

The

En-deavour

Magazine

A CHRISTADELPHIAN REVIEW

TWO SHILLINGS

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REVIEW

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WORK

WORK is not popular today, and few consider it a virtue.

Leisure is the keynote of 20th century man's ideals. People do not want to serve, but to be served — by the welfare state. This ethic has of course its practical disadvantages, which were grasped by the charlatades to whom Sir Oswald Mosley in the 1930s promised one char apiece. They saw at once that if they stopped charring there would be no one else to do it. A lay community must have the same realism if it is to function at all. Our Breaking of Bread service needs diverse kinds of workers even to take place at all. Unfortunately it can take place with the minimum of effort on the part of those who serve. But it will not be effective if work is eschewed. We do not refer simply to the immediate preparations for this particular occasion. The cumulative efforts of past time will either show or will be absent. Since we are joined together for spiritual purposes it is possible for us to be influenced by the half-truth that it is the spirit in which we do things that counts as much as what we do. Certainly it is true that the utmost efficiency does not of itself create true worship. But it is equally true that a spirit of true worship does not just happen by wishing it. It arises in response to the way of life of those who engage in it. In other words past experiences and efforts bring their fruits. Every aspect of our communal life is the same, and at the present time one of the greatest needs is for more serious study of the Bible. One cannot listen to our preachers over the years without realising how little serious study takes place. Our books and pamphlets (and the lack of them) similarly proclaim that we are no longer what we were once, a Bible-loving community. There is a minority devoted to reading and re-reading "Eureka," something that Dr Thomas would not have approved of. There are others quite willing to trust a previous generation and to rely on human creeds rather

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The Life and Times of John Thomas M.D.

5. "Information Wanted"

by Brian Tighe

IN THE FIFTH number of the *Apostolic Advocate* Dr Thomas wrote an article in which he asserted that "no immersion was a valid baptism which was not predicated upon the true faith." This, of course, gave great offence to the leaders of Campbellism because many of them had been Baptists who were accepted into the Campbellite community without re-immersion. This marked the beginning of the long antagonism between John Thomas and all but the more liberal Campbellites.

It was not long before Alexander Campbell's attention was drawn to the article, and he sought to combat its influence, initially by a series of articles in the *Millennial Harbinger*. He also wrote privately to Dr Thomas and counselled the dropping of the question on the score of the "inexpediency of its agitation." Dr Thomas replied that it was "expedient to maintain the truth" and that there was no real charity in leaving their friends in the dark when they knew they were "pursuing a course that would finally be prejudicial to their best interests."

In the midst of this controversy another source of contention arose. As a result of his studies Dr Thomas formulated a series of problems which he found difficult to resolve. Some of these were connected with the fundamental beliefs of Campbellism. He gave an account, in later years, of the way in which the problems came to be published.

In writing to our father in London, who has been all his life an intense and laborious student of "divinity" and college lore, we commenced to propose a few

questions for his consideration, in the hope that he would answer them and thus furnish us additional matter and variety for the pages of the *Advocate*. One question suggested another, until the list grew to upwards of thirty. When we had finished, the thought occurred, if these questions were also published in the *Advocate*, they would, perhaps, elicit examination of the Scriptures; and replies, which might likewise furnish "information" on their diverse subjects. We adopted the suggestion and copied them out forthwith. The original was mailed to England, and the copy appeared in the next number of our paper.

The following extracts have been taken from the list of questions, which appeared in the *Advocate* under the heading "Information Wanted."

"1. Is there any other difference between man and the inferior animals than their *organisation*, i.e. does not the *essential* difference between them consist in their susceptibilities?"

"3. Is man *naturally* and, therefore, necessarily immortal, i.e. is he an 'immortal soul', *because* he is man; or is immortality a *gift* consequent upon the due observance of certain conditions, proposed by God, at certain periods of the world's age?"

"6. If immortality be a gift, is that gift conferred as soon as a man dies, or does he wait for it, in unconsciousness, 'till the revelation of Jesus Christ' at this second advent, when he will descend from heaven to ascend 'the throne of his father David'?"

"10. If immortality, or perennial bliss or woe, be conferred upon men as soon as they die, i.e. if they be even sent to heaven, or contrariwise, to hell, pray what is the use of the judgment, which all say is to be at the end of the world?"

