successful in the nineteenth century create no response in the twentieth. Some hold that the solution is to hold fast to all our traditional ways, and not to engage in any radical re-appraisal of our faith. The only merit of this course is that it involves no effort. But a vital Church will not be sustained on an acceptance of tradition alone. Each generation needs to find the Gospel for itself from the Scriptures, and to convince itself that this is what Jesus and the Apostles taught. Of course such a procedure involves work and courage. We will have to put aside the satisfaction of thinking that we know it all. We must be prepared to find that some of the emphases we have been placing hardly conform to the general tenor of Scripture. (Daniel and Revelation are not more important than many other books of the Bible.) We must have open minds to allow the messages of Scripture to come to us, and not merely try to justify what we heard in Sunday School. Only in this way can the vitality of our community in a changing world be preserved, and nothing less is worthy of the Cross.

WILFRED LAMBERT.

(Continued from previous page)

Time and effort has been wasted on these unprofitable pursuits.

All aspects of divine revelation are related. God's will is to call men to repentance, and to bring forth the fruits of the spirit. To such men and women God has revealed something of his purposes. They have been encouraged down the ages by the knowledge that God is working in history, and that he has not abandoned his earth to wicked men. They have also been encouraged by the revelation that God's ultimate purpose is to remove evil altogether. It would not have been to the spiritual edification of David, Elijah or Isaiah to have known every little detail of the history of the world down to our own period. Thus it is that in most predictions one passes without interruption from the immediate future to the Kingdom of God in its fullness. Whether the current world was that of the Assyrians, as it was to Amos, the Babylonians, as witnessed by Jeremiah, or the Romans, under whom Christ was crucified, prophecies most commonly deal with the then world and pass directly to the End. To know what Russia will do next would be knowledge more likely to puff up than to edify. The value of prophecy is therefore the assurance it gives of the purposes of God. One can be certain that they will be fulfilled, but to judge from the example studied our grasp of how they will be fulfilled may be imperfect. In all probability they will exceed our expectations.

SUMMER SCHOOL 1968

SATURDAY, 27th JULY-SATURDAY, 3rd AUGUST

Our Study Week will again be held, God Willing, in the house and lovely grounds of Fircroft College, Birmingham. The course will be run on similar lines to last year and will have the Book of Isaiah as the main study.

A few vacancies remain, but immediate booking is advised by writing to our business address, see p. 13.

The Annual General Meeting is arranged for the final Saturday, 3rd August, and there will be two addresses, at 11.15 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. on "Messianic Prophecy" and "The Messiah". Lunch and Tea can be provided for those who communicate their intention of coming to our business address.

The Endeavour

Magazine

A CHRISTADELPHIAN REVIEW

TWO SHILLINGS

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CORRESPONDENCE

No. 29

Autumn 1968

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

THE attempted student revolution in Paris in the early summer seemed to shake the very foundations of Western society for a time. If we discount the professional agitators and all the criminals and cranks who tried and in part succeeded in making it serve their purposes, there was a certain truly noble spirit behind the students, however unfortunate some of its expressions. While it was in part a demand for reasonable reforms — the law curriculum in Paris had remained unchanged since the time of Napoleon — it went beyond purely university matters to protest about society in general: against the satisfaction of the majority in ever-increasing wages as the sole end of life, and against the cant and humbug of professional politicians. The attempted revolution was a failure in its protest against the standards of Western society. The workers were bought off with higher wages. They were concerned more with pay than with principles.

Looking back now over the "happenings" one wonders how Christians were reacting. So far as news was concerned it would appear that they were detached and uninvolved: shocked perhaps at the violence and destruction of property, but not stirred to action of any kind. One wonders if there were any Christian students who tried to preach Christ in the babble for Marx and Mao. Most likely Christian workers were quite happy to acquiesce in a ten per cent wage increase.

The whole episode is a further example of the utter secularization of our society and of the impotence and ineptitude of the great majority of those professing Christ as Lord to witness in season and out of season.

The peculiar vice of the age is materialism. Never before in the history of the world have so many had such opportunities to acquire and enjoy material things. In other ages a minority may have lived in luxury while the

(Please turn to back page)

The Life and Times of John Thomas M.D.

(2) Qualification and Emigration

by Brian Tighe

IN 1823 JOHN THOMAS returned to London to continue his medical studies under the guidance of a general practitioner near Paddington. Two years later he began to attend lectures at Guy's and St Thomas's Hospitals, where he remained three years, acting for some months as Demonstrator of Anatomy in a school connected with one of the hospitals. On completing his medical studies he went to live with a London physician who was commencing a series of lectures on obstetrics. The arrangement was that John Thomas should write the lectures for the physician to deliver and generally assist him in his practice. At the end of a year the physician proposed that Dr Thomas should go into practice for himself, undertaking to do his utmost to help him.

Thus it was that the year 1830 saw John Thomas established in a practice of his own at Hackney—a venture which proved to be moderately successful. Having a good deal of leisure on hand he began to develop his literary talents in two distinct directions. The first was by contributing articles and letters to *The Lancet* and the second by that traditional pastime of nineteenth century clergymen and doctors, writing a history of the parish where he was resident. Both undertakings show the very characteristic attitudes and abilities of the young John Thomas, although in rather different ways.

The *History of the Parish of Hackney* had advanced considerably and reached a point which made it necessary for Dr Thomas to consult

the parish records. He applied to the ecclesiastical authorities for permission but this was denied when the authorities in question knew the purpose of the request. They were apparently very uneasy and "fearful of disclosures." By means of obstacles they prevented the completion of the work and after a period of stalemate Dr Thomas was "induced on advice" to offer the completed work to a certain publisher in London who gave him £50 for it. The "apprehensive parish pharisees" (who had, apparently, engineered the transaction) immediately negotiated its purchase from the publishers for £100 and thus prevented it seeing the light. The last laugh was with Dr Thomas, however, a situation which he still found to his liking when recounting the incident some 30 years later. "The MS. was perfectly innocuous which they, no doubt, would be chagrined to discover after paying down the money. . . . When I think of it, I would not have given five cents for the whole concern." Even at the time that he said this, the money paid by the parish authorities would have purchased 50 acres of "superior farming land" in Illinois!

His contributions to *The Lancet* consisted of letters and articles touching on a diversity of subjects ranging from the shortcomings of midwives and death by asphyxia to the nature of the soul and mind of man. The last mentioned topic formed the basis of an article written in reply to a paper on the same subject by a Dr Dermott, Professor of Anatomy in the City of London.

Dr Dermott's paper suggested that man has attached to his existence a principle termed "the soul" which is unconscious during his mortal lifetime, but starts into consciousness at death, thus becoming the continuation of the same individual's existence. The young John Thomas felt that these ideas were irrational and absurd and, undaunted by the status of his opponent, wrote a somewhat scathing reply to the article. He suggested that if such an intellectual and moral soul, capable of thinking, seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, and yet without brain, eyes, ears, nerves was breathed out with the breath of death it must depart at the mouth or nostrils. Why not then, he asked, catch it in some appropriate apparatus and subject it to chemical analysis? His own positive views on the subject were not based on an understanding of the subject but, as he later remarked, "carnal and unenlightened reasoning."

The "Essay on Asphyxia" reveals something of his characteristic literary style, as the following extract shows:—

TREATMENT OF PERSONS BLASTED BY LIGHTNING

The electric fluid, it has been shown, does not suspend animal life, but instantly destroys it. When the body is struck by lightning, complete death ensues; I need, therefore, scarcely observe that any kind of treatment will assuredly prove abortive. That man who shall hereafter restore to consciousness a senseless body struck by the

lightning's blast, will richly deserve Promethean renown, and merit the honoured title of "Great Father of Human Kind."

In asphyxia of this kind, no vitality exists upon which to act; for organic and animal life are both extinct and to reunite the departed spirit with the lifeless corpse surpasses infinitely the mightiest efforts of the power and ingenuity of man.

By the beginning of the year 1832 Dr Thomas was well established in his practice at Hackney. It was in this year that his father (who had by this time left the Independents and joined the Baptists, retaining his position in the City Gas Office and preaching to a small congregation in Brentford) was "seized with the American Emigration fever." The origin of this seems to have been threefold. First of all his naturally restless disposition: he had remained with the City Gas Office for eight years now, longer than in any of his previous ventures. Secondly, the state of things in England was less than happy. The cause and extent of unrest have been briefly mentioned: added to this a series of cholera epidemics had raged in the country, London being particularly hard hit. These two factors, combined with the glowing reports of the new country and sudden rush of emigrants leaving England convinced him that the family should leave for America at once.

Dr Thomas was conscious of his father's impetuosity and afraid that the family might be led into an undesirable situation by a rash decision. He therefore suggested that he should go himself to "spy out the land." If all was well his father and family should join him; to this his father consented.

The events which followed are reported in *Dr Thomas: His Life and Work* because of their remarkable consequences. The earlier account which appeared in *The Ambassador* is even more detailed and seems to bear the unmistakable literary stamp of John Thomas himself. It is not difficult to suggest a reason for this. Robert Roberts, in preparing biographical fragments for *The Ambassador*, had been in personal as well as written contact with Dr Thomas. Being a shorthand writer he would have had no difficulty in preparing a verbatim

transcript of the conversations. It seems that he extensively rewrote and condensed these for the book whereas in many of *The Ambassador* articles one has the impression that Dr Thomas himself is telling the story.

On 1st May 1832 *The Marquis of Wellesley*, a ship of some 500 tons, left St Catherine's Dock, London, bound for New York. On board, sailing as ship's surgeon was John Thomas. The ship carried 70 passengers and a crew of 19. There were only three cabin passengers, a man who called himself Williams (but whose real name was Mott) and a woman and boy travelling as his wife and son.

The ship encountered foul weather almost immediately. At the end of a fortnight, after enduring unfavourable winds and heavy seas the ship's main mast was snapped off, and the foretop mast and mizzen top were carried away. "A heavy sea stove in the bulwarks and swept the deck of everything movable and some things not intended to be movable." The description which follows seems to be a first-hand account.

A heavy, clouded, angry sky portended a continuation of the storm; the furious gale which howled hideously in the rigging was at least discomforting even to a stout heart, an effect which was not likely to be mitigated by a look at the raging sea, lashed into mighty high ridged froth-crested billows which rolled in ponderous undulations, and broke in wanton fury over the frail hiding place of 90 souls. The ship was tossed about like a chip in a boiling cauldron. She plunged and rolled and creaked in a horrible manner now lifted on a mountainous wave and then engulfed in the trough of the sea, as if she would never rise again.

The account in *The Ambassador* contains the laconic statement, "sailing was now dangerous."

The general state of alarm amongst the passengers led to the captain's consenting to hold a service on Sundays. Williams (rather ironically as events transpired) was appointed to read the prayers, and Dr Thomas a chapter from the Bible together with an extract from a book of published sermons. The arrangement seemed to calm the excitement amongst the passengers, a state which

Dr Thomas referred to in later years as "... a superstitious apprehension in relation to the sulphurous torments which their paganised education had led them to associate with the destiny of the wicked."

The Ambassador continues with an account of an incident which has been omitted in the *Life and Work*. It shows Dr Thomas employing what he referred to in later life as "a little management and forethought." The account reads:—

For days the storm showed no symptoms of abatement and there was danger of the ship becoming waterlogged. The doctor advised that some of the lead and chalk which constituted the cargo of the vessel should be thrown overboard; but the captain, who received the suggestion through Williams, would not hear of it. The doctor determined to enforce his counsel by a little stratagem. Knowing the superstition of sailors, he next Sunday selected as the scripture reading of the day the account of Paul's shipwreck in which it will be remembered Paul counselled the lightening of the ship by the throwing of the cargo overboard. Having read the chapter, the doctor called attention to it as illustrative of their own position, and drew especial notice to Paul's advice as likely to be of service to them. At the close of the service, the captain said to Williams he did not know but Paul's advice was very good, and would have no objections to some of the chalk being thrown overboard if he could only have spared the necessary hands. Williams suggested that he might leave the matter in the hands of himself and the doctor who with the assistance of the steerage passengers would be able to attend to it. To this the captain ultimately consented, and accordingly Williams and the doctor arranged the steerage passengers in gangs and relieved the ship of a large number of chalk blocks, after which she floated lighter by two feet. She sailed much easier for a day or two after.

The cloudy conditions prevented observations from being taken for some days and the ship's progress

was quite uncertain though the captain appeared quite confident as to the position of the vessel. They passed several ships within a relatively short space of time and inquired for their reading of the position. The captain remarked next Sunday at dinner that if the reckoning of the other ships was correct, they could not be far from Sable Island, but added that he believed their own reckoning to be the correct one and that they were upwards of 250 miles away from the island. Dr Thomas suggested that it would be as well to assume that the other ships were right, and they wrong, and take soundings. The captain seemed impressed by the wisdom of this suggestion, and ordered the mate to check the bearings of the ship for Sable Island, but the mate taking the data of the ship, came, of course, to the same conclusion as before. The captain was thus lulled into what almost proved to be a fatal sense of false security. On two or three occasions the same evening Dr Thomas who was struck by the shallow appearance of the water, attempted to arouse the interest of the second mate in this situation. He was told that he knew nothing of such matters being only a landsman. Dr Thomas's reply was intellectually satisfying but brought about no change in the situation. He was about to retire for the night when the ship scraped on the bottom and struck heavily causing it to lurch with considerable violence.

The resulting confusion is not difficult to imagine. The look-out immediately raised the cry "breakers ahead" and the captain frantically issued orders to head the ship out to sea.

The ship struck the bottom 12 times "striking horror through her living freight with every concussion." One of the male passengers was lying, apparently nearly hysterical with terror, crying, "We shall go to the bottom! we shall go to the bottom!" Dr Thomas with characteristic British phlegm replied that they were already at the bottom, and could get no lower than they were. Notwithstanding this he felt that their chances of survival were pretty poor.

It was at this point that the situation forced introspection upon him. He realised that he knew nothing of the state of man after death and "felt uncomfortably pressed" by the

question of what would become of him in the event of his being drowned. He concluded that the best thing in the circumstances would be to go down with the prayer upon his lips, "Lord have mercy upon me for Christ's sake." At the same time he determined that if ever he got ashore again he would find out the truth of the matter. It was this decision that changed the course of his whole future career.

The captain's efforts were, meanwhile, meeting with some success. A change of wind turned the ship and for a few moments she ceased striking bottom. Just as ecstatic cries of "she rides" rang around the ship, however, she struck ground with a terrible crash, destroying for the moment all hope that she might be saved. This was her last and worst collision. She immediately rose on the waves and headed out to sea. The damage was quite formidable and the pumps had to be kept constantly at work during the remainder of the voyage. The ship limped into New York harbour 10 days later having taken eight weeks to complete the voyage.

The Ambassador contains an interesting tailpiece to the story. Since this is not mentioned in any of the editions of *Life and Work* it is recounted here in full:—

The event (arrival in New York harbour) was the occasion of great joy to every soul on board except the man Williams, whose real name turned out to be Mott. It appeared he had decamped from England with £2,000 of somebody's else's money, in the company of the woman who travelled with him as his wife, but who it was said was not married to him; and when the ship arrived in harbour, she was boarded by an agent who had come over from England in pursuit of him. This agent had started some time after the departure of the *Marquis of Wellesley* but had managed to arrive in New York before her. The man went from the ship to prison.

On leaving the ship Dr Thomas went to a boarding house in New York. Three days later opening his door in response to a knock he was amazed to find his father there. The impetuous man had wound up his

affairs and "resolved to commit himself and his fortunes to the emigration scheme." Some measure of his impetuosity and indeed the misfortunes of the *Marquis of Wellesley* may be gauged from the fact that he left England three weeks after his son and arrived in New York only three days behind him.

(To be continued)

A FURTHER NOTE ON MRS JOHN THOMAS (SEN.)