"18. When it says, 'Be fruitful and multiply; and RE-plenish the earth' does it imply that the earth was inhabited before the creation of Adam; and that the earth being without form and void and darkness upon the face of the deep waters which pervaded it, was the result of a catastrophe by which its former inhabitants were destroyed?"

"19. May not these inhabitants be 'the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their proper habitation, whom God has reserved in everlasting chains under the darkness to the judgment of the great day' (Jude 6), 'the angels that sinned whom he spared not, but with chains of darkness confining them in Tartarus, delivered them over to be kept for judgment' (II Peter 2:4) — the angels whom Christ and the saints are to judge (I Cor. 6:3) — may not these inhabitants of a former world on earth be the demons whom God in ancient times permitted to possess man, the chief of whom is Satan, and who cried out, saying, 'Ah! Jesus of Nazareth, what hast thou to do with us? Art thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the holy one of God' (Mark 1:24), and 'what hast thou to do with us, Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us BEFORE THE TIME?' (Matt. 8:29)."

"34. Are not these interrogatories worthy of the investigation of all who

desire to add to their faith, knowledge? Are they not calculated to stimulate us to search the scriptures? . . . and would not their scriptural elucidation remove many obstacles at present in the way of objectors to revelation on account of supposed incompatibilities and incongruities?"

The effect of the publication of these questions is easy to imagine. The situation has had many parallels, both before and since. This is how Dr Thomas described the response of his readers:

We asked bread, but our contemporaries gave us a stone. Our mind was not made up on any of these questions. We wanted light. Instead, however, of someone condescending to instruct us, we were beset on every side. . . . No one ventured to touch freely and candidly upon a single point or suggestion contained in them. On the contrary they vented their ill humour. And why? Is it because it is a criminal thing to ask for information? Did Jesus brand the disciples with infamy when, in their simple ignorance, they asked questions for information? And yet we have asked many who profess to tread in his footsteps to impart to us their views in candour and humility on certain things which have been suggested to our own mind, and instead of, in a gentlemanly and Christian manner, attempting to enlighten our darkness, or to direct us in the way of truth, they round upon us, and cry aloud earnestly, with a pretended zeal for orthodoxy, "Infidel, Infidel!"

For the next eighteen months or so Dr Thomas remained in Richmond, although his position became almost intolerable on account of the antagonism of his fellow Campbellites. The *Advocate* continued to appear, although subscriptions were badly affected, especially initially, by the controversial views expressed therein. Alexander Campbell, bitterly chagrined that a co-worker in the Reformation should promulgate ideas calculated to jeopardize the rising popularity of the movement, bent his energies towards counter-measures. He attacked the views of Dr Thomas, speaking against him at every opportunity, and devoting large portions of the *Millennial Harbinger* to attacks on him.

One battle began when Alexander Campbell published a series of articles entitled "Conversations at Thomas Goodall's." In this, a Mr Wickliffe (who represented Alexander Campbell) discussed Dr Thomas's views on the mortality of man with a Mr Payne (who supported the views). Needless to say Mr Wickliffe always had the best of the discussion. Dr Thomas took up the idea and published a "Dialogue Between Three Friends on Men and Things." It is difficult to read these exchanges without smiling at the way in which Dr Thomas thinly disguises himself as Tomaso, enters the "Dialogue," and convinces the "interested friends" that the views expressed in the *Advocate* are correct. The following extracts are illustrative:

Philo. Good morrow, friend Alethes. It is with pleasure I meet you again after so long an absence. What tidings do you bring from a far country?

Alethes. My absence has been indeed long; but as for tidings, I have none of importance to communicate. I thank you for the pleasure you express at seeing me again. I reciprocate your kindness.

Philo. I thank you Alethes. Pray what is that you hold in your hand?

Alethes. It is the April number of the *Harbinger*, which I have just obtained from the Post Office.

Philo. Does it contain anything of interest?

Alethes. Yes, indeed; the Editor, you know, is always worthy of being read.

Philo. Read the table of contents, if you please. [Alethes reads.] There, friend Alethes, stop! Turn now to the *Conversation at Thomas Goodall's*. Read it, if you please. [Alethes reads it through deliberately, and Philo pays profound attention.] Who is he whose writings seem to be the subject matter of conversation there?