An interesting sidelight on John Thomas (senior's) short stay as pastor at Huntly (1812-13) is presented in *The Missionar Kirk of Huntly* by the Rev. Robert Troup. The author tells, in some detail, how Mrs Thomas hastened her husband's departure:—

... difficulties arose, chiefly, I believe, domestic. Mrs Thomas never liked Huntly. It was a great change to her to come from the metropolis of the empire to what she would regard as a poor, dirty village. And indeed it was by no means attractive in those days. The streets were unpaved and often deep with mud and manure, the houses almost all small and mean; the people uncultured, their speech scarcely intelligible to her, their manners in her eyes rude, their staple food unlike what she had been accustomed to. . . . She was determined to get away. And she secured her purpose in a curious, but not very seemly, manner. Mr Thomas intimated that he was about to resign his charge. When this became known, a meeting was called to consider the matter, at which he was expected to be present. Afraid lest the meeting should persuade her husband to remain—for she knew they wished him to do so—Mrs Thomas on the morning of the day of it removed all his clothes and kept them hid until the meeting was past. In his absence it broke up without doing anything, and Mrs Thomas accomplished her object. Mr Thomas could scarcely have remained with comfort after such an affair became known, nor his work been likely to prosper, and accordingly he soon left.

In the World, yet not of It

By Wilfred Lambert

To what extent can a Christian be an integrated citizen in an increasingly pagan society and state? And if he participates in world affairs may he not risk setting himself up against God? These age-old problems are looked at afresh in this article.

MOST OF US are reconciled to accept both the possibility of God's intervention in our lives and the reality of freedom of choice. This is no mean achievement, for if we think back over the course of our lives there is no difficulty in seeing how inheritance and environment have to some extent, perhaps a large extent, moulded our characters. Occasionally one hears from those who consider they have never had a fair chance, and with some one must concede that circumstances have been unusually severe and adverse. This may be the genuine reason why X or Y has not become Prime Minister, a High Court judge, or director of a big company, though he obviously had the native talent equal for these posts. With moral character we do not make the same allowances so readily. We feel that all men stand equal before God and must bear personal responsibility for what they are. In so far as this view is adopted of others, we may be too harsh. Those who grew up in a wretched environment may well please God by overcoming some, but not all of it, as compared with those who were blessed with a most edifying family background. However, in our own cases we do well not to invoke the conditions of our life as excuses for personal failings, since this is usually an aspect of the despicable vice of self-pity. God gives us freedom of choice: we are responsible.

However well we may balance the conflicting factors in our personal affairs in relation to God, this is no guarantee

that we shall do the same in relation to the larger world. Here again we acknowledge the freedom of men to choose, while accepting that God's purpose is being worked out among them, or even by them. All this is intellectual. The problems arise when we begin to think of our own position in this bigger world. That many of the forces controlling it are in some respect evil is both taught by Scripture and is clear to the observer. There is, accordingly, a limit to which the committed Christian can consider himself part of this world. When confronted with the evil, he may consider himself unrelated to this order of things, as one who looks on from a superior vantage-point and awaits the revelation of God's son from heaven. An element of truth exists here, but it should be balanced by the other factors, namely (i) that Christians who live in the world, as distinct from those who have gone into monastic isolation, receive much benefit for which as Christians they should be grateful, (ii) that the whole human race is God's creation and is not therefore to be despised or ignored, and (iii) that the Christian's obligation to the world in some senses includes a responsibility for it. These points will be considered in turn.

First, are we truly grateful for all the services that we receive from the state? What of the police, hospitals, schools for our children, postal services, water supply, travel facilities, etc., provided for our benefit? Do we take all

these for granted and complain at the taxes we have to pay towards their cost? Do we ever give a thought to the nurses and school teachers, many of whom serve out of a sense of devotion, though they could usually command better salaries in commerce or industry? Are we good citizens only in the sense that we commit no crimes? If we are afraid to do our neighbours good turns because the association with unbelievers might not be spiritually edifying, have we asked ourselves how we can possibly justify working with such people, and sending our children in their formative years to schools full of unbelievers' children? It is entirely practical politics to form social units of believers so as to keep contact with unbelievers to a minimum. For example, we might form village communities with private schools for the children. Of course the villages might not offer such varied, interesting and lucrative employment as our present positions, but let us not pretend that it is impracticable. If, then, we choose to mix in with the world at large (and there are good Christian reasons for doing so) let us not lay ourselves open to the criticism that we take all it offers in the way of benefits and in return give the minimum demanded of us.

A particular example may bring out the issue at stake. Many ecclesias rent a hall rather than take on the financial burden of acquiring a building of their own. Some of these halls are hired from social, cultural, charitable or religious bodies, and the rent paid may in fact be subsidised. Even if it pays for the actual material expenses, it often turns out that the management body, which has made the letting possible, is composed of voluntary workers who do not even claim for their expenses, so that the letting is done on a charitable basis and not as a commercial transaction. Yet it has been known for individual members of a group enjoying such facilities to be unwilling on principle to contribute to the charitable work done by these bodies.

Secondly, it is easy to become detached observers of the human scene at the present time. The mass media of communication are full of war, destruction, violence and crime. If our emotions were too tender not a day would pass without weeping for the tragedies of the past 24 hours. And so the world's suffering becomes a spectacle on which we are the passive onlookers. A terrifying example of this occurred only a few years ago, when a woman was stabbed to death over a period of some 20 minutes, since the assailant was compelled to withdraw for intervals while people passed close by, quite unsuspecting what was happening. Later he

returned to complete his ghastly work. The scene was in an upper-class residential area, overlooked by some 20 houses, whose occupants afterwards gave the details of what had occurred, since it happened in their full view. Yet so accustomed were they to seeing violence on television that not one of them even thought to ring the police until the whole episode was over, and the woman dead. The Christian's separation from the world is not of this kind. His concern with spiritual matters does not result in indifference to the welfare of others, whatever their creed or colour. As created in the image of God, all mankind is his concern. God has purposes, and does pour out judgment, but that is no reason for the Christian to stand aside and watch events as a spectacle. As Christ in His mission to the Jews was deeply involved in their welfare and was stricken at the thought of the coming disaster, so should we share in the events of our time, moved by His Spirit.

This leads to our third point, that a follower of Jesus must accept some responsibility for what happens in the world. The Christian has a responsibility not only to save himself, but also to witness to Him whose servant he is. That witness may be to some degree successful, or it may be a total failure in the sense of influencing others. Just as in personal life one does not seek to excuse failings because God can influence environments, similarly in respect of our witness to Christ, the existence of a divine purpose does not exonerate us if we are ineffective. We must still ask if we have done all we could, and if we are not in some measure responsible for the current lack of concern for religion. Have we, as Christadelphians, really sounded a clarion call to the world in which we live? Dare we say that we have done all we could to direct the present generation into right ways, so that we bear no responsibility for it? Or have we been too concerned to maintain our traditional ways of doing things to influence the present generation? Have we assumed too readily that to convert the present generation nothing new is needed beyond what sufficed for the last century? Have we really faced the new problems that our grandfathers never knew so as to give the best answer possible, or have we not rather pretended there was no question to face?

It is not unusual among us to denounce the moral evils of the times. It is a dangerous thing to do, since by implication we are putting ourselves on a higher level, which can breed self-righteousness. We could be better advised to inquire, very searchingly, why our witness has been so ineffective.

LOVE: an exhortation

By Stephen Bailey

WE ARE READING this magazine today because of one thing and one thing only; we are reading it because of love. Because one man loved us sufficiently to dedicate His life to us, because one man loved us sufficiently to show us that perfect example which is necessary for salvation, because one man loved us sufficiently to die for us and above all, because God loved us enough to allow Him to die. This love, this simple and much abused word should be the centre and the driving force of our lives. To take upon ourselves the love of Christ is something which should not have been done lightly for it is a very great responsibility and it is a very great task to reciprocate. And so in this article let us consider this word "love," decide its meaning and find some examples in the Bible from which we can glean applications for our own lives. In this connection let us see man's love for God, God's love for us, and finally Christ's love for us.

The dictionary definition of the word is as follows: "fondness; affection of the mind caused by that which delights; pre-eminent kindness; reverential regard; devoted attachment to one of the opposite sex; the object of affection and the God of love." These meanings do, of course, cover a wide field. We are for the moment interested only in the tremendously personal aspect of this word. However, these meanings will have given us a true indication of what love really means. The pornographic sentimentality and loose morals which unfortunately exist in our day and age are very often excused by the use of this word. An illicit relationship is condoned because it is said that the two partners are in love whereas, in fact, only lust is involved and it is because of this type of reasoning that the true import of the meaning of love has been lost.

For our first consideration let us look at Job's relationship with God, because by reviewing the situation we may learn what the foundations of true love between man and God should be. The problem Job had

to face was a theological problem having more import in his own particular age than in ours, but this does not mean that we cannot be taught a very important lesson. Job, as we all know, was a wealthy man, had many possessions, had a fine family consisting of many sons and daughters and a wife and he had good health. Suddenly he lost his wealth; suddenly he lost his possessions; dramatically he lost his family, apart from his wife, and then he was smitten down with a terrible disease, probably elephantiasis, the significance of the latter being that it was thought in the days of Job that this was a disease of divine retribution. The theological problem of which we have already spoken was that it was believed in those days that wealth was synonymous with a godly life and that great losses and poverty were connected with some form of divine judgment. The visit of the three friends confirms this. They reason that surely Job must have committed some terrible sin, that his life must have been unworthy, thereby bringing upon himself this punishment. Even Job's wife requested him to curse God and die rather than continue to respect God. But throughout all this anguish and sorrow, having lost everything and being racked with a terrible disease, Job did not desert his God; Job did not deny his God; Job did not stop loving his God. Job knew that he had not committed any great sin other than the sins of youth and he could not understand why these things had happened to him but even in his most anguished perplexity he did not waver and because of this his previous wealth was doubled and a family was restored to him.

What are the lessons we can draw from this? Surely that it is easy to believe in God, to say that we love God and to wear a cloak of apparent righteousness while we are comfortably treated by life, but it is in times of loss and in times of sorrow that we really decide whether we love God. Many of us travel today in modern trains or motor cars, all

of us are dressed in a decent outfit of clothing, some of us possess wealth, some of us possess property and, therefore, comparatively speaking, we are living this comfortable life but if this was removed from us, would we not be tempted to desert God, to blame Him for our loss? Only we ourselves can answer this question but at least let us recognise that this should not be the case.

Now we come to the example of Hannah. Here we see a woman who was in a terrible plight. She was well loved by her husband and by all accounts was well blessed with the good things of life, but her greatest desire could not be fulfilled and this was to bear a child. As we read in the book, she prayed to God, no doubt many times, for deliverance from her affliction. We cannot tell, we cannot possibly comprehend the terrible anxiety which must have prevailed on her. The remorse, the sorrow and the helplessness of her situation can surely only be felt by those who have been in her own situation. But Hannah prayed to God fervently and sincerely that if she could only bear a son she would devote that child's life to the service of God.

Because her prayer was sincere it was answered and in the course of time she bore a son whom we now know as Samuel and this child in due time was delivered as promised into the Temple. Hannah by this act showed how much she loved and regarded her association with God. She had not relinquished her vow. She did not let the bonds of mother love over-rule it but instead she kept her promise.

How many times have we prayed to God for something either great or small to occur in our lives, be it the passing of an examination, the money required to buy an item we wish to possess, or that we may enjoy good health once more, and how often have we assured God in our prayer that if we were blessed with these things we would devote more of our time to Him or significantly alter our relationship with Him? And how many times after praying in this fashion have we rejected the condition which we used in our prayer? Do we love God sufficiently to keep to our side of the bargain? Do we love God sufficiently to devote the thing which is closest to us to Him?

Do we love God sufficiently to give Him our wealth or our possessions? It is only by loving God truly, it is only by entering into that sacred personal relationship that will make us of necessity absolutely honest with Him.

We have so far considered the relationship of love between man and God, or woman and God as the case is, but now let us consider the reverse. Let us consider the love of God for man. Space will not allow us, unfortunately, to consider many examples of this, but surely we can all remember certain instances ourselves. Here are some of the most important ones.

God's love for man began in the very beginning because God in all His wisdom allowed the world to be created. Likewise He allowed us to live and to have being. God loved Noah and his family sufficiently to forgive their natural sins and allow them to escape death in the flood. As we have seen, God loved Hannah sufficiently to allow her to bear a son. God loved Israel enough to forgive them on numerous occasions for gross neglect of His laws. He loved them sufficiently even to forgive them for turning their backs on Him.

The whole of the Old Testament declares the love of God for mankind. Because God's love is an integral part of His own character it is deeper even than the love of a mother for her child. God's love for man, because it is part of His personality, cannot be swayed by passion or diverted by disobedience. This Hosea most clearly in the whole of the Old Testament confirms:—

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

Hosea 11: 1-4

And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they

called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt Him. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me. My repentings are kindled together.

Hosea 11: 7-9

Israel's terrible unfaithfulness as we have already mentioned could still have no effect on His love for them.

Jeremiah 31: 3 in some respects repeats this implication—

The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

God's love for Israel, this covenant relationship is His prior form of love. Unlike the gods of other nations who belonged to them for natural and geographical reasons, Yahweh took the initiative and chose Israel because He loved her. This love which also applies to us as we will see is far above the normal human counterpart. It is spontaneous and is not affected by any intrinsic worth in the object but, rather, it desires to create that worth in the object. By this we mean that God chose man not because he was righteous, not because he was worth loving, not because God would benefit from the relationship, but God chose man that he might in some way create in him righteousness, holiness and finally a love for the creator and sustainer Himself.

When we compare our love with that of God, all of us without doubt fall far short of His standard but all of us should aspire to that very high station. We tend as human beings to love things because we want them. Our love tends to be guided by the eye. When we love something it is generally because we consider it to be, by our standards, perfect, and we do not easily love things which fall below our standards. This is the difference. God chose us, sinners, unrighteous and now mortal beings to be the object of His love. We love the good things of life, we love a man or a woman because they offer some physical attraction to us, but let us see that we have love for

others who are not as fortunate as ourselves; that we have a true love of the sick and of the dying; that we love sinners of the world enough to devote our lives to their service, doing this not out of self-righteousness but because we sincerely wish to save them from an everlasting death. Love is unselfish, love in most respects is not demanding, love suffers, to love is to give.

for God so loved the world
that he gave his only begotten
son . . .

This is the highest form of love which has ever been shown in the whole of history. God, the supreme being, gave His own son that we should not die but have a chance of everlasting life. This thus leads us to our final remarks and these are concerned with Christ's love for us.

Jesus Christ presents to us the highest form of love (He was love in the flesh). His birth, His life, His sayings and His death all bear the seal of true and divine love. Christ taught, as in the Old Testament, that mutual love was the ideal human relationship. But Christ went further even than this. Whereas the Rabbinic teachings accepted mutual love they imposed limitations and standards as to whom one should love. The parable of the Good Samaritan exploded for all time this self-centred and ungodlike attitude. Jesus shows in this parable, as He did in His life, that our neighbour is to be the first object, because the nearest, of the love which characterises a Christian heart. Christ was the friend of the friendless. He was the friend of sinners. He showed many times that He loved these people. He did not condone their sinfulness, but on the other hand He did not withdraw from them. He loved them enough to try and help them, to try and heal them, to try and save them. The parable of the Good Samaritan shows us that Christ did not believe in a state of sentimental utopianism because He shows by His teachings and by His own life what practical steps we must take if we are to live our own philosophy.

Two sets of verses will help to illustrate how far Christ's idea of love exceeded his Rabbinic counterparts.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, "Thou shalt love thy

neighbour and hate thine enemy."

But I say unto you, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Matthew 5: 43-48

But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed

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down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Luke 6: 27-38

Surely these verses illustrate simply and clearly how to love: how to love one another, how to love enemies and how to love God. Love is unselfish, love is not demanding, love suffereth, love is to give. I have already said that Christ's life and sayings show love. To illustrate this more clearly let me quote an extract from a book by Pastor Bonhoeffer:—

It is infinitely easier to suffer in obedience to a human command than to suffer as free responsible men. It is infinitely easier to suffer with others than to suffer alone. It is easier to suffer as public heroes than to suffer alone and in ignominy. It is infinitely easier to suffer physical death than to endure spiritual suffering.

Christ suffered as a free man, alone, apart and in ignominy, in body and in spirit and since that day many Christians have suffered with him.

Brethren and Sisters, this poem together with the few verses which we have just read are our guides to love, they are the rules, they should be our ideal, our philosophy. But unlike many philosophies, they should be put into practice and should not be merely vain utterances.

Brethren and Sisters, we all have been baptised, we have all taken upon ourselves this standard of love. Do we sincerely apply it? Do we truly love one another? Do we truly love our enemies? Do we truly love God? Do we love Christ? Or do we merely wear this cloak of apparent righteousness of which we have already spoken? Are we pharisaical in our interpretation of the Laws of God?