Alethes. Mr Payne calls him his "English friend," I judge therefore, that he refers to an individual who edits a paper in Richmond. I am the more strengthened in this opinion, because I have some recollection

of having heard the quotation which appears to have concussed Father Goodall's aged nerves so violently, cited as coming from him. I know that he is from England.

Philo. Then you do not read Mr Payne's friend's writings?

Alethes. No; as yet I have not. But the manner in which the *Harbinger* has recently noticed several of his articles has excited my curiosity. I like to read both sides of a question; and to read a man's defence of his own sentiments, which I confess the *Harbinger* has not enabled me to do in relation to this "shrewd gentleman's" writings, as it calls him, I intend to take his paper, and judge for myself.

Philo. I coincide with you in this matter. The whole conversation appears to be a very one-sided view of the subject, written in a style calculated to catch the multitude. For my own part, I cannot learn the views of the half-Christian half-sceptic, as he is represented, from the Editor's exhibition. But here comes Tomaso, perhaps he can assist us in our review of this conversation at Father Goodall's.

Tomaso. Good morrow, brethren! May I enquire the subject matter of the discourse in which you seem so earnestly engaged?

Alethes. We have been commenting upon a conversation in the last number of the *Harbinger*. I suppose you have read it, for I know you are a reader both of it, and of the *Advocate* published at Richmond. Are you acquainted with their respective editors?

Tomaso. Yes, I have a personal knowledge of them both. He of the *Harbinger* is a very excellent man; of fascinating manners, and most esteemed by those who know him best.

Alethes. What is your judgment concerning this conversation at Thomas Goodall's?

Tomaso. In the general, I think that my friend of the *Harbinger* has not done his reputation as a reasoner justice. He has descended to gossip. . . .

The dispute between Alexander Campbell and Dr Thomas continued, and so did publication of the *Advo-*

cate. The increasing time spent on those activities had a marked effect on Dr Thomas's medical practice however. Towards the end of 1836 he announced his intention of leaving Richmond and moving some forty miles to Paineville. He wrote, "The chief reason of this move is that the business of interpreting the Scriptures to the people in remote places is incompatible with the practice of the medical profession in a city. I have, therefore, purchased a farm, which I am engaged in settling, in order that I may procure a maintenance for myself and family. . . . Riches are not the object of my desire. The riches I desire here are liberty of speech, of action, and of opinion; the enjoyment of the right of free discussion in relation to things past, present, and to come. . . . There is much meaning in a maxim of William Penn: "Choose God's trades," says he, "before men's; Adam was a gardener, Cain a ploughman and Abel a shepherd or grazier. When Cain became a murderer he turned a builder of cities and quitted his husbandry." . . . "As to the continuance of the *Advocate*, I am now providing for it. Through the liberality of certain brethren in these parts, who are anxious that a free and independent Press should be established amongst them, I shall be enabled shortly to purchase a press and types, and to continue the publication of our paper on my own farm."

This move seems to mark the beginning of a new era in Dr Thomas's life. He moved fairly frequently, as he had done before, but the change from medical to agricultural activities, the increase in size of his family, and the fact that he now undertook both the editing and printing of the *Advocate* added to the complications of removal. The size of the Thomas household grew steadily. Within the space of two years a baby daughter (Eusebia), Dr Thomas's brother, a man servant (of mixed Indian and negro blood), and a boy servant joined them.

The move to Paineville presented problems in the production of the *Advocate*. The mail to Richmond consisted of a horse and two saddle bags. This had previously proved to be fairly adequate, but two or three journeys were required to clear the monthly issue of the *Advocate*. In addition Dr Thomas experienced trouble in retaining a printer to

assist with the production. He writes of one, a convert to Methodism, who on being faced with a passage which was critical of revivals and camp meetings, felt obliged to leave. "His Methodism could not stand this, so he packed up his kit and absconded by starlight to Richmond."

Although Dr Thomas had found a peaceful environment he did not escape the attention of Alexander Campbell. The *Advocate* had been installed only twelve months at Paineville when Campbell published a statement disclaiming fellowship with John Thomas on account of certain views (primarily on the nature of man) which the latter was supposed to hold. In the course of a characteristically lengthy reply Dr Thomas wrote:

We ought to be very cautious in this matter of excommunication; and especially ought we to beware of jumping to conclusions upon the reports of enemies to the faith. I know we agree in this, if we differ in everything else beside, which however, we do not:— that *there is no infallible judge of controversy upon earth*. If this be true, then my judgment of you, or yours of me, or ours of the church, or the church of us, is not, and cannot, under existing circumstances be infallible. If you say there is no resurrection of the dead, then, inasmuch as the Scriptures plainly say there is, the Scriptures pronounce you perverted; but even then not lost, but in a state to be reasoned with, and so reclaimed to the true doctrine. If you deny the remission of sins by faith in the blood of Christ and obedience, then you would manifestly have apostatized, and trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God. But is there no difference between this and contending for what one honestly believes to be the Scripture doctrine of the resurrection, the gospel, its obedience, and so forth? If at this time, just as some are beginning to emerge from the smoke of the great city, they are to "elevate" themselves as arbitrators in religious matters, and with an air of infallibility, to fulminate decrees against their brethren, I certainly think they are overstepping the

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bounds of modesty, decorum, discretion, and propriety. It appears to me, from all the consideration I have been able to bestow on the subject, that brethren ought not to excommunicate one another, *unless for well established dereliction of Christian conduct, or a plain and positive (NOT A CONSTRUCTIVE) denial of the truth, founded upon their own confession, and not upon the report of others, who may be either personally or ecclesiastically opposed to them.*

In many ways Alexander Campbell would have been wiser to avoid bringing the disagreement to a head in this way. He concluded his "bull of excommunication" with the statement, "It belongs to the church of which he is a member to consider whether he is or not of the same genus with that of Hymenaeus and Philetus (11 Tim. 2: 16, 17), and then for sister churches to act upon this question."

The churches near to Paineville expressed their support for Dr Thomas. In addition he gained a considerable amount of sympathy within the community from people who felt that Alexander Campbell's action had been hasty and ill-considered. In this sense Dr Thomas had gained ground since the publication of "Information Wanted." This was his comment:

By this time, I suspect, my opponents will have concluded that they have been too precipitate in the steps they have taken against me. Crooked policy generally defeats itself. I have never had recourse to it, but have always been straight forward and above board, which, in the long run, will be found to be the best policy, for it is honest. I confess to have not laboured so elaborately as I might have done in sustaining the positions I have set forth. I have adapted my defences to the nature of the attack I have had to bear. This has been, as far as argument is concerned, so feeble and so pointless, that I have ranged much that could have been advanced, in the rearguard as a *corps de reserve*, or body of reserve. We have thrown a few bombs, congreves, and hand grenades into

our opponent's trenches, which have done their works much damage; but as our garrison has been straightened neither for water, provisions, nor forage, we have contented ourselves with posting the watch for the look out, while we have reserved our main forces for the time of need. But from all appearances, we do not think that our reserve of defence will be needed; we shall, therefore, at some future day, convert it into a reserve of offence, and carry war into the hostile territory.

It is quite apparent that Alexander Campbell could not, at this time, afford to force a division in the community. The major effect of his declaration was that Dr Thomas found out where he was not welcome! The relationship between the two protagonists deteriorated rapidly during the next twelve months, despite attempts to bring them together in the hope that their differences might be settled. Finally, in October 1838, Dr Thomas was persuaded to go to Richmond, where arrangements had been made for Alexander Campbell to preach. The reconciliation, doomed as it was to failure, got off to a bad start. Alexander Campbell delivered a stirring address on "Speculations and Untaught Questions" in which he referred to Dr Thomas as being "fit only for such society as Tom Paine, Voltaire and that herd." Despite this the two men had discussions and a debate which were marked by their good humour. The outcome was a treaty in which each gave his word not to attack the views, or person, of the other unless first provoked. A statement was issued which concluded "thus has been happily composed and, I trust, extinguished for ever, the misunderstanding which has so long subsisted between us."

Although both men were signatories to this document, there was little hope of its intent being realised. The fact that they had peculiarly compatible personalities has been mentioned; this was the primary reason for their mutual acceptance of a brief reconciliation. Such was the diversity of their views and the fervour with which they were held, however, that further conflict was inevitable. Within a short time the breach between them was wider than ever.

(To be continued)

Your Questions Answered

A reader in London asks about I Cor. 10: 16: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?" (R.S.V.):

... It is easy to grasp how the cup is a "cup of blessing": those who partake of it worthily receive spiritual blessing by so doing. But how can we "bless" it? Surely we can only thank God for it. He alone supplies the blessings of the cup.