Do we love God enough to give our lives truly to His service? Do we love Him enough to give away our most treasured possessions, be they money or goods? Do we love God sufficiently to keep our part of the agreement? Brethren and Sisters, do we really understand the true meaning of Christian Love?

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

by Ralph Lovelock

7

Chapters 9-11

The Righteousness of God

SO FAR PAUL has been dealing with the relationship between God and the individual man. It is true that he has spoken much about the totality of man as divided into two basic societies, the Jew and the Gentile, but only in respect of the effect which membership of the ethnic group has upon the individual's standing in the purpose of God. He has demonstrated from Scripture that the nationality of the man does not affect his standing with God, but only the kind of person that he is; this does not deny, of course, that the society in which a man lives can be either helpful or hurtful to the personality, and hence affect indirectly the final relationship with God. From this foundation, that every man is acceptable to God if he is suitable in spirit, the apostle has developed the theme that no man can earn life, but that God has provided in His grace that which we need to transform our character into one that can form part of God's eternal people. Hence, at the end of the eighth chapter he concludes that it is only our own obstinacy in not desiring the things of God which can prevent our obtaining salvation.

Now, in the next three chapters, 9 to 11, Paul turns to mankind as

a group, as divided again into two basic societies, but societies which are not ethnic, but spiritual. He considers men as either members of the group which will attain to life in the culmination of God's purpose, or as members of those who will fail to do so. The difference between the two is their present relationship to God, and he summarises the various aspects of this difference under the general term "righteousness." As he has already demonstrated, righteousness in the individual is not "legal," that is, it cannot be earned or attained by purely human effort, it comes through faith, and is the manifestation of the grace of God. When God speaks in Scripture of "Israel," it is not the totality of those born into the line of Jacob of which He speaks, but of those who manifest the character of Abraham, irrespective of their nationality or legal and ritualistic grouping. "Not all the descendants of Israel are truly Israel."

He opens by saying that that which troubles the Jewish people troubles him also. Despite all the advantages of Divine revelation and the many heights of spirituality which individuals had manifested in their nation, as a nation they had failed

the test, and repudiated their Messiah when he came. To demonstrate that this is not inconsistent with the nature of God manifested in Israel's history, he cites the cases of Abraham and Isaac. Even one as righteous in God's eyes as Abraham could not, by his own planning and efforts, accomplish even the first stage of God's purpose; the son which he achieved was not suitable in God's eyes and wisdom to be the founder of those who should be God's servants and channel of revelation. It was in God's good time, and through His intervention, that the "seed" was born. So also in Isaac's history; when twins were born, the foreknowledge of God allowed Him to know that one would be humbly appreciative of God's promises, and the other proud and impatient of the human role of "waiting upon the Lord." In Scripture it is written, "Jacob I loved and Esau I hated." With these two well-known examples before them, it ought not to have been a philosophical problem to the Jew that once more the natural descendants of Abraham were found divided into two parties, those who were acceptable, and those who were not.

Having shown that such a decision by God was a regular feature of the divine nature, and that God had said at the very founding of the Law, "Where I show mercy, I will show mercy, and where I pity, I will pity," he asks whether such a freedom of God to choose where He pleases is a demonstration of *arbitrary* pique amounting to injustice. This he vehemently denies. The very words quoted from Exodus are significant in showing that Paul sees the choice of God as limited to mercy; it is because no man can merit salvation that there can be no *injustice* in refusing it where God deems a man unsuitable for perpetuation. John had said the same thing at the commencement of his gospel (3: 17-21) when he explains that the intervention of God in sending His Son was to save; that all men were in darkness and in need of light; that it was those who would not come to the essential light who condemned themselves to destruction by rejecting the proffered help of God. It was of Israel's rejection of Messiah that John wrote, and of which Paul is speaking here.

He then poses the question which

arises from this case that some men are incapable of responding to the overtures of God: "Then why does God blame a man? For who can resist His will?" He has deliberately cited the strongest case which could be made out against him in this direction. God is said to have strengthened Pharaoh's resolve to resist Moses, and to have raised him up for the very purpose "to exhibit my power in my dealings with you, and to spread my fame over all the world." Firstly, we must consider the circumstances in Exodus. It was not a case of flamboyant exhibitionism on God's part. Israel were weak and wavering in faith, and it was the plagues which nerved them sufficiently to make the journey to Sinai and become related to God for their own good. The exercise of power by God was directed towards the salvation of those who would respond if helped. Likewise, the initial rejection of the demands of Moses was the result of the natural desires of Pharaoh, and not the result of divine intervention. All that God did was to give to the king the strength to do what he really wanted to do. Any "blame" therefore was for the personal rejection by Pharaoh of the commands of God, and was based upon the kind of man that he was, and not upon the intervention of God to strengthen his independent personal resolve.

Paul therefore turns to the question of whether it is unjust of God to create men who are incapable of responding to salvation. He cites the Old Testament figure of God as a potter, and men as the clay in His hands. The context of the idea in the eighteenth chapter of Jeremiah must have been in Paul's mind as he wrote. The clay which the potter manipulates has lumps and imperfections in it. If, as it turns upon the wheel, it breaks up and becomes lacking in homogeneity, it is broken down and a new start is made from the mass of raw material. So, says Jeremiah, with peoples. If during their development they prove intractable in the hands of God, then they are rejected, and God turns to a new lump to form into the shape which He desires. In the human case, of course, it is human unwillingness to respond to God which forms the imperfection in the material. Paul is here considering the casting

back into the raw material of mankind of the partly developed vessel of Israel, and the taking of Gentiles with which to commence a new formation. It is certain therefore that he had Jeremiah in mind when he cites this figure.

From the broad figure established by Jeremiah he develops the application to the individual within the community. He says, in effect, that it was not desired by God to have undesirable vessels in the case of individuals, but a divine tolerance towards all men. He has shown that no man is intrinsically good, but that all are unsuitable vessels in the first instance. It is God who is willing to bear with our weakness and give us opportunity to respond, and who in His wisdom and power is able to use even the unresponsive to further the salvation of those who will. Thus, it is not the nation as a whole which attains perfection as a vessel, but those individuals within it who make adequate use of the salvation supplied by God. The final vessel formed to grace the House of God is composed of individuals from nations, and it is a "remnant" within a people which amalgamates to form the new people of God.

He reiterates that his personal desire is to see all Israel as a people saved. He establishes again that it was lack of response in Faith and a desire in pride to establish by their own efforts a state of righteousness, which has been their undoing. This case is established by several references to the prophets to show that repeatedly they have been admonished as a people, and that even now as individuals they are invited. Just because the Jewish nation as a nation has been replaced by a cosmopolitan people composed of remnants from all nations, it does not mean that members of the Jewish nation have been rejected. They are as welcome to God as all members of other peoples. The case of Elijah is instanced, when he appealed to God against Israel because of their corporate rejection of him. The reply of God was that although as a nation they had joined themselves to Baal, nevertheless, within that nation were seven thousand men who were still the acceptable people of God. It is vital to the correct understanding of this eleventh chapter that the argument of Paul be closely followed. The case which he is establishing with

many quotations is that Israel as a nation never were an acceptable people of God, but that within the nation there always was a people, but its relationship to the nation was that of "remnant." "What Israel sought, Israel has not achieved, but the selected few have achieved it."

But this development is in answer to the question, "Has God rejected His people?" to which he has given immediate answer, "I cannot believe it!" He is saying therefore that God has not even now rejected His people, for the question and answer are in the present tense. He follows this up by arguing that the rejection of the Jewish people is not a rejection of God's people. The people of God were never the Jewish nation, but only a remnant within it. In Elijah's day he was wrong to identify the two, and not to recognise the difference, and so through the later days of the Kingdom as witnessed by Isaiah. Thus he is saying that the events of that century did not represent a discontinuity in the developing purpose of God, nor in the existence of God's people and God's Kingdom. All that had occurred was that the people of God were growing in numbers and extent.

Even as a little earlier he has cited the power of God to utilise vessels only fitted for dishonour to aid the formation of vessels fitted for honour, so now he instances the exhibition of that same power in using even the national rejection to further the personal acceptance. The very sin of the Jewish nation as a nation was furthering the calling in of very many more individuals to a membership of the people of God; and, in due course, this widening of activity of the Spirit of God would result in a greater harvest from within the Jewish nation. In the figure of the olive tree the meaning is fairly clear. The thing that matters is the root: this is the source of life, and the support of the branches, and it is because the branches are growing on the root that they are part of the people of God, not because they are a particular kind of branch.

Once this principle has been grasped, the continuity of God's people and Kingdom is obvious. The rejection of Israel was but the lopping off of a few branches; the acceptance of the Gentiles was the grafting of new branches on to the same stock. The root remains un-

changed, and continues unaltered as the source of life and physical support of the branches. It is the root which constitutes the basis of the Kingdom; the branches are but transitory parts of it: "remember it is not you who sustain the root; the root sustains you." Furthermore, when Israel adopts a more conciliatory attitude, there is not a setting up of a new organisation, only the grafting back of some more branches, along with those Gentile branches which have still remained receptive to the life of the root.

Thus, this passage is not a statement by Paul concerning any national revival as a nation. Whatever the requirements of prophecy may be in that direction, it is not such a revival that Paul has in mind here. The final entrance of the Jewish people will be similar to, and upon the same basis as, that of the Gentiles, for Paul himself draws the strict parallel—"just as you"—when he says to Gentiles, "Just as formerly you were disobedient to God, but now have received mercy in the time of their disobedience, so now, when you receive mercy, they have proved disobedient, but only in order that they too might receive mercy. For in making all mankind prisoners to disobedience, God's purpose was to show mercy to all mankind." The old covenant of the Law has been replaced by one based upon the faith of Abraham, and henceforth the admission of Jew and Gentile will be upon the same basis: faith, not nationality. The only difference between Gentile and Jew is one of time; just as the Jew had been the instrument used by God to draw the Gentile into a covenant of faith, so would the Gentile be used to draw the Jew.

It was the very inscrutability of God's ways, the power and wisdom which was able to use the rebellion of a Pharaoh and the rejection of a people to further His purpose of salvation which caused Paul to break forth, "O depth of wealth, wisdom, and knowledge in God! How unsearchable his judgments, how untraceable his ways! Who knows the mind of the Lord? Who has been his counsellor? . . . Source, Guide, and Goal of all that is—to him be glory for ever! Amen."

(To be continued)

The Bible and Psychology

by E. E. Garnham

Two previous articles seeking to explain the relevance of Psychology to Religion have appeared in Endeavour, which have given rise to much discussion. After reading the last one, "Psychology and Religion" in the Winter 1967 issue, a 77 year old reader penned this article. It is the first time our reader has written for publication, and we welcome this contribution.

Nothing New Under the Sun

IF WE DEFINE psychology as "That knowledge which has been built concerning the intricacies of human nature; looking at a person both as an individual personality, and as a person in society," we had no need to wait for the twentieth century for that kind of information. For 1,900 years Christians had been reading a "textbook" dealing with this problem. Indeed, long before the Christian era this same book (although not then in its completed form) had a lot to say concerning the workings of the human mind, not only instructing its readers concerning it, but offering solutions to its problems.

Thousands of years before the arrival of Freud and his contemporary psychologists, another Jew had written, "The 'heart' is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things." No psychologist would describe anyone as desperately wicked; indeed it would be illogical to use such a term if undesirable traits of character are the result of forces at work in the unconscious, of which the conscious mind is unaware.

The Bible, however, knows nothing of this unhappy state. It deals only with the mind that God gave him, when He made man in His own image. That is to say, man was

made a *reasoning* being, so distinguishing him from the animal creation which is, by its very nature, amoral. And so, because God made man a highly intelligent animal, able to understand the wise laws He formulated for his good. He holds him responsible for his actions, and man disregards those laws at his peril.

The psychological view is very different. The psychologist is very unlikely to use such an old fashioned word as "*sin*," but substitutes "anti-social behaviour." The person exhibiting such behaviour is regarded rather as a victim (of the unconscious) in need of sympathetic understanding, and the help of psychiatry. It is true that Jesus was sympathetic to sinners, because He well understood the temptations of human nature, but his admonition was, "Go and *sin* no more."

A Stepping Stone to Humanism

We have had the advantages of psychology now for approximately 70 years, and it would seem that hand in hand with belief in its teachings goes a corresponding disbelief in any wisdom higher than that of man. Not so long ago, Britain regarded itself as a Christian country; now, most of our

intellectuals, and many who are not so mentally well favoured, describe themselves as "Humanists."

The most disquieting feature of the situation is that the Humanist *views*, if not the name, are not at all unusual among influential leaders of the Church. The Bishop of Woolwich would certainly have raised a hornets' nest had he published *Honest to God* 50 years ago, but today, with so many fellow travellers both outside and within his Church, he has little to fear from public opinion.

The First Textbook of Psychology

It is probable that the majority of psychologists have only a hazy idea of what the Bible is all about, and might be surprised to learn that at least some of their findings had been demonstrated thousands of years before "psychology" had become a household word. True, the Bible's phraseology is simple, and its writers did not coin peculiar words to make it sound impressive, but it was written for the benefit of ordinary folk as well as scholars. Jeremiah said in a brief sentence what took many pages of psychological jargon to explain: "The heart (or mind) of man is deceitful." There are actual characters, as well as the parables of Jesus, demonstrating this fact.

Examples of what modern psychologists call "projection" are found in David's indignation when told of the rich man who had robbed a poor man, when David had just murdered a man so that he could steal his wife, and in Judah's demand for the life of his daughter-in-law, when he was the cause of her pregnancy. We are warned of the danger of "rationalisation" in the parable of the idle servant who offered the excuse (or, as psychologists would say, "rationalised") that it was in his employer's best interests that he had buried his talent in the ground.

These are just a very few instances of the many ways in which the Bible exposes our "defence mechanisms." To devout students of God's Word these manoeuvres of the dishonest human mind seeking to appear respectable have been well understood for 1,900 years.

"By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them"

There is an old saying, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." In our country today only a very small minority have a good knowledge of the Bible, but a much larger proportion of the population know something about psychology, and practically all are conditioned by its findings. Can we really say the influence of psychology on the whole has been beneficial?

Since psychology probes the mind to find what it is that makes it tick, it is not unreasonable to expect a general improvement in mental health and social behaviour. There is no need to stress this is not the case! In the days when the Bible was the only guide to the workings of the mind (apart from personal experience) we did not have a bevy of mothers escorting their little ones to school for fear of their being attacked by a sex maniac; there was no alarming widespread problem of juvenile delinquency; "nervous breakdown" was not a fashionable illness; and there was no need to attach a chain to the doors of even humble folk.

So, if we apply that old proverb to the results of the intellectual diet fed us for the last two or three generations are we satisfied, or do we perhaps find the taste of the "pudding" somewhat rank?

Thinkers Can be Thoughtless

The young are encouraged today, as perhaps never before, to use their reasoning faculties. This is a splendid exercise so long as they do not regard reason as an infallible god. The fact that so many thinkers are divided in their opinions goes to show that intellectuals *can* make mistakes as well as ordinary people, and that their theories when closely examined are by no means unshakable.

A former Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Rev. Archie Craig, emphasised this in a recent broadcast address.

He referred to the shortsightedness of the man who will argue that a Christian is only a Christian because

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he has been church-conditioned, without stopping to wonder how his own thoughts have been conditioned by current philosophies! As C. S. Lewis pointed out, the Freudian proves that our thoughts are merely due to complexes—*except* the thought that constitutes the proof itself; the Marxist proves that our thoughts are due to class conditioning—*except* the thought he thinks when he says this!

We must never forget that psychology as it is generally taught is rooted in determinism, and the determinist wants to rewrite the dictionaries of mankind, deleting all such words as Responsibility, Good, Evil, Conscience. Fortunately clever people are often wiser than their theories and ordinary people often wiser than clever people.

So Choice and Freedom and Responsibility continue to be the growing points of healthy personality, and the Ancient Word still challenges: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

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Reviews

Bryan Wilson again
on Sects

Patterns of Sectarianism. Edited by Bryan R. Wilson. Heinemann, 1967, 63s.