Reply: The matter is not simple because even "cup of blessing" can be taken as meaning no more than "the cup which we bless". Many expositors do in fact take the phrase that way. "Which we bless" can be understood with the usual sense of bless as "consecrate". We invite the bestowal of the beneficent influence of God on the cup, and do not supply it ourselves. There is, however, a

better explanation. Many commentators consider that the Last Supper was originally a true Passover meal to which Jesus gave a new meaning, and that Christians took over those parts of the meal—the bread and the wine—which Jesus interpreted as referring to himself. Even if this view is rejected, the Passover meal would still be a strong parallel to the Last Supper and the explanation would still stand. In the course of the Passover meal graces were said over the several courses and over the cups of wine. The purpose of these graces was to thank and praise God for the giving of these items. The exact wording of these graces in the time of Christ is not definitely known, though from the Rabbinic writings of later date attempted reconstructions have been made. However hypothetical these may be, there is no doubt about the opening phase, since it is so firmly attested. Such graces began, "Blessed be Thou," followed by specification of the particular matter for the giving of which thanks were being expressed. Here "blessed" definitely means "praised": God is to be praised for his good gifts. Thus when Paul wrote of "blessing" the cup, he probably meant thanking God by saying a prayer of thanksgiving which began, "Blessed be Thou".

(Continued from front page)

than take the risk of finding for themselves what the Bible teaches. There are still others without any particular view on this matter. It is not surprising that we make so little impact on the world when few of our number have that personal faith in Christ which springs from individual devotion to the gospels. Here is a field for hard, strenuous work indeed.

Creation and Evolution

by John Weaving

Introduction

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that the word "evolution" has become taboo in the Christadelphian Community. The word only means the change to something more complex. A motor car is a vehicle that has evolved over the centuries. First, the wheel, the crude cart, the wagon, then refinements with springs for suspending the wheels to reduce the effects of bumps, then an engine to replace the horse, and finally various degrees of other refinements to produce the luxury motor car of today. This is how man has worked. There is no reason why God should not have worked in a similar way, but on the other hand, as, unlike man, He is all-powerful, there is no reason why He should. To continue the analogy, there is no obvious reason why if man were as powerful as God he should not have produced a perfect vehicle immediately, but there would have been no suitable roads for it, so that for all things to develop together has been appropriate. To go back to the analogy, it would be necessary for God not only to create man but his food, water to drink, materials, and a suitable environment for his shelter. For his food there must be suitable ground for it to grow, or if animal, food for the animals, and so on. Indeed a whole world in equilibrium. God could have done this in six days of 24 hours, but did He?

There is surely nothing immoral or irreverent in believing that God worked by an evolutionary process any more than by a sudden process, *ab initio*. Our problem is to decide, if this is possible, which process He did in fact use, or if the evidence seems divided to say we cannot reach a conclusion.

Where we believe serious error or indeed sin is introduced is when a theory of evolution is concocted for the purpose of eliminating a need for God, and thus rejecting the rest of His Testimony and substituting blind chance. Or, put in other words, the first principle is "In the beginning God made. . . ." How and by what process He worked is secondary and if we sincerely believe He worked one way or another, or indeed are not convinced how He worked, this is not important.

Sincerity and honesty of thought is far more important than clinging to a doctrine because it was formulated decades ago. We must remember the words of the Master, "The truth shall make you free." This, of course, is not an invitation to licence but an invitation to think and form an individual opinion, and an individual relationship with the one who is "the way, the truth and the life."

So in one sense the matters we are discussing are not vital but contrariwise they have great importance for this generation because we are commanded to preach the Gospel and we cannot preach it effectively

unless we can approach this subject with reasoned views. Many will reject the Bible if we insist that the only meaning today of the early chapters of Genesis is that God created everything some six thousand years ago in seven literal days. If we are not careful, to use a common metaphor, we can throw the baby out with the bath water. We must preach the Gospel that "Christ died for sinners." So for those who do not feel it is worth while delving into this matter, and for the majority of people, we agree there are far more important things to be done. Let them say, "I believe that God controlled these matters, but how He did it I do not know." Such a person is not justified in rejecting the scientific ideas he has not studied.