THIS BOOK, in which seven different authors deal with nine different Christian sects, will be invaluable to all who are interested in the outlook of other religious people, or who want to speak with or about those of other sects. Unlike so many previous books that have been written on the same subject, such as *Christian Deviations* by Horton Davies, it is objective and, from a theological standpoint, free from bias. The object of the book, however, is not just to catalogue various sects, but to analyse them in an effort to find a pattern in sect development. The great interest of this lies in the fact that if a valid pattern emerges it may be possible, if hazardous, to predict the future of a particular sect, indeed even to take action for its preservation. The editor recognises the possibility of sociological bias, the possibility of forcing sects into a definite or oversimplified framework of development. He has, therefore, taken pains to encourage the authors to avoid this temptation.

Dr Bryan Wilson defines a "sect" by saying that:—

"It may be identified by the following characteristics: it is a voluntary association; membership is by proof to sect authorities of some claim to personal merit—such as knowledge of doctrine, affirmation of a conversion experience, or recommendation of members in good standing; exclusiveness is emphasised, and expulsion exercised against those who contravene doctrinal, moral or organisational precepts; its self-conception is of an elect, a gathered remnant, possessing

special enlightenment; personal perfection is the expected standard of aspiration, in whatever terms this is judged; it accepts, at least as an ideal, the priesthood of all believers; there is a high level of lay participation; there is opportunity for the member spontaneously to express his commitment; the sect is hostile or indifferent to the secular society and to the state."

"In contrast, the 'denomination' shows the following features: it is formally a voluntary association, it accepts adherents without imposition of traditional prerequisites of entry, and employs purely formalised procedures of admission; breadth and tolerance are emphasised; since membership is laxly enrolled, expulsion is not a common device for dealing with the apathetic and the wayward; its self-conception is unclear and its doctrinal position unstressed; it is content to be one movement among others, all of which are thought to be acceptable in the sight of God; it accepts the standards and values of the prevailing culture and conventional morality, though the conceptions it entertains of these may be those of a particular social class; there is a trained professional ministry; lay participation occurs but is typically restricted to particular sections of the laity and to particular areas of activity; services are formalised and spontaneity is absent."

Types and patterns of development proposed by Ernst Troeltsch and Richard Niebuhr the editor considers as oversimplifications and his general thesis is that a sociologically useful classification can only be arrived at by a greater division of types of sects. His major divisions are as follows:—

"(1) The *Conversionist* sect is one whose teaching and activity centres on evangelism; in contemporary

Christianity it is typically the orthodox fundamentalist or pentecostal sect. It is typified by extreme bibliolatry; the Bible is taken as the only guide to salvation, and is accepted as literally true. Conversion experience and the acceptance of Jesus as a personal saviour is the test of admission to the fellowship; extreme emphasis is given to individual guilt for sin and the need to obtain redemption through Christ. Examples are to be found in the Salvation Army and the Pentecostal sects.

"(2) The *Adventist* or *Revolutionist* sect focuses attention on the coming overturn of the present world order; in contemporary Christianity it is the adventist movement. It is typified by its emphasis on the Bible, and particularly of its exegesis of the allegorical and prophetic books from which the time and circumstances of the second advent of Christ are discerned. The conventional eschatological ideas of heaven and hell are regarded as false, and the resurrection of the dead for judgment is accepted as the principal eschatological event. Christ is regarded as a divine commander, not only as a saviour, and a high moral standard is based on the moral precepts of Jesus. Participation in the new kingdom will be limited and only those who have maintained doctrinal and moral rectitude will be eligible. admission to the fellowship is by thorough understanding of necessary doctrine, and not by affirmation of conversion. Examples are Jehovah's Witnesses and the Christadelphians.

"(3) The *Introversionist* or *Pietist* sect directs the attention of its followers away from the world and to the community and more particularly to the members' possession of the Spirit; in recent Christianity it is exemplified in the Pietist sect; such a sect is typified by reliance on inner illumination, whether this be regarded as the voice of conscience or the action of the Holy Ghost. The sect considers itself an enlightened elect; inner values may be regarded as incommunicable and eschatological ideas are inarticulated or of little significance. It admits of no spiritual directors or ministers. Examples include some Holiness movements, Quakers, and the Society of the Truly Inspired (Amana Community).

"(4) The *Gnostic* sect emphasises

some special body of teaching of an esoteric kind. In contemporary Christianity it is a sect offering a new or revived interpretation of Christian teaching. It accepts the Bible as allegorical and complementary to its own gnosis; conventional Christian eschatology is replaced by a more optimistic and esoteric eschatology; Christ is a way-shower, an exemplar of truth; rather than a saviour. The cultural standards of the society are accepted and even utilised: the gnostic sectarian does not withdraw from the world but seeks to use his special knowledge for his own advancement, or that of the movement, in the world. These traits are found, for example, in Christian Science, New Thought sects, Koreshanity, and the Order of the Cross."

In addition the author considers that for an adequate analysis the conditions under which sects emerge is very relevant. He divides these into three sub-sections.

- (1) The method by which it came into being.
- (2) The factors that stimulated its growth.
- (3) The external social conditions which were then prevailing.

For the origin of a sect he observes three definite methods:—

- (1) A sect formed around a local gifted leader.
- (2) By schism.
- (3) By an organised revival.

Here we may observe, and this is an interesting point of classification made by the author in respect of our own body. He classifies the Christadelphians as emerging by schism, as distinct from development around a gifted leader:

"The schismatic sect tends to be vigorous as long as its protest against the parent body remains significant, and as long as the rival group exists as a challenge; in this period it is likely to grow only by accretions from the parent body. Subsequently, as the issue of disagreement wanes in importance, such a schismatic group may adjust to continuance as a sect, may decay in the absence of opposition, or may partially and gradually rejoin the parent body. Illustrations of such processes are afforded in the history of the Plymouth Brethren and of the Christadelphians."

Most Christadelphians will disagree with this classification, which illustrates how difficult it is to fit sects into neat parcels. Clearly there was schism from the Campbellites but no large portion of that body divided to support Dr Thomas, while in contrast Dr Thomas made a large number of converts by virtue of his publications, particularly the *Herald of the Future Age* and it takes a very careful study to find the origin of the various groups that were influenced by Dr Thomas and later became Christadelphian Ecclesias. In this connection several groups were formed through his introduction to the Millerites, who were an offspring of the Campbellites. This occurred in Nottingham, Birmingham, Derby and Plymouth. These groups provided a platform from which Dr Thomas spoke but the Millerites on these occasions were joined by a considerable number of other interested hearers who formed groups which ultimately constituted the respective ecclesias. Robert Roberts, who of course was never a Campbellite, was influenced by the works of Dr Thomas and was responsible for the organisation of many of these small detached groups into ecclesias. However, whether Dr Wilson, the editor and principal writer, makes a good case for patterns of sectarianism, the reader must judge for himself. The book he will find well worth reading, even if he is only interested in the beliefs and analysis of the various sects.

The sects, namely,

- The Holiness Movement
- The Society of Friends
- The Pentecostals
- The Salvation Army
- The Plymouth Brethren
- The Churches of God
- The Exclusive Brethren
- The British Israelites
- The Humanist Societies

are dealt with by seven different authors in a competent and unbiased manner and will undoubtedly form a reference book for both sociologists and theologians for some time to come.

J. H. WEAVING.

Human Life and Human Worth, Douglas M. Jackson. Christian Medical Fellowship, 56 Kingsway, London, W.C.2, 1968. 2s. 6d. (A published account of an address to an open

meeting of the Christian Medical Fellowship, 14th March 1968.)

The Biological Time-Bomb, G. Rattray Taylor. Thames & Hudson, 1968, 35s.

"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1: 21).

Today the doctor gives and the doctor takes away. Today, in many decisions about life and death the doctor plays God.

The author of the booklet, *Human Life and Human Worth*, is a surgeon at the Birmingham Accident Hospital, and he discusses some of the problems confronting the medical profession and society generally in a world which is changing so rapidly that traditional views about the nature of life and the significance of death are being questioned radically.

What should a Christian's attitude be to abortion, euthanasia, heart transplantation? What constitutes a human being? Does a person who has suffered a devastating brain injury such that he is little more than a vegetable possess a personality? What point is there in keeping an unconscious individual alive for years when the eventual outcome of his illness is death?

As medical science advances these and numerous other problems need to be faced. It is ironical that as society is shedding its Christian system of ethics it is confronted as never before with moral problems whose gravity is concerned with the fundamentals of human existence.

And it is the doctors who are literally left holding the baby—a possibly deformed baby, who, thanks to medical science, has the privilege of living but is denied the quality of life.

This is just one of the problems facing doctors. G. Rattray Taylor in his prophetic book, *The Biological Time-Bomb*, describes many more. He makes us well aware that the threat to world peace comes not only from atomic physics but also from the biological sciences; his book informs us of the developments that have taken place in recent years and the course which they are likely to take in the immediate future. At first sight what he describes reads more like science-fiction: life created in the laboratory from inert chemicals, or human life kept in a state of

suspended animation; new ways of keeping people alive by transplant operations, new ways of birth control and of deciding the sex and genetic constitution of a yet unborn child; the prolongation of human life to an estimated 150 years or more; the control of mind, mood and memory by drugs and surgery.

These are just a few of the good things awaiting us. There are many other problems waiting on the doorstep, in fact hammering at the door. To quote one specific example, that of kidney dialysis: some 7,000 people a year die of kidney disease in Britain. Who is going to be kept alive on a kidney machine, and who is going to be left to die? Assuming that only 2,000 of these 7,000 are suitable for treatment by dialysis, after five years this would build up to some 10,000 patients. The first 2,000 would cost about £3,500,000 to maintain, up to a minimum estimate of £17.5 millions for 10,000.

Thus what began as a moral and medical problem becomes inextricably intertwined with financial, economic, social and political problems. Where are all the doctors and nurses to care for the sick? Where are all the facilities, the hospitals and clinics to house the patients? Where does the money come from to make it all work?

People believe they have the right to be healthy. They expect and demand to be cured, and even to have their "immortal longings" satisfied; it is estimated that in the U.S.A. 1,500 transplant operations a day may eventually be called for.

G. Rattray Taylor concludes his book ominously: "While primitive societies, which have not learned to challenge their own traditions, may live peaceably and agreeably, it is far from certain that societies with universal means of travel and intensive education can do so. Modern life, as we understand it, may mean an inevitable increase in the proportion of desocialised individuals. The basic answers lie for all to read in the works of wise men. Man is the measure; knowledge, without the corrective of charity, hath some nature of venom or malignity. It is the know-how for putting these principles into effect which is lacking."

And what better know-how than the corrective of Christian charity! Readers who are perplexed by the

problems facing society in G. Rattray Taylor's book *The Biological Time-Bomb* may gain some comfort from Douglas M. Jackson's booklet which expresses a Christian philosophy of human life and human worth. They may also be reassured that at least

some members of the medical profession are fully aware of the nature of the decisions that will have to be made and their bearing on Christian ethics. Should faith, hope and charity fail, we will have to face a test-tube Armageddon. PAUL R. PEARSON.

Correspondence

It is now nearly six months since the concluding article on "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit" appeared, and readers of *Endeavour* have had some time to reflect upon it. The general argument, that the Holy Spirit must operate upon the heart of the believer as an essential feature of the New Covenant, is beyond question, and you have rightly distinguished between the "Spirit" and the "Gifts of the Spirit" in order to overcome the popular Christadelphian argument that any person claiming to have the Holy Spirit must perform miracles.

Bro. McHaffie has shown considerable merit, however, in not labouring the distinction between "Spirit" and "Gifts of the Spirit." It is possible for us to accept "possession of the Spirit" as a principle, as many of us do, and yet to fail completely to realise the implications of claiming to possess the Spirit. There is every evidence from Scripture that where the Spirit is the "Gifts" should also be, and no passage of Scripture tells us that at any time the "Gifts" were or would be withdrawn. This is an error which we have inherited from orthodox Protestant tradition. It is a remarkable fact that all the bodies with which we have identified ourselves (perhaps unthinkingly!) as "witnesses" had a tradition, not only of "Spirit possession" but of possessing the "Gifts." The second century Montanists spoke with tongues and prophesied, the Novatians claimed prophecy, the Donatists maintained that ability to use the "Gifts" was dependent upon moral rectitude, the Waldenses claimed "gifts of healing," the "perfecti" of the Albigenses both claimed Apostolic succession and practised "laying on of hands," and few bodies of people have denied post-Pentecostal manifestations of the Spirit to the extent that we have.

It has been common for us to deny any miraculous activity outside our community. Whereas Jehovah's Witnesses denounce healings at Lourdes, and the work of fringe, evangelistic and spiritual therapists as that of Satan's organisation, it is common for us to explain it away. Yet, in all these cases the odd "miracles" do happen. There are a hard core of about a hundred such cases at Lourdes, and in the Protestant world the Churches' Fellowship has a committee for investigating cases of healing.

I believe that the incident of Mark 7: 24-30 may have relevance to us in the twentieth century. It is probable that the real barb of Jesus' irony was against the "children" rather than the "dogs" and that the Syrophoenician was commended for rightly understanding what Jesus meant. Dogs can only eat crumbs if children allow them to drop, and the fact that they so waste their food is evidence that they do not rightly value it. It is not without significance that Jesus in Luke 2: 11 uses the comparisons of "father," "children" and "bread" in the very context of the Holy Spirit.

This may be the answer to the greatest problem with which we are faced, the question why, if we have the Spirit, there is no open manifestation of the "Gifts of the Spirit." The question should rather be, "Have we ever as a community asked for the Gifts of the Spirit?" If we are the "children" and modern Spirit-claimants are the "dogs," then the occasional miracles which occur outside our community may be "crumbs" really intended to provoke us to "jealousy." If this is so, then are we right in publicly saying that the age of miracles ended with Pentecost? Or is it not rather high time that we all went down on our knees and asked? D. PITT FRANCIS

(Continued from front page)

majority slaved for them in poverty. Today automation creates so much material wealth that it cannot be restricted to a few. Once the process is set in motion, it generates its own increase. Crystal sets with ear-phones begat loud-speaker radios. These led to black-and-white television, and this to colour television: each one more complicated and expensive than the last. This "progress" is not just a matter of technical invention, but is part of the satisfying of the public's appetite. The taste of a little wealth creates the desire for more, and so on. Now government has to engross itself in how to stem this lust for money, to the exclusion of almost everything else. Politics is no longer a matter of principles and conviction, but of steering as near as possible to national bankruptcy without actually sinking the ship. Social standards are subjected to the same aim: to create the maximum wealth for the largest number.

It is small wonder that from time to time there are outbursts of idealism in the form of protests about this or that, or just protests in general. While the human race is never wholly good, it is never wholly bad either, and the young often see what is wrong more clearly than their jaded elders, though they may not have the skill and experience to put it right. In a society devoted to the acquisition of wealth we should expect from time to time that the young will rebel and try to create another kind of world. It is precisely to such idealists that the gospel could appeal. As events have shown,

the Name of Jesus is not even heard. The churches are too compromised by their positions in society as bastions of conformity and respectability. The Jesus in the flesh, a nonconformist who gave short shrift to hypocrisy and enunciated principles of justice without favour or fear, is now often worshipped in a sanctimonious aura of precious vestments and holy smoke. Those Christians who do concern themselves with the practical affairs of governing the world often get too deeply involved and are compromised as much as unprincipled politicians. Those whose main concern is to uphold the purity of the gospel usually withdraw from society to the extent that they cannot influence it, while accepting its material benefits and enjoying them as much as others. Their separation is usually devoted to doctrinal argument on matters that are far from basic.

While the present generation of the Western world condemns itself by turning its back on God, Christians are even more to blame. The respectable conformists should learn of the radical spirit and teaching of their Master. Those who see their duty as going out and getting involved in the affairs of the world must constantly ask themselves if they are bringing the world up to Christ's standards, or His standards down to the world's. Those who think the gospel can be preserved as pure doctrine in their Statement of Faith must learn that unless their lives are far different from the respectable people's around them, the Kingdom of Heaven is not theirs.

The world today could well be stirred from its complacent

materialism. There are many who inwardly have frustrated spiritual longings. But until Christians can show something of the radical spirit of Jesus and get rid of the tradition of material respectability that dogs them, they will present nothing that is worthy of being followed. The political agitators and the criminals will make greater headway, and Christ will once more be put to an open shame.

WILFRED LAMBERT.

Rabban Gamaliel (not the teacher of Paul), the son of Rabbi Judah the Prince, said, "The study of the Law together with a secular profession is fine, because the toil at both keeps sin out of mind. But any study of the Law without work is in the end futile and yields sin. Let all who work for the congregation work with it in the name of Heaven, for the merit of their fathers upholds them and their righteousness endures for ever. . . ."

Hillel said, "Do not keep yourself separate from the congregation, and do not trust in yourself until the day of your death. Do not judge your brother until you are in his position, and do not say about something that cannot be explained that it will be explained eventually. Also do not say, 'When I have leisure I will study.' Perhaps you never will have leisure."

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The Endeavour Magazine

A CHRISTADELPHIAN REVIEW

TWO SHILLINGS

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REVIEWS

No. 30

Winter 1968

RESOURCES NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL

A majority of ecclesias hold a regular Sunday evening lecture. This involves finding male members able and willing between them to fill 52 occasions during each year. Those who attend may merely note the succession of speaking brethren over passing months. But the Recording Brethren and their assistants who make the appointments have a different perspective on the matter. Able speakers worthy of the duty of preaching the Gospel are increasingly hard to find. The small number that give good service and are popularly appreciated tend to be so overworked that they have no time for study or reflection, and over the years they get worse, not better. As 1968 draws to a close there will be ecclesial appointment books with gaps even for the first half of 1969. Of course Bro. X will always fill in, but what he says is never very enlightening, despite his wonderful character and zeal for the Lord. On those occasions it is no sorrow to note the lack of visitors in the hall.

We are not exaggerating when we say that so acute has this problem become that it is increasingly difficult to hold 52 lectures a year in the majority of ecclesias, unless depressingly low standards are tolerated. Two attitudes prevail on this question. Some speak of "lightstands": the more stands the more light, and since "God gives the increase" the quality of public speaking and standards of presentation are secondary. So, as long as brethren can be found to speak, these efforts must be kept up. Others ask if a lightstand that gives more smoke than light should properly be so designated.

It is certainly time that attention was given to the husbanding of our resources. Is it advantageous to hold several lectures simultaneously in the same town if this means the presentation of a somewhat unintelligible Gospel at some of them? With modern transport distances are less

(Please turn to back page)

A Time for Action

by David Preston

A Challenge to all Christians

The discovery of the wheel, the invention of gunpowder, the adoption of Christianity as a state religion, are all examples of events in the world's history after which nothing could be quite the same again.

The year 1968 could well stand out to future generations as one of such turning points in human history.

In an increasingly turbulent world, 1968 has been characterised by international violence and civil strife. A spirit of unease stalks the earth. Student riots in West Berlin, Paris and Mexico; police brutality in Chicago; strange stirrings of the spirit in Czechoslovakia and China; even violence in our own cities are all set against a background of continued bloodshed in Vietnam and Nigeria.

Will human society survive? Can human society survive in the face of such bewildering signs of anarchy and discontent?

One hundred years ago John Ruskin said, "Government and co-operation are in all things the law of life; anarchy and competition the laws of death." One hundred years later we are at least entitled to ask if we are viewing the death-throes of a civilisation.

We know that ultimately human society will not survive, but what are we to do in the meantime? Stand on the sidelines and watch civilisation as we know it crumble before our eyes?

Our answer to that question could

determine the course of Christian witness for many years to come.

It is a natural reaction for animals to run for safety whenever danger threatens. The haven of refuge may be the family group or a larger unit. In the present turmoil many Christians seek refuge within their Church. Christadelphians, in common with most other religious communities, have been and are increasingly turning away from the troubles which beset society and are looking inwards. Whilst apparently showing more concern for the suffering which is present only too obviously in the world, they are omitting to perform the much more urgent Christian duty of proclaiming the Christian way to a world desperately in need of some positive faith.

The sad thing is that the Churches which have the voice have forgotten the message and the Churches which have the message have little idea how to get the message across. "Institutional Christianity, it seems to me, is now in total disarray, and visibly decomposing to the point that, short of a miracle, it can never be put together again with any semblance of order or credibility . . . (it) is not even an impediment to Christian belief, but just a joke." So wrote Malcolm Muggeridge in the *New Statesman*. But the same could equally be said of any body of professing Christians. As a body we Christadelphians have a positive and constructive message but we seem to waste our energies on stupid trivialities and discussion of

points as equally irrelevant as the medieval disputation as to how many angels can stand on the end of a pin. Any attempt at communication of the Gospel message is usually couched in the language of last century using the thought forms of a bygone age.

Endeavour cannot escape such criticism. It is enlightened in its appeal for action, but its message and content are often painfully academic and monumentally irrelevant. This is the first of a series of articles which are to investigate the relevance of the Gospel in modern society, and to suggest an approach to our present problems which is both intelligible and practical. Unless more people who care attempt to do just this we can look forward to another Dark Age when the beacon light of Christianity will no longer be seen, and all that will be left of a once virile movement will be little groups of people bolstering up their own inadequacies and wrangling over the meaning of obscure biblical passages.

Meanwhile a dark world cries out for light and a frightened world seeks reassurance. . . .

The Church in the Twentieth Century

There is a sense in which Christianity does not change, that Christ is the same today as yesterday. But if Christianity has any relevance at all it is because it is a faith to be lived. It is about people, and people change.

The Church is made up of people and people change—so the Church changes. We *are* what we are largely because of what our ancestors were. We *know* what we know largely because of the acquired knowledge of the people who have gone before us. But we have the characters we have because of the use we have made of our inherited characteristics and knowledge. A criminal, a scholar or a saint may be predisposed towards one or other of those characteristics by his genetic make-up and by his environment. But in each case his character is determined by his reaction to his circumstances.

The same is true of the Church—of OUR Church. It is what it is today because of its history and its environment. But its character depends on how it reacts to society today. And whether we look at the Churches around us or at our own, it is important to remember that the ethos of that Church depends on how its members react in overcoming its inherited weaknesses and strengthening its worthwhile aspects.

In order to trace some of the influences which shaped the Church today it is instructive to go back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Renaissance, which saw the end of the medieval era and which lasted until the nineteenth century, was marked by a new spirit which reacted against the old idea of man as a subject of God's wrath. The material world was no longer regarded as a vale of tears to be escaped from as soon as possible, but a place of delight and richness.

To this view the Protestant and Catholic Churches reacted in different ways. The Protestants tended to compromise with it and to substitute a humanistic Kingdom of Man for the Kingdom of God. It became deeply involved in secular life and lost much of its vitality. On the other hand Catholicism retreated from the world and became imprisoned within narrow limits of useless dogma (but remaining more stable as a result). The tendencies are present today, with "hippy" vicars on the one hand and an out-of-touch Pope on the other; with Quakers who have lost all beliefs (except in good works), and Jehovah's Witnesses who have nothing but beliefs.

The nineteenth century, which followed on the dying years of the Renaissance, was one of great opti-

mism and so much progress that the scientists of the day were quite convinced that they had the key to the universe at their fingertips. One Cambridge professor even resigned his professorship on the grounds that everything of importance had been discovered.

In such a smug and self-satisfied world God seemed an unnecessary intrusion. Yet at the same time Victorian man was still unsure of his place in the universe. It had turned out to be much vaster than he had ever thought. Space was endless and the life span of the world receded millions instead of thousands of years. Above all (through Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man*) the uniqueness of man and his special place in the order of things was removed for ever. The universe appeared bleak and unsympathetic. The very moral foundations of the world seemed to have been destroyed. Two issues confronted the Church: (i) the challenge of scientific thought, (ii) the challenge of social change. The alleged conflict between science and religion has occupied men's minds for many years. Once the confusion was made between the supernatural and the unnatural the Church found itself fighting a rearguard action. If the hand of God was seen in those things for which there seemed to be no natural explanation, then God would get pushed further away from the centre of things as science provided the explanations. It needed the great Archbishop Temple to remind Christians that Christ saw the hand of God in the whole wonder of nature, in the changing seasons, in seedtime and harvest.

Today the Christian should know that there is no quarrel with science as such; and thoughtful scientists that science does not exclude religion. Yet to the majority of people the conflict remains. Lectures are still given debunking scientific ideas no longer held, and talking of evolution as if Darwin were still alive and his theory unchanged. So much are people's views reluctant to change. So great the need to inform.

The Church met the social challenge in many ways, notably in Prison Reform and Education. But being a child of its time it did not escape the double standard which characterised so much of the nineteenth century. William Wilberforce (for example), who did a great deal

to abolish the slave trade—entirely from Christian motives, and against vested economic interests—failed to see the slavery implicit in his own mills where small children worked long hours in dreadful conditions for very little money.

In general the Church did little to destroy the hypocrisy of an age when sexual morality was so outwardly strict that even table legs had to be covered, yet where sexual immorality was so widely tolerated—provided it was kept out of sight. To this extent the Protestant Church had not changed from the Renaissance.

In the twentieth century the same two challenges face the Church. But what in the nineteenth century had been a rapid change in man's thought brought about by scientific discovery, and a swift change in his social life brought about as a result of those discoveries, has today been a tremendous and cataclysmic upheaval. Yet in spite of many setbacks the Church has made a genuine effort to meet the challenge.

There has been much more attention paid to the presentation of the Bible message as a whole, some attempt to re-interpret ideas about God. (The Bishop of Woolwich may rightly be called "woolly Woolwich" after his tergiversations in *Honest to God*, but at least he tried.)

Perhaps ultimately of more importance has been some attempt to make good the Church's failure to assimilate the importance of public (as opposed to private) morality. With the enormous growth in our organisations, with closer dependence of groups and countries upon one another has also grown the problem of public morality. Whilst many Christians have much to say on private morality, very little is said about public morality. No clear lead is given to people on problems which range from war to unofficial strikes, from international relations to financial speculation. And so, many ordinary folk seeing no guidance on matters affecting the lives of many thousands of people, reject what the Church says about personal morals.

In the next issue we shall discuss some of these problems unique to our own age and suggest why Christianity, above all other religions, can offer the solution for which many people look.

(To be continued)

The Life and Times of John Thomas M.D.

(3) Introduction to Campbellism

by Brian Tighe

THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS which followed the arrival of John Thomas in America is recorded in some detail in all editions of *Life and Work*. One or two additional pieces of information can be added to the account given there to provide a more complete narrative.

It appears that Dr Thomas had arrived in America with the intention of making his way to Cincinnati, having a letter of introduction to a man named Brown, director of one of the Cincinnati banks. Other letters of introduction, principally to clergymen living in New York, had been brought by his father, but the one which took them to Cincinnati proved to be the most significant. It was provided, curiously enough, by a staunch Methodist, a Colonel Brown of London (whose brother lived in America) and it was this letter which provided the next link in the curious chain of events which changed the course of John Thomas's life.

In the two months that Dr Thomas spent in New York before travelling east, he began to examine the views of the various religious denominations preaching in that city. He and his father had letters of introduction to several Baptist and Presbyterian ministers there and he began with these. Having listened to a sermon by one of the Presbyterian ministers he "came to the conclusion that it was no use hearing him again." He spent rather more time with the Rev. Foster, a Baptist preacher in the city. On hearing of the letter of introduction to Mr Brown of Cincinnati, the

Rev. Foster remarked that western people were very hospitable but very much infected with "reformation." It is interesting to note John Thomas's reaction to this: he was "struck with the remark, not supposing that reformation was a drawback upon any community." He subsequently discovered that the minister was speaking of Campbellism, this being the first time that he had heard reference to the sect.

Shortly afterwards, in early September John Thomas, armed with two further letters of introduction (from the Rev. Foster) set out with his father for Cincinnati. Although many interesting experiences befell him during his later travels in America, particularly those by rail, the railway network was not yet established and this particular journey was uneventful. The route now seems rather curious but reflects the difficulty that travellers experienced at that time in undertaking apparently straightforward journeys. They first went up the Hudson River to Albany, then by the New York and Erie Canal to Buffalo, where they boarded ship on Lake Erie for Cleveland. From Cleveland they travelled by the Ohio Canal to Portsmouth, and then on the river, by steamboat, to Cincinnati.

On arrival in Cincinnati they called on Mr Brown, who was responsible for Dr Thomas's first contact with Campbellism, for it was he who introduced the family to Major Daniel Ganow, Clerk of the Supreme Court of the United States. This man, who lived opposite to Mr Brown, was

destined to exert quite an influence on Dr Thomas and initiated the sequence of events which led to his baptism. Major Ganow invited Dr Thomas and his father to dinner, an invitation which Dr Thomas himself certainly accepted but which seems to have been declined by his father (despite an implication to the contrary in *Life and Work*). The reasons for this are not hard to find.

Within a few days of arriving in Cincinnati, John Thomas (Senior) became preacher to a Baptist congregation in the city. This was certainly the result of letters of introduction that he bore with him and advance recommendation which had preceded him. Bearing in mind that relations at that time between Baptists and Campbellites were, to say the least, strained, it is certain that he would have been warned off Major Ganow by his various Baptist contacts in Cincinnati. The complete lack of reference to his father in the detailed account which Dr Thomas later gave of the dinner at Major Ganow's, coupled with the "wrath and indignation" with which his father learned of the baptism of Dr Thomas by the Campbellites, also suggest that John Thomas (Senior) did not dine with Major Ganow. At this point it is relevant to look at the background to these and subsequent events.

The "reformation" apparently had its beginnings in the early eighteenth century when John Glas, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, attempted to return to New Testament principles

and was deposed (in 1730) for opposing allegiance with the state. This led to the establishment of the Glaisite Churches, initially in Scotland and later south of the border. (It is interesting to note that Michael Faraday was at one time a Glaisite.) Some 30 years after the founding of the Glaisite Church, Archibald McLean renounced the practice of infant sprinkling and was immersed. His influence seems to have spread quite rapidly. Several of the smaller Churches of the Baptist movement (which had begun in Britain about 200 years previously) had their origin in his work. From the point of view of this narrative the most important of the McLean Baptists was James Wallis, who founded a Church in Nottingham. He was the first editor of the *British Millennial Harbinger* (and before that was associated with the *Christian Messenger*). These magazines were designed to introduce the teaching of Alexander Campbell to this country. It was through Wallis and the *British Millennial Harbinger* that Dr Thomas gained so much publicity, particularly in the Nottingham area, when he returned to Britain in 1848. Although the publicity was uncompromisingly adverse, as circumstances turned out, Dr Thomas made good use of it.

Thomas Campbell, the father of Alexander Campbell, was born in Ireland and educated at Glasgow University for the Presbyterian ministry. He became a minister of the Presbyterian Church but, as a result of a great deal of bitterness over a division within the Church, went to America in 1807, being followed two years later by his son. The Campbells were both opposed to divisions arising out of doctrinal differences although, ironically, Thomas Campbell's attempts to promote unity in America led to the formation of yet another sect. Opposition to his views became so strong that he was compelled to withdraw from the Presbyterians.

He was joined by people of different denominations (including several members of the Baptist community which had grown up in America) and in 1809 an association was formed which in many ways represented the beginning of Campbellism. Because of their anti-sectarian views they sought unity with groups holding similar views and for several years had a rather unhappy association with the Baptists. This was finally broken

in 1832 when Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott (who had joined the Campbells 12 years earlier) formed a separate organisation—the Campbellites.

A steady stream of Baptists followed them; and thus it was that Baptist ministers in particular (including the Rev. Foster of New York) spoke with some feeling about "the reformation." Undoubtedly the opinion that John Thomas (Senior) held of the Campbellites was influenced by his contact with the "Baptist Hierarchy" in Cincinnati. The Campbellite body still exists today; in Britain the assemblies are called Churches of Christ.

Major Daniel Ganow had become a Campbellite as the result of presiding at a debate in which Alexander Campbell was one of the speakers. The sincerity with which he held his Campbellite views may be judged from the following incident. He had, prior to his conversion, entered a horse for the races at Lexington in Kentucky. On becoming a Campbellite he "concluded that horse racing was not a legitimate proceeding," withdrew the horse and paid the \$500 fine imposed in such cases. Dr Thomas in relating that he had "not been an hour in his company" when the conversation was turned to a theological topic wrote that he "thought this to be a very unfashionable proceeding but supposed it was the custom of the country." He discovered afterwards that it was a Campbellite rather than an American custom.

Two things of special note emerge from the account of this meeting with Major Ganow. The first is the suspicion with which Dr Thomas viewed the substitution, which Major Ganow invariably made, of the word "immerse" for "baptise." The second is the fact that Dr Thomas was persuaded, against his will, to go to hear Walter Scott speak the following Sunday. The meeting in question was a funeral service for a person who had died of cholera, but since it was held at a private house and attracted a great crowd they could not get in. The Major therefore invited Mr Scott to return home with them by carriage, in order that Dr Thomas "might get the full benefit of the occasion."