To be fair to evolutionists, and there are Christian¹ evolutionists as well as agnostic evolutionists we must first examine at least the basis of their theories. Unfortunately the subject is so complex that it is only feasible to look at one theory and that only sketchily. We shall, therefore consider the Neo-Darwinian theory, which is the theory held by Julian Huxley and is the most widely held view today. Other views differ in important respects but have the same fundamental approach.

Darwin made several observations on life.

1. The number of offspring exceed the number of parents, hence multiplication.
2. But broadly, the number in a species remains approximately constant unless badly disturbed by environmental conditions.

¹ This uses the term Christian of one who sincerely believes he is following Christ.

Previous articles in

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have dealt with various aspects of the origins of life in the universe. The present one frankly faces the problems raised by the evidence.

3. Variation is a universal phenomenon—no two individuals are exactly alike.

From (1) and (2) he postulated his first deduction, that there is a struggle for existence. Combining this with his third observation he made his second deduction that is, the environment—other animals, food, and climate—cause the elimination of the weak resulting in the survival of the fittest. This is his theory of natural selection.

Mendel later postulated his principle of inherited characteristics, showing how improvements, or for that matter any characteristics, are passed on to subsequent generations.

Later de Vries postulated the appearance, from time to time, of a "sport," an animal or plant with some considerable change of characteristic that may fit it better for its surroundings. As a crude example, say a longer neck to reach more food, such a type in the end would predominate and a better adapted animal evolve.

Neo-Darwinism postulates a similar theory but does not rely on accident to produce the "sports." Every living thing is made up of cells and within the cell is a nucleus containing the chromosomes, thread shaped bodies, built up (or containing) the genes of hereditary factors. The substance of the cell nucleus is a complex molecule called DNA² and in some marvellous and, at present, almost inscrutable way forms a controlling record analogous to a "tape recording" to produce the correct kind of offspring. The recording of the "tape" is provided by parents. This process is being carefully studied today and it is known that the genes of the chromosomes determine the characteristics of the offspring.

It is believed that the reason that no two people or animals are alike is because there is mutation or changing of the orientation of the genes built into the system and although the "tape recording" causes the cells to conform to a pattern it allows variation within the framework. Neo-Darwinists assume that, instead of sudden sports, mutations therefore occur which may form a better individual and will be passed on to offspring, which

in the end natural selection sorts out. Thus Huxley states:—

In general it seems clear that from the standpoint of mathematical theory, existing mutation rates will in moderately abundant species suffice, with the aid of selection, for the distinctly slow processes of evolutionary change to be observed in fossils.

This statement is easier to say than to prove. Evolutionists make use of the fossil record which we have briefly examined in previous articles. We will quote J. Merrell on vertebrate evolution³:—

In order to give some appreciation of the type of information available in the fossil record, the history of the vertebrates or backboned animals will be outlined (fig. 1). The first vertebrate fossils appeared in the Ordovician period some 450 million years ago in the Paleozoic era. These fishlike animals were small armoured, bottom dwellers, but lacked both jaws and paired fins. Known as ostracoderms, they belonged to the class Agnatha, which today is represented by just a few surviving species, the most familiar being the lampreys. The first vertebrates to have jaws and paired appendages, the placoderms, appeared among the late Silurian fossils, and were very common in the Devonian, 370 million years ago. These were followed by the bony fishes (Osteichthyes) which appeared in the fossil record in the Devonian, and have flourished ever since. Unlike the sharks⁴, they had an added support for the jaws, and an air bladder or lungs.

The first land vertebrates, with legs and lungs, did not appear as fossils until the late Devonian. These first tetrapods were amphibians, a group that had its heyday during the Carboniferous period and has since been a subordinate part of the land vertebrate fauna, represented today by the frogs, toads, newts and salamanders.

The first known reptiles were found in rocks of upper carboniferous (Pennsylvanian) origin.

The reptiles increased in numbers during the Permian and were the dominant land vertebrates throughout the Mesozoic era. Many of the reptilian groups then prominent, such as the dinosaurs, ichthyosaurs, mosasaurs, and plesiosaurs, are now extinct, and the reptiles today are represented by such groups as the snakes, turtles, alligators, and lizards.

The first birds⁵ appeared in the fossil record in the Jurassic period of the Mesozoic, but unlike modern birds which did not appear until the Cainozoic, they had teeth and a tail composed of vertebrae, and were difficult to distinguish from reptiles.