The conversation during the evening ranged over a variety of religious topics including, of course, the importance of adult baptism by immersion. Walter Scott was obviously very experienced in discussion and

debate and after observing that they agreed very well "in the generals" he proceeded to corner his quarry in a masterly fashion. The following extracts from *The Ambassador* speak for themselves:—

"Now," says he, "suppose we talk somewhat of particulars. What hinders that you should be a Christian?" The doctor replied that he did not know but that he was as good a Christian as anybody. "Well," said the major, "have you been baptised?" The doctor answered that the only baptism of which he had been the subject was the baptism administered when he was a baby. Mr Scott was then at some pains to show that that baptism did not avail anything. . . . Mr Scott asked what hindered that he should be baptised? "Oh," said the doctor, "that was a different thing." He thought it all very well for preachers to be immersed who had to baptise others but he did not see the necessity for anybody else . . . he told Mr Scott that if he could show him a case from the Scriptures in which a man was baptised as soon as he believed, he should give up his opposition. The doctor in his ignorance thought himself well entrenched in that position. Mr Scott at once accepted the issue and directed his attention to the case of the eunuch. . . . "Now," said he, "I would suggest that you do likewise." The doctor, a little taken aback at the suddenness and strength of the issue, said that to be candid he had established his point but he had not come prepared . . . as to change of raiment and so on. "Oh," said Mr Scott, "that will be no obstacle in the way. Here is our friend Major Ganow who will furnish us with everything requisite in that respect."

There was indeed, as Dr Thomas later remarked, no escape. The Miami Canal "passed the front of the house on the opposite side of the road." It was in this way that Dr Thomas "at ten o'clock at night, by the light of the moon" joined the Campbellite body; an association which was, as future events were to show, a not altogether happy one.

(To be continued)

Who Wrote the Letter to the Hebrews?

by Wilfred Lambert

THIS QUESTION has been debated as far back as our knowledge goes, and it has always been couched in terms of whether Paul wrote it or not. No other claimant to authorship has ever enjoyed similar support. In the early Church it was a matter of considerable importance, since it was widely held that canonicity of the New Testament depended on apostolic authorship. It followed that if Paul wrote this letter, it was to be considered part of Scripture, but if doubts about the author existed, then the canonicity of the writing was equally doubtful. Today, fortunately, this idea no longer prevails. Canonicity depends on divine inspiration, not on the author's membership of a particular circle. Now, therefore, this question is not so fundamental, but is one of the points on which the student of Scripture will seek the right answer, so far as it can be found.

In Christadelphian circles there has been a tendency to assume Pauline authorship. For example, the late John Carter is reported to have answered a private question after an address by saying that he made no apology for quoting Hebrews as "Paul". Reasons for this trend may differ from person to person, but one has probably been most effective. In the Authorised Version the letter is entitled *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, which is definite enough. Unfortunately this title has no authority whatsoever. In the ancient world, as will become clear, the title was simply *To the Hebrews*, and while the work is a letter beyond doubt, the usual self-identification of the writer in the opening words is lacking. Thus this letter is anonymous, and was taken as such in the ancient world. Of course it would be nice to know who

wrote it, but this feeling must not compel us to adopt a wrong or doubtful answer rather than no answer at all. If no certain answer can be reached, then this is what we must say.

Two main approaches to this question are open. Either we may study the letter as it stands to see if its style and content suggest the author, or we may study external testimony on the question from the ancient world. The present article will employ the second approach, since the material available is highly illuminating, and much of it is not generally known.

The earliest surviving discussion of the question was in a work of Clement of Alexandria, a Christian scholar who died shortly before A.D. 215. The work as a whole is now lost, but the excerpts on Hebrews are quoted by Eusebius, the great historian of the early Church. Clement himself quotes words of "the blessed elder." The identity of this figure is not stated, but since Clement was a disciple of Pantaenus, a teacher in Alexandria who died somewhat before A.D. 200, it is probably to him that Clement alludes. Pantaenus, then (if it be he), wrote as follows:—

Since the Lord was sent to the Hebrews, being the Apostle of the Almighty, Paul in modesty, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, did not inscribe himself as Apostle to the Hebrews, both because of his respect for the Lord, and because as herald and Apostle to the Gentiles it was outside his sphere to write to the Hebrews.

This quotation by Clement may not be the whole of what "the blessed elder" said on this subject, but two

points emerge. The first is that as then read Hebrews was anonymous. The second is that the elder himself, while accepting Pauline authorship, felt obliged to offer some explanation of the anonymity of an author who otherwise never hid his identity.

Clement himself was in the same position roughly as his teacher, as his own words (partly summarized by Eusebius) will tell:

He (Clement) says that the *Letter to the Hebrews* is Paul's, but it was written in Hebrew, and Luke carefully translated it and so made it available to the Greeks. For this reason, he continues, the same flavour is found in the translation of this letter and the Acts, but with good reason "Paul, an apostle" was not put at the beginning. "When writing to the Hebrews," he says, "who had a prejudice against him and suspected him, he wisely refrained from putting them off by giving his name."

The same uncertainty as with the elder is found here, and while Clement likewise accepts Pauline authorship, he too offers an explanation of the anonymity, but one which differs completely from his teacher's!

Origen (c. A.D. 185-254) is the next author to comment on this matter. He too was an Alexandrian by birth and upbringing, though the latter part of his life was spent in Caesarea. Whatever one thinks of his theological opinions and methods, he was certainly one of the greatest Christian scholars of his time, and well informed on current opinions by his travels. He writes:—

Anyone who has sufficient knowledge to judge differences in style will grant that the character of the diction of the Letter to

the Hebrews does not contain the idiosyncrasies of the apostle, who confesses to being "unskilled in word," that is in style, but that the letter is in better-phrased Greek. Again, any careful reader of the apostle will agree to the truth that the thoughts of the letter are wonderful and in no way inferior to the apostle's writings. . . .

Personally I would say that the thoughts are the thoughts of the apostle, but the style and phraseology belong to someone who remembered what the teacher had said. If, then, some Church regards this letter as Paul's, it should be respected even on this score. It cannot be without reason that men of old handed it down as Paul's. Who in fact wrote the letter, God only knows. We have heard the opinion of those who say that the Clement who became bishop of Rome wrote the letter, and others who say that it is by Luke, who wrote the Gospel and Acts.

Origen's fuller statement throws light on the briefer comments of the other two Alexandrians. Clearly the Church of Alexandria accepted Pauline authorship, but had to defend itself on that account. Origen is rebutting criticism when he says that a Church which holds this view should be respected even on this point. The reason for this view in Alexandria is plainly stated: it was a tradition handed down to them. But when faced with the necessity to offer a firm answer on this point, Origen admits he cannot be definite: "God only knows." The Greek is plainly not Paul's, so Pauline authorship can only be maintained by assuming that another person wrote up his thoughts. The Alexandrian tradition, Origen has to admit, was only one of several: others held Clement of Rome or Luke as the author.

In the rest of the Eastern Churches, namely in Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor, there is no evidence before the time of Origen, but from his time and later they were unanimously favourable to Pauline authorship. Eusebius himself, a Palestinian who died in A.D. 339, opted for Paul as author, but knew all the problems that this entailed. The Council of Antioch in A.D. 264 included it among Paul's letters, and most later writers, both in Greek and Syriac, either assumed or defended this view. However,

exceptionally Methodius, bishop of Olympus in Lycia (died c. A.D. 310), cites it as an anonymous work.

In the West, that is in the Churches of Italy, South Europe and North West Africa, the picture was very different. The Church in Rome was particularly influential, and Clement of Rome, already referred to, in his widely read *Letter to the Corinthians*, written about A.D. 96, often uses the teaching and even the language of the *Letter to the Hebrews*. This, of course, is why some in the East thought that he had written it. However, he never quotes it formally, so we do not know whom he considered its author, and whether he considered it Scripture or not. Despite the respect in which Clement was held, no later writer from the Church of Rome specifically quotes this letter until almost the middle of the fourth century, and Jerome later in that century confirms the impression gained from this silence by saying, "Among the Romans also up to the present day it (i.e. Hebrews) is not considered to be by the Apostle Paul." Hippolytus, presbyter of Rome (d. 235), who was brought up in the East, betrays knowledge of it, but the sixth century writer Stephen Gobaros informs us that he did not accept Pauline authorship. This is confirmed by the so-called Muratorian Canon, a Latin account of the books of the New Testament, now generally thought to be connected with, or the work of Hippolytus, which ignores Hebrews.

In Africa, the well-known Tertullian (c. 160-220) considered Barnabas the author, and for this reason assigned to the letter a high place in books read for edification, but not a place in the canon. Cyprian, another Christian writer of Africa (d. 258), never once refers to the letter, which, in view of its length, would be incredible had he regarded it as Scripture. Philemon is the only Pauline letter he does not cite somewhere.

However, after the middle of the fourth century opinion in the West gradually changed. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers (d. 367), cites Hebrews with such phrases as: "It is written," and "Paul to the Hebrews said." Ambrosiaster, an Italian c. 370, quotes it as Scripture, but does not include it among Paul's letters. Victorinus, about the same time, wrote, "One reads in Paul to the Hebrews. . . ." Priscillian, a heretic executed in Spain in 385, similarly says, "Paul, in

the Letter to the Hebrews . . .," but a contemporary Spaniard, Gregory, bishop of Elvira near Granada, quotes it as the work of "the most holy Barnabas." Also Philaster, bishop of Brescia, Italy, from 383-391, devotes much attention to this question and stresses that Hebrews is not generally read in the Churches, unlike the undisputed books of Scripture. He was well aware of the problem of style, and refers to the views that Barnabas, Clement or Luke wrote it. From the very concern over this issue on the part of Philaster one senses that support for Pauline authorship and for canonicity was getting stronger so that the bishop felt constrained to reassert the traditional stand of the Latin Church.

Meanwhile in Africa the Council of Hippo in 393, the Third Council of Carthage in 397, and the Sixth Council of Carthage in 419 all affirmed its canonicity and Pauline authorship. St Augustine was in large measure responsible for this attitude to Hebrews at these Councils. Meanwhile in Italy Rufinus of Aquilaea (d. 410) stated that there are 14 letters of Paul to be used with the other books of Scripture as the basis of Christian doctrine. (Without Hebrews it would be 13.) However, Rufinus had spent some time in the East where he acquired a profound admiration for Origen, so his attitude was no doubt influenced by the same scholar. However, the West now welcomed this idea, and when Exuperus, bishop of Toulouse, consulted Pope Innocent I about the canon of Scripture, he received in February 405 a list containing Hebrews, considered to be Pauline.

Jerome himself (c. 347-420), one of the greatest scholars of the Latin Churches, and one who travelled and lived in the East, accepted the verdict of the Eastern Churches, and in writing to a correspondent Dardanus expresses himself as follows:—

We must tell our people that this letter which is addressed to the Hebrews is not only accepted by all the Eastern Churches, but also by all previous writers of the Greek-speaking Churches as of the Apostle Paul, though some consider it to be by Barnabas or Clement. Also we must say that it makes no difference who wrote it, provided he was a man of the Church, and esteem for it is shown by its being read regularly in the churches.

Jerome goes on to state emphatically his own acceptance of the letter. Largely as a result of St Augustine, Jerome and the Popes Innocent I and Boniface I the tradition of the Western Churches on this matter changed, and from the sixth century onwards both the canonicity and the Pauline authorship were accepted throughout Christendom as beyond dispute.

From this much condensed survey of the relevant facts, conclusions of value even for today can be drawn. In the first place, Hebrews was from the beginning always an anonymous letter, so that any statement about its authorship was a matter of opinion only. Secondly, the Greek style of the letter is so unlike Paul's that even the staunchest supporters of his authorship fully acknowledged this difficulty and tried to explain it away. The idea that it was first written in Hebrew (which might mean Aramaic in fact) is simply a wild theory, and seems to have had one supporter only through the centuries. There is nothing intrinsically implausible in suggesting that the letter is influenced by Paul's teaching. Any Christian document from the second half of the first century A.D. might show that, but this would not necessarily imply that the writer was particularly close to Paul personally, nor that he was Paul's amanuensis. Thirdly, the basic reason for asserting Pauline authorship sprang from a profound admiration for the letter coupled with the belief that it could only be canonical if it were apostolic, and no more suitable author than Paul was to hand. Theodoret of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, one of the fathers of the Greek Church (d. 428), puts the matter quite frankly:—

The letter had to be handed down to them as of Paul who wrote to them, just as happened with the other letters. And anything anonymous could not have helped them, if this had not happened.

In other words, it must be Paul's whatever the lack of evidence.

Jerome seems to be the first writer who saw clearly what seems so obvious today, that the value of the book is something apart from the certainty or otherwise with which its author can be identified. That he was a man of the Church and that the Church acknowledges its inspiration is sufficient.

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

by Ralph Lovelock

8

Chapters 12-16

The Fellowship of the Church

In this article the author brings to a conclusion this penetrating presentation of Paul's systematic statement of the Gospel.

THE CONTROVERSIAL portions of the epistle are now finished. The struggle between Jew and Gentile is left behind. Having established that God's true people are those personally related to Him through faith, a people now found scattered throughout many nationalities, Paul turns in the concluding five chapters to a consideration of that people. He now considers the fellowship of the Church, which marks a man out as having a living relationship to God. A number of the issues raised are to be found also in the first Epistle to Corinth. The two epistles were written around the same time, the same problems existed in both the developing Churches, and they were in the forefront of the Apostle's mind. The tone moves naturally from that of debate and exposition to that of exhortation and instruction. This remaining section of the epistle falls naturally into three parts: firstly, the consideration of the personal life and the relationship between the individual and God, contained in chapters 12 and 13; secondly, the consideration of the relationship between individual and individual as fellow participators in the grace of God, contained in the fourteenth chapter and the first half of the fif-

teenth chapter; and, thirdly, those matters concerned with the relationship between Paul and the members of the Church at Rome, contained in the remainder of the letter.

He opens with a definition of that which is involved in membership of God's family and an exhortation to each of them to place themselves in that position. "Therefore, my brothers, I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to Him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for His acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart." The phrase "living sacrifice" may seem anomalous at first reading; we are so used to thinking of a sacrifice as an animal that has been killed and cannot be received by God until it is dead. In the earlier portion of this letter, however, Paul has been arguing that the Christian is a man who has died in association with the sacrifice of Jesus upon the Cross, and who is henceforth living the new life of Jesus in association with his living Lord. This unity with Jesus in the slaying of sin and a consequent living unto God is an essential element in the Christian life. He has already said (ch. 8) that unless a man has the spirit of Christ he is none of his, and

that it is solely by that spirit residing within him—that he can be raised from the dead. He here continues by saying that they are no longer to be conformed to this world, but to be remade in mind and their nature thus transformed—in other words, to live the new life of the risen Lord and hence to “discern the will of God, and to know what is good, acceptable and perfect.” The phrase “living sacrifice” is a description of one sacrifice only: that of the Son of God, who made the “once-for-all” offering for sin, yet now lives eternally, that our lives may be contained in Him and reside within the presence of God.

This opening exhortation, therefore, is to unite oneself with the risen Lord as a member of His body which is the Church. Quite naturally the Apostle passes into this figure of a “body” which he uses also so effectively when writing to Corinth. We are no longer separate individual lives, and we must cease to live for ourselves. We are members of One Body, that of Christ, and as members of that body our function is to live for service to that body. So also, as members of that body we are no longer dependent upon our own life and our own resources: it is the life of God which now energises us. We have new and irresistible powers available, but they are “gifts . . . allotted to us by God’s grace.” The rules of conduct which Paul here enunciates are drawn mainly from the Sermon on the Mount but he recognises that each individual will be gifted primarily in a narrower sphere than was his Lord. The responsibility of service does not cover the whole range of Christian activities. The eye is for seeing and the ear for hearing as he was to argue so effectively to Corinth, but that limited sphere in which we are able to serve must be taken care of; we must be sincere in all that we do. In particular, their whole attitude was to be that of Jesus; they were not to meet human evil with the same weapon; their victory would come in the same manner as his, by way of the Cross. “Do not let evil conquer you, but use good to defeat evil.”

From our service to the Body as its members, Paul now passes to our relationship with the State. Having died to this world, and as “citizens of heaven” (Phil. 3: 20), what is to be our attitude to the authorities of this world? His reply is based, as are all his replies, on the life of his Lord. When Jesus stood before Pilate (John

19) and that ruler referred to his authority, Jesus replied, “You would have no authority at all over me, if it had not been granted you from above.” So Paul here says, “There is no authority but by act of God, and the existing authorities are instituted by Him.” This is but a repetition of the lesson to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4: 17), “The Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom He will, and sets over it the lowliest of men.” Some have tried to evade the lesson by arguing that Paul was here writing at a time when the Roman authorities were just and kindly disposed towards Christians, and that he would not so have replied had he written later in the century. This is wilfully to disregard his reply, however. He is not arguing about the attitude of the authority, but that because God is in control, all authorities exist with His agreement. We must remember that when Jesus used the same argument, it was to a ruler who was unjustly condemning Him to death. This does not mean, of course, that we have to obey all the demands of that authority, but that we have to submit without struggle to the authority when it punishes those actions which are essential to a Christian life, but of which it disapproves. So far as the vexed question of taxes was concerned, his advice is doubtless based upon the judgment of Jesus to “Pay Caesar what is due to Caesar and pay God what is due to God.”

From our duties to the State, he passes to our duty to man. Here he takes up and slightly expands the motif which he had sounded in the fifth chapter of Galatians. The duties owed to our fellow man, to our neighbour, had been duly codified in the Law of Moses. That Law had been truly an expression of the will of God. Yet, as in the case of all legislation, it could not cover every single circumstance, and had to be followed in the spirit, and not taken advantage of by adherence to the letter. In his life, Jesus had fulfilled every demand of that Law in its spirit and intent, even though breaking in the letter an occasional demand in order to do so. Jesus’s life of obedience may be summed up as a life of service in love to man. Paul preaches the same ideal: “He who loves his neighbour has satisfied every claim of the Law . . . Love cannot wrong a neighbour; therefore the whole Law is summed up in love.” That it was the “new

command” he had in mind is proved by his concluding words in this section: “Let Christ Jesus himself be the armour that you wear; give no more thought to satisfying the bodily appetites.”

With the beginning of the fourteenth chapter, Paul turns to the vexed problem of disputes between fellow members of the Church. Although the points at issue were mainly those of personal conduct, these differences were based upon differences of interpretation of the demands of God, differences about the meaning of Scripture. Since our whole attitude towards God is based upon faith, as the preceding parts of this letter have demonstrated, it follows that such disputes must rest upon the nature of the faith that the disputants possess. Even before the details of a particular argument have been examined, the very existence of the dispute necessitates that one at least of the parties must have some weakness or imperfection in their faith, and it may be that both have a measure of fault. To the whole of the Church therefore, Paul lays down a basic rule. It is a rule which practically no branch of the Church in history has ever applied in any but a very minor way. It is a rule which is solidly based upon the attitude of Jesus to us, and which we all would do well to consider thoroughly and then practise:—

If a man is weak in his faith you must accept him without attempting to settle doubtful points.

He begins by illustrating the general rule in its application to a dispute which was current both in Corinth and in Rome. One man had realised the full implications of the freedom in Christ, and could eat all kinds of meat with an easy conscience; the other was still under some semblance of bondage to the Law and considered he would be committing grievous sin were he to eat of some meats. The application of his general rule in this specific case results in two edicts:—

- (a) The man who eats must not hold in contempt the man who does not.
- (b) He who does not eat must not pass judgment on the one who does.

It is to be noted that in both cases what is prohibited is the judging of the case at issue: the one who eats, though convinced that he is right in so doing, must not assume that the other is necessarily at fault in judg-

ment. So also the one who is fully persuaded that it is sin to eat, must not assume that the one who does is necessarily wrong to do so. We are each committed to following our own understanding of Scripture in our own lives, but not allowed to judge in another's. "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."

He follows this up by noting the similar dispute over whether particular days are to be counted holy, or all days esteemed equal. He then proceeds to the second general rule: instead of looking for faults in another, we should look for them in ourselves:—

Let us therefore cease judging one another, but rather make this simple judgment: that no obstacle or stumbling block be placed in a brother's way.

The very context precludes the reading that we should make certain that our brother does not place a stumbling block in the way, for this is what they were already doing, and passing judgment on one another; they it was who must seek whether they were themselves causing another to stumble. What has been so often missed in this clear argument is that it is not opinion but action which must be suppressed by the individual. The prohibition to judge another has already made it an offence against the liberty in Christ for one to take action against another man's ideas. It is his actions, his way of life, which he must discipline to avoid scandal or offence.

This, Paul points out, is what Jesus did for us, and yet in no detail did he cease to hold ideas about God and interpretations of Scripture which were an active offence to his contemporaries. But instead of living a life to himself, he served those who disagreed with him, suffering much because of their weakness of faith, even, at last, the death on the Cross because their ideas about the holiness of God differed from his own. "The reproaches of those that reproached Thee fell upon me." In the very yielding of himself for their sakes he was upholding the ideas which formed the basis of the controversy: "I mean that Christ became a servant of the Jewish people to maintain the truth of God." This is the source of

all Paul's teaching, as he expresses in his prayer for them: "May God, the source of all fortitude and all encouragement, grant that you may agree with one another after the manner of Christ Jesus." Paul's attitude to those who were insisting that their opinions should be forced upon others is well summarised in his parallel passage when writing to Corinth: "Of course we all 'have knowledge,' as you say. This 'knowledge' breeds conceit; it is love that builds. If anyone fancies that he knows, he knows nothing yet in the true sense of knowing. But if a man loves, he is acknowledged by God." Towards the end of this answer to Corinth, he distinguishes sharply between thinking and doing: "We are free to do anything, you say. Yes, but is everything good for us? We are free to do anything but does everything help the building of the community? Each of you must regard, not his own interests, but the other man's. . . . Follow my example as I follow Christ's."

Towards the end of this letter to Rome, in the middle of his personal salutations, he turns again to this matter (16: 17). Concerning some, whose names are now unknown to us, who were insisting on judging their brethren and actively persuading others to join them in the pursuit, he says, "I implore you, my friends, keep your eye on those who stir up quarrels and lead others astray, contrary to the teaching you received. Avoid them, for such people are servants not of Christ our Lord but of their own appetites, and they seduce the minds of innocent people with smooth and specious words." Such were to be "avoided," that is, they were not themselves to join in the quarrel which was being fomented. So he says, that he would "wish you to be experts in goodness but simple-

tons in evil." By implication, such activities were the work of Satan, because God is a God of peace, and he continues, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan beneath your feet." This is, of course, in alignment with his earlier exhortation, "So far as it lies with you, live at peace with all men . . . leave a place for divine retribution; for there is a text which reads, Justice is mine, says the Lord, I will repay."

With the other matters raised in the personal salutations and messages we have already dealt in the introduction, particularly with the collection for relief at Jerusalem which lay so near to the Apostle's heart. It is with a certain amount of sadness that we leave the letter. We know how sorely the Apostle's own faith was to be tried when all his well-laid plans to journey pleasantly to Spain via Rome went astray. As we read again the account of Luke, we are reminded how completely Paul was to practice in his own life the advice which he had given to others. Plotted against by the Jews, who sought to murder him and went to great lengths to prevent the normal course of Roman justice from acquitting him, he breathes not a word of accusation against them, but seeks still to save them from their folly: "My brothers, I who never did anything against our people or the customs of our forefathers, am here a prisoner; I was handed over to the Romans at Jerusalem. They examined me and would have liked to release me because there was no capital charge against me; but the Jews objected, and I had no option but to appeal to the Emperor; not that I had any accusation to bring against my own people. That is why I have asked to see you and talk to you, because it is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am in chains as you see."

Summer School—2nd to 9th August 1969

Our Study Week will again be held, God willing, in Fircroft College, Birmingham. The course will be run on similar lines to last year with a special study on the Minor Prophets and a New Testament theme. In the afternoons it is proposed to explore the Avon on foot and by boat.

The cost will be as last year—£11 for the week. It is important to know the approximate number of those wishing to attend. Please therefore write as soon as possible to:

The Endeavour Magazine, 104 Lady Byron Lane,
Knowle, Solihull, Warwickshire.

Jesus and War

by George McHaffie

THE LAST 50 YEARS have seen a remarkable transformation of attitude to war in the Western world. During the First World War nationalism was everywhere—great excitement, adulation of troops, gross exaggerations about the wickedness of the enemy, contempt, in the form of white feathers, for those who refused to take part. The waste of human life, the fearful blunders of the war leaders and the general horror of 1914-18 are all now well documented. Long after the event, the policy and leadership which dominated the war are now subject to public criticism.

The years since 1918 have brought increasing complexity in international affairs. By the time of the Second World War the glamour, glory and heroism of the battlefield were under suspicion. By then, war had become highly technological. Since the days of stone, bronze and iron, victory had usually gone to the superior technology. Today it is more so. The gum-chewing American soldier with his sophisticated weapons is more than a match for a nation whose armoury is less advanced, no matter how fearless, courageous, or disciplined is that nation. For the first time in history, however, weapons are now so technically frightful as to inhibit their use.

The white feathers and cries of coward have died out in a new respect for those who denounce the folly of killing and destroying millions to enforce one's opinions. Now it is the militarist who must justify his actions before world opinion. So far has this

advanced that the funeral of Dr Martin Luther King, who consistently denounced violence of any sort as an instrument of policy, was attended by national leaders. Many of the comments now made on war are echoes of what Jesus said on the subject, but a real understanding of Jesus' teaching can only be brought out by a close consideration of the New Testament.

Personal Relations

The Christian response to evil or aggressive action can best be appreciated when considered at the level of personal everyday relationships. We may not be responsible for conducting the war in Vietnam or elsewhere, but we all have our personal tensions with our relatives, friends and neighbours, or, indeed, with others who would claim to be Christians. Personal relationships merit first consideration. If we can understand and experience the working out of Christ's commands in our own hearth or neighbourhood, we have a clear lead into an understanding of Christ's teaching on war between great nations.

The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is, on the whole, concerned with individual actions. One of the well-known sections of the Sermon as given in the New English Bible is as follows:—

You have learned that they were told, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." But

what I tell you is this: Do not set yourself against the man who wrongs you. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn and offer him your left.

Matt. 5: 38-39

The difference between the old and the new commandment is the difference between justice with enmity and revenge on the one hand, and love with reconciliation on the other. The healing of estrangements was the major work of Jesus' ministry and it is the key to his commandments in the Sermon on the Mount.

You have learned that they were told, "Love your neighbour, hate your enemy." But what I tell you is this: Love your enemies. . . . Matt. 5: 43-44

The morality of the Bible is all traceable back to the eternal character of God. In the law we read: "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Leviticus 19: 2 R.S.V.). So in the teaching of Jesus, the keeping of His commandments is linked with true sonship. As children normally take after the characteristics of the parent, so if we would be the spiritual children of God we must act like Him.

How blest are the peacemakers;
God shall call them his sons.
Matt. 5: 9 N.E.B.

Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors; only so can you be children of your heavenly Father, who makes his sun rise

on good and bad alike, and sends the rain on the honest and the dishonest. Matt. 5: 44-45 N.E.B. God loves His enemies; He is kind even to those who hate Him and He seeks their eternal good. By acting in this way God is inviting a loving response from men to induce them to forsake their wicked ways.

If we hate our enemies or even exact stern justice, "an eye for an eye," we estrange rather than reconcile. We must be peacemakers, living demonstrations to all men of how God feels for them, loving, doing good, freely forgiving, inviting reconciliation.

For centuries and in many religions the character of God was depicted as despotic, often angry, remote and unfeeling. As revealed by Jesus He is a God of love. "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son . . ." (John 3: 16 N.E.B.), not the world of misguided "good" people, but the world as depicted elsewhere in John—a world lying in wickedness. As children of God we are invited to share His sorrow and experience in our lives the suffering which reconciliation involves.

From first to last this has been the work of God. He has reconciled us men to himself through Christ, and he has enlisted us in this service of reconciliation.

II Cor. 5: 18 N.E.B.

It is now my happiness to suffer for you. This is my way of helping to complete, in my poor human flesh, the full tale of Christ's afflictions still to be endured, for the sake of his body which is the church.

Col. 1: 24 N.E.B.

It is by this that we know what love is: that Christ laid down his life for us. And we in our turn are bound to lay down our lives for our brothers.

I John 3: 16 N.E.B.

The Sermon in Practice

If we have a quarrel with someone, and let us assume that we are in the right, there are three courses from which we can choose to meet the situation.

- (1) The coward's way, in which out of fright one flees and leaves the enemy in command.
- (2) The "manly" way, in which one first endeavours to intimidate by threats but if these

fail one puts the matter to the test of superior muscle, strategy or wit, no doubt fortifying oneself in the meantime with talk of "justice," "rights," "honour," and so on.

- (3) The Christian way, in which our first concern is for the reconciliation of the enemy. Towards this end we extend love for hate, good for evil, kindness for cruelty, reconciling words for threats, and are prepared to suffer loss and defeat that our attitude may be maintained.

The first of these choices will be rejected by all responsible people. The second is universally accepted by the world as the proper attitude for men, and its shortcomings must be weighed against its advantages.

In certain circumstances the destruction of evil men or nations is, and has been, called for. Even in the natural sphere, nations which overreach themselves in sin tend to attract evils which destroy them. But there is no true peace to be found among persons or nations who act with retribution towards each other. The vanquished, if not destroyed, will remain embittered and seek redress. So in the world we find personal enmities, family feuds and national hates. The bitterness of defeat in 1918 led to Germany's attempted redress in 1939.

The Christian way surpasses all this. It can best be revealed by two examples showing how ideally Jesus' commands apply.

The Christian Way

(1) If an aggressor approaches us with intent to defraud, hurt or kill, our first duty is to show that instead of the usual reaction of defence and counterattack we will offer no resistance at all. If he smites us on the one cheek, we turn the other. His fighting passions will be roused if he saw hate or heard insult from us, and rising passions would lead to blows, and, becoming uncontrolled, could lead to murder. But our demeanour will produce none of these passions, and if there, will quell them. He thus would be induced to consider the position.

He could not explain our attitude as being one of craven fear, for there would be no trace of this. Being accustomed to a "jungle law" type

of man-to-man relationship, he would find our reaction something entirely new in his experience. This would be his first contact with someone living by the law of love. Our verbal reaction would explain our stand, relating it to God's love for him which we are seeking to express. Given such a demonstration of divine love, our action will then become the greatest single call to repentance he will ever experience. If he resists the call, then there will be no forgiveness for him "neither in this world nor in the next," "and he treasures up to himself wrath . . . not knowing that the goodness of God" is leading him to repentance (Romans 2: 4-5).

Worldly wisdom would tell us that in such circumstances the aggressor would make the most of our apparent weakness to despoil us to the uttermost. This may often happen as a long list of Christian martyrs bears witness, but it is by no means the rule. The appeal of love which is ready to suffer that another may be reconciled is one of the most powerful and therefore redemptive moral forces that an evil human can experience. This can be seen in everyday life. If we approach someone in a rage meaning to have it out with him, nothing is more "disarming" than being met with a calm, conciliatory manner which not only seeks to redress wrongs, real or imaginary, but is prepared to do so in double measure. On the other hand, if our enemy is impertinent and unjust, we would in the natural way feel satisfaction at seeing him come to grief. Men are not machines. Even the worst has a streak of shame and conscience lying latent waiting to be brought to the surface. Even the crucifiers of Jesus were "pricked in their hearts" (Acts 2: 36-37). It should be noted, however, that Christian methods are not to be regarded as a more efficient way of "disarming" our enemy and protecting our interests: rather do they "disarm" the enemy at the expense of our interests. There is also one further point. We are not obliged to remain with an unrepentant aggressor. "When you are persecuted in one town, take refuge in another" (Matt. 10: 23).

(2) In the foregoing example we have a simple issue which involves only our personal honour, hurt or death. The difficulty is heightened when a third party is involved. For example, a bully attacks a child; a man attacks a woman, our wife, sister

or mother. What can we do? One thing we must not do is keep out of the way, or pass by on the other side of the street. That would be irresponsible and savour of the coward's way. Our duty is clear: "Blessed are the peacemakers" says Jesus, so we should be concerned to effect peace.

There appear to be no New Testament examples which bear directly on this situation, but to be consistent with Christ's principles and the rule of love, our action should be as follows. The aggressor's blows must be intercepted and we must bear them rather than the victim. If we then intercede on behalf of the victim we will draw the aggressor's rage to ourselves. The case would then rapidly become an issue between ourselves and a personal aggressor, as we get in example (1). So long as the bully continued his threats, it would not of course be open to us to flee as before. We must be prepared for insult, blows and even, in the extreme, death for the victim's sake.

If we did thrash the bully we might resolve the immediate conflict, but the ultimate effect would only be to make him more wary and confine his bullying to occasions when we or another strong arm were absent. If our appeal succeeds, we shall have gained a convert who will now bully no more.

Points to Ponder

The conclusions reached so far can now be summarised in the following propositions:—

1. God is love (I John 4: 8). He loves men even as sinners (Eph. 2: 4, 5; John 3: 16). He is revealed in Jesus as sorrowing for them and seeking their reform (Matt. 23: 37), offering forgiveness if they will but turn unto him.

2. Jesus is the embodiment of that love revealing it to men and seeks to bring "repentance unto Israel" (Acts 5: 30, 31) by extending love even through suffering and finally death.

3. We are asked to enter into this mission sharing his suffering (II Cor. 1: 5-7) having the ministry of reconciliation in order that we may be children of our Father which is in Heaven. As his children we seek to save others from their sinful ways, believing that by the appeal of love, we exert the greatest moral force which can be brought to bear on a sinner to effect reform.

4. The appeal may involve us in loss (Heb. 10: 34), shame (Acts 5: 41), hurt or death (Luke 21: 12-16). We must, therefore, hold the things of this world as loss for Jesus' sake (Phil. 3: 8).

The Feeling of Inadequacy

It may well be that the foregoing illustrations set forth a way of life to which none of us attain. We may live sheltered lives away from the seamy side of civilisation. We may be screened from the danger of personal violence by the etiquette acknowledged by the circles in which we move and so the real issue raised by the Christian response to evil seems remote from our lives. Perhaps in honest appraisal of ourselves we would confess that if we saw two men fighting we would be frightened to intervene and our faith desert us or we might go for the bully with our fists. Again we might feel that an uncouth child, a common woman or a fighting man are not worth the sacrifice it would mean for us. Against all these things we must set the wonder of God's love for us. He does not ask from us more than we have been given. What were we before Jesus found us? What indeed were the Ephesians? "... walking in the lusts of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind and were by nature children of wrath ..." (Eph. 2: 3), and they were made nigh by the suffering unto death of God's Son (Eph. 2: 13). What if Jesus had said "they are not worth the sacrifice"? If then we draw back, if we join our contemporaries in their cutting replies to each other, their insulting remarks, fierce glances, envious talk and consciousness of individual rights and honours, then we stifle the appeal of God's love for some unregenerate who might have responded, and are not true children of our Father which is in Heaven.

Jesus and War

Christian teaching on man-to-man relations is so clear that few commentators would dispute its meaning. Once the application is made to relations in society or to international affairs, however, great efforts are made to lay plain meanings aside. For the first three centuries of Christianity the universal opinion of

Christians condemned carnal warfare. Cyprian (third century) said, "If a murder is committed privately it is a crime, but if it happens with state authority, courage is the name for it." Towards the end of the third century it is clear that practice failed to follow precept and with the rise of Constantine to the position of Caesar opinion changed. Subsequent leaders of the Orthodox Church down to the present day have accepted and argued for this changed opinion.

The Argument of the Orthodox Church

The main Orthodox Christian argument is based on Romans 13: 4, in which Paul states that the nation bears the sword at God's appointment for the punishment of evildoers. Hence it is argued that a Christian society or a Christian nation is not bound by the principles of the "Sermon on the Mount." If, therefore, a Christian is acting on behalf of a nation he may bear the sword, though he may not do so when acting on his own right. The responsibility for his actions is, then, not his but the nation's, which in turn is acting for God. Luther could therefore reach the breathtaking conclusion that "the hand that bears such a sword is as such no longer man's hand but God's; and not man it is but God who hangs, breaks on the wheel, beheads, strangles and wages war." We cannot agree that there is or ever has been a Christian nation, and it may seem that to investigate Jesus' teaching as it applies to obedient nations is somewhat academic.

The Political Background to Jesus' Ministry

In Jesus' day, Palestine had been conquered by the Romans. All sections of the nation with the exception of the Herodians were bitter in their opposition to Rome. Nationalistic and religious pride gave rise to demands from the people for organised rebellion. Galilee itself was a hotbed of revolutionary intention, and looked for a leader. Jesus' Messianic claims substantiated by his evidential miracles were certain to attract these elements to him. He was bound to have occasion to clarify his position even if no one cared to accept his instruction.

Instruction to the Jewish Nation

In Matt. 5: 13 we read, "Ye have heard that it hath been said 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy,' but I say unto you, love your enemies." "Thy neighbour" in this context would be understood by the Jews to mean their fellow Israelites and "thine enemy" Israel's national enemy. "Love your enemies" therefore means in its first-century setting, "Love the Romans," and similarly "... do good to them that hate you. ..." As an example of this we have Jesus' instruction in the event of Roman forced labour. When the Roman legions were passing through the land they would compel the local residents to carry their baggage a stated distance, "a mile" in the A.V. The patriotic Jew would consider this compulsion deeply humiliating, and consider it his sacred duty to resist and evade this task. But Jesus counsels not only doing it, but doing willingly, giving more than is asked, so Matt. 5: 41, "And whosoever will compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." In response to overbearing compulsion, we render ungrudging help.

Any nation which followed Jesus' precepts would lose honour and dominions and certainly be conquered. Jesus' commands cover even such a situation. The well-known words "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" have been taken to mean "pay taxes to your lawful government." This is not the meaning, and in any case, if it had been, would have been so obvious that no one would raise such a query. Caesar was not the lawful ruler, but a military conqueror and the Jews a subject people. Jesus' command in such circumstances is therefore, "Submit and pay the tribute your invader exacts."

To those, then, of his own nation who would plot rebellion against Rome and stir up passions for a holy war of liberation, Jesus clearly says, "No! Love the Romans, do good to them, help them, resist not their evil, thereby showing them a reconciling love." He demonstrated the spirit of his coming in appearing to them as a king but not on a horse prepared for battle but "riding on an ass," the symbol of peace, and coming to "speak peace to the nations." So Zech. 9: 9, 10.

Surely the same rule applies today

for any nation which desires to be Christian and live according to His commands. If the fruit of individual Christian living is repentance on the part of other individuals, would not the same apply on a national level? And while the nation concerned would stand to lose everything that this world considers appropriate to nationhood, there would be a reward to that nation which brought forth "the fruits of the Kingdom of God."

Discipleship Today

We have seen the advice which Jesus offered the Jewish nation. Complete rejection of both Jesus and His teaching led the Jews to engage in two disastrous wars during which the nation was virtually annihilated. Nothing was gained by resistance but everything was lost. Here is a bit of history which could easily be given a modern twist. Suppose Russia were to invade Britain, what should our attitude be?

The answer of Jesus is timeless and closely related to His words about Caesar. We would render unto Russia the tribute she exacts, resist not her evil, but seek her good; hoping thereby to reconcile her. We would also be prepared to suffer loss of goods and death itself rather than exchange hate for love. There is no evidence to suggest that such a policy, if it were adopted, would mean the death of the Christian faith or the end of the British people. Christianity itself is rooted in death and resurrection and flourished in times of persecution. The nation would die to its old way of life but rise again to a new.

Blessed are the Peacemakers

Many groups have refused to take responsibility for the State's use of armed force to settle international affairs. War is a confession of failure. The political situation which compels the use of force is itself the outcome of a long series of unchristian acts and to save the situation by force would be merely to perpetuate these.

As Christians we are constantly challenged to think and act as individuals. We are told to love our brethren and our enemies. People are the objects of God's love. Therefore we must try at all times to think in terms of people and not in terms of colour, nationality, political complexion or religious aberration.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

A brother in the Midlands writes:

At day schools children are now taught the Higher Critical theory that the Pentateuch is made up of four documents, J, E, D and P. This seems to throw doubt on inspiration, but their parents are often unable to say anything helpful on this subject, and their Sunday school teachers seem to be in the same position. Could one of your writers offer us some help, please?

Answer:

This is a big subject, and nothing less than a book would deal with it adequately, but there are some points that can be made briefly. First, the idea that parts of the Old Testament were composed in part, or largely, by excerpting from existing works is a fact. If one compares Samuel and Kings on the one hand with Chronicles on the other hand it is obvious from a simple reading that in places Chronicles simply repeats what is found in the earlier books without change. In other places there is some similarity, but not identity, and in still other parts the two records are quite different. There is nothing to be feared or lost in acknowledging these facts, which have, of course, been known long before documentary hypotheses were framed. It is simply a matter of technique of writing which differs in the modern world from that employed in the ancient. Today we disapprove if an author borrows sections from an earlier work without formally quoting his source. In Old Testament times this was a universal practice: anything valuable in an earlier work was liable to be taken over in later books. Everyone knew this happened; there was no dishonesty about it. Inspiration can work of course through any technique of writing. Thus we would be ill advised to try to cast scorn, as some do, on the idea that in principle the Pentateuch may have been based on several earlier works. The possibility certainly exists.

However, it is quite another thing to commit ourselves to a particular theory of source criticism, such as that of J, E, D and P. Attempts to analyse the sources from the final product alone are very hazardous undertakings. Here and there a scholar (or the majority of scholars) may feel certain that the combination of, say, two sources is obvious. But when the matter is pressed further and the whole Pentateuch is analysed into sources and sub-sources and glosses, etc., which are then all dated and assigned to particular cities or areas, then a degree of speculation enters which merits a sceptical reception. While in the last century a majority of scholars did accept J, E, D and P, today there is not the same degree of confidence in this theory in all its details. There is certainly a Deuteronomic ("D") style, and a Priestly ("P") style, but they need not be the product of single individuals, nor of one generation, and even if they were there is no likelihood that what was written in them was composed out of the blue. No doubt it would depend on earlier sources, just as the final Pentateuch did.

In short, the critics have worked from sound principles, but have pushed conclusions beyond reasonable bounds. A degree of scepticism on precise analyses is fully justified, and believers have no reason to be afraid of this subject.

W. G. LAMBERT.

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Reviews

Bultmann's Theology

Rudolph Bultmann. *Theology of the New Testament*. S.C.M.

TO MANY PEOPLE the name of Rudolph Bultmann signifies an author almost impossible to understand, who writes about such things as "demythologising" and "existentialism." This is because a number of his smaller works on the more philosophical aspects of religion have become well known as paperbacks, and being written for co-workers in the forefront of intellectual advance, they employ a terminology not generally known, and have a terseness of expression which does not help to explain them to a reader unfamiliar with such terms. It would indeed be a pity if such an impression should deter a serious Bible student from reading his most impressive and weighty book. This work, *Theology of the New Testament*, is also available as an S.C.M. paperback.

In this work also there is an economy of words which requires the full attention of the reader, but for anyone familiar with the Bible it does not make very difficult going, and for anyone who is not, it could prove an invaluable introduction to much which might take years of study to realize. In any case, it is well worth having on the bookshelf as a reference work to direct one's attention to the whole collection of passages dealing with any particular aspect of Christian theology. It is well indexed, and there are few of its 600 pages which do not contain more than 10 references to the New Testament text. Every one of these references is made with meticulous regard to the context in which the passage is found. Where a particular word may have a key bearing on the meaning of the text it is invariably given, as is also any Old Testament word which may have been in the writer's mind and coloured his meaning. In addition to these thousands of New Testament references, there are also exhaustive references to all the early Christian writings up to around A.D. 150.

Many historians of the Christian

religion have pointed out that its progress has been one of continuous development and change. All interested in religion are aware, for example, of the tremendous changes which resulted from the Lutheran Reformation, and of the multitude of Christian sects which have flourished since that time. Not so many are familiar with the significant movements of philosophy within the Roman Church from around A.D. 700 to A.D. 1600. It is commonly known that the period A.D. 100 to A.D. 500 were centuries in which considerable development of Christian doctrine occurred, and for anyone interested in this period one of the most masterly summaries is *Early Christian Doctrines* by J. N. D. Kelly. While it is obvious to any careful reader of the New Testament that there was over the years a tremendous advance in Christian realization of what the life and teaching of Jesus had really meant, and it was not until the first century was drawing towards its close that a coherent theology was present within the Church, yet there is not so general a familiarity with the details of this growth.

In part this lack of familiarity springs from the fact that many writers on the subject have been anti-Christian, and their case has been distorted and lacking in precision. In this work by Bultmann, however, there is a sincere belief in the Lordship of Jesus, and a fair and scholarly attempt to unravel the skein and reveal from the pages of the New Testament what really happened. In some measure he draws on the results of previous literary analysis of the New Testament text, and the reader may not choose to accept all which the author does. This does not detract from the usefulness of the book however, because never does the author merely give his own opinions, but always the full facts are laid out for inspection and judgment. Any difference of opinion on the authorship of a few New Testament books makes no serious modification of the devel-

opment revealed, because the date of the writing is not greatly in question, and it is only the names of those responsible for presenting the various aspects of theology which are in controversy.

The first section of Bultmann's work is based upon the fact that the early Christian Church was built upon the life and teaching, and death and resurrection, of the prophet Jesus of Nazareth. He notes that the ministry was basically Messianic in proclamation, whereas the first Christian proclamation in Jerusalem was based upon the resurrection and return of Jesus the Christ which was not understood even by his disciples during the ministry. This first section, therefore, is devoted to analysis of what the message of Jesus before the Crucifixion comprised. Because the Gospel of John is a later interpretation of what the teaching of Jesus had come to mean for John, this examination of what it meant for disciples while it was in progress is confined to the three synoptic Gospels. The basic teaching of Jesus is well presented, and the results of this section are later used to show the essential differences which resulted in the Christian proclamation as a result of the resurrection and ascension.

The second section examines the earliest proclamation in Jerusalem, and its historical development in the Jewish Church centred on that city. He notes, for example, that the Church at Jerusalem continued to meet in the Temple, and was in fact a Jewish sect, living in conformity with the Mosaic Law, and necessarily viewing the Lordship of Jesus through Jewish eyes. The third section looks at the earliest proclamation and

mode of life in the Gentile Church. Here, because the surrounding peoples were pagan, living a life of immorality, there was a separation from the non-Christian contemporaries which was unknown to the Church in Jerusalem. Here, in contrast to the Jerusalem Church, Jesus was viewed through Hellenistic eyes, and many of the categories of Greek thought were used to explain Christian fundamentals.

The nomenclature of Judaism, Gnosticism and Mysticism is examined and the basic implications expounded. It was inevitable that Christian expositors should use the language of their age, but the essential difference between the Christian meaning which the terms carried and the outlook of the non-Christian world around is clearly demonstrated. These two earliest sections of the Church are shown to have a basic "proclamation," but no coherent scheme of connected theology. It is shown that it was Paul who first thought out the full implications of the "faith," and presented them as a "theology" in his Epistles. The fourth section of the book is an examination and analysis of the teaching of Paul, and the fifth that of the later teaching of John, which is shown to be different from, and complementary to, that of Paul. The final section of the book deals with development of Christian outlook through the final years of the first century, when the community was becoming an organisation, with deputed officials and set credal belief.

A careful perusal of this work, with each aspect of New Testament teaching so thoroughly classified and presented, brings many matters to light which are not obvious on the

surface, and establishes a picture of the first-century Church which helps in the full understanding of the New Testament. Along with this widening of appreciation of what Christianity fully meant for the first-century disciple (very much more than it does to most of us) comes a host of new problems concerning our twentieth-century practice. With a wide range of differing but complementary sets of dogma and outlook, the whole Church still constituted a unity; the Church at Jerusalem was in full fellowship with that at Ephesus, though differing in details of daily life and outlook. Furthermore, God saw fit to include in His Word a selection of the differing outlooks to show that all were acceptable to Him and helpful to us insofar as they fit our type of personality and assist in our walk towards the Kingdom. We have much to learn from the Apostolic Church!

RALPH LOVELOCK.

(Continued from front page)

important that they used to be. Have we considered the advantages of holding a series of lectures by one speaker, who would then cover the field more evenly than a succession of different ones? The intervals between series could be filled with different kinds of services that would be of no less value to our friends and members. Of course there are other ways of looking at the problem: of training speakers, for example. But whether the ecclesial appointment book is full or not, it is our common duty to employ our resources to the best possible advantage in the service of God.

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