Though mammal-like reptiles⁶ existed in the late Paleozoic, the first true mammals did not appear as fossils until the Triassic (200 million years ago), and they did not form an important part of the fauna until the Cainozoic (70 million years ago). The mammals are characterised by the presence of mammary glands, hair, warm blood, and a relatively large brain, which is probably in large measure responsible for their current dominance. The first fossils that show clearly human affinities appeared in the fossil record less than two million years ago.

To sum up: the theory seems plausible but the significant question that arises is, can all the wonderful variety of flowers and animals and particularly man be the result of blind chance? On the other hand if God controls, designs, and causes to evolve—the matter is altogether different.

In previous articles we hope we have examined all the major evidence of creation albeit only sketchily. We have also looked at what could have happened. We now come to the crux of the matter. Can we say what *did* happen?

What are the propositions that

³ *Evolution and Genetics* by J. Merrell, with some simplification and abbreviation.

⁴ The chondrichthyes, a branch not considered to be in the evolutionary line leading to mammals.

⁵ Aves.

⁶ Therapsids.

² DNA = deoxyribonucleic acid.

have been put forward? What is the evidence in favour of each idea, and what is against each idea? Let us try and review these ideas dispassionately and without bias though this is really difficult as we are also conditioned by our unbringing and training. The scientist and fundamentalist⁷ have equal difficulties, the scientist cannot help what he believes and neither can the fundamentalist, but it is the Christian duty of each to try to see the view of the other (Philippians 2: 3-4), and it is a mental ability and indeed often a spiritual virtue to be able to change one's mind. We have to be like a jury—we must not condemn the criminal because we do not like the look of him—or bring in a verdict of "Not Guilty" because we are certain that the charming young lady in the dock would not have poisoned her husband. We must examine the evidence dispassionately.

The propositions are:—

1. (a) That God created the heavens and the earth and all life at about 4000 B.C. in six days of 24 hours.
- (b) That God created the heavens and earth at some unspecified beginning, but put the earth in order and created life at about 4000 B.C. in six literal days.
2. That God created the heavens and the earth at some unspecified "beginning" and that the earth had life which has left the fossil record but that the earth received a cataclysm which wiped out all life and God recreated life in six literal days.
3. That God created and set in order the heavens and the earth in the beginning and the six days of Genesis are epochs or "Days of God," say "1,000" years.
4. (a) That Creation has been more or less continuous from the beginning but in speaking of the earth, for simplicity of presentation, God revealed it as six great epochs or "Days of God."
- (b) As (a) but the days taken as six successive days on

which each vision of an epoch was revealed.⁸

5. As 4 (a) and (b), but that God used a comparatively slow evolutionary method of creation.
6. As 5, except that God left time and chance to work as well as his divine fiat.
7. That the whole process of the origin of life can be explained by some Neo-Darwinian theory of evolution.
8. That the early chapters of Genesis are legend.
9. That the early chapters of Genesis are myth.

Paul in Romans 4: 20 by inference exhorts us to search for the hand of God in nature and this we have endeavoured to do in previous articles. We propose now to examine the various theories in relation to this and the Biblical evidence.

1. (a) This, it has to be admitted, is the *prima facie* case from Genesis. In Genesis 1: 1 we are told that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the latter was without form and void and in six days God completed his full creation including man.

This account has been all and sufficient until modern times and undoubtedly we can deduce that all God requires us to believe is that He is the agent of creation and the account He gives us in Genesis 1 is both simple and sublime. In a few words it paints a series of beautiful pictures, culminating in the paragon of the animals—*man*—with his domination of nature.

However we believe that the evidence produced in previous articles proves beyond all reasonable doubt that there has been life on the earth for millions of years. So we must conclude that God in His wisdom reveals in such a way that a simple picture hides behind it a deeper explanation, so that His record will be valid for all the changing times and circumstances. Let us therefore emphasise again that those people who are unaware and not interested in the fossil record have no need to be. It is not important. "God created," that is all that matters. However, let us appeal to such people to allow others to consider other explanations that

they find more in harmony with their assessment of all the evidence available to them.

(b) The difficulty with this theory is that there is no obvious gap in the Biblical record in Genesis 1: 1, and we now know this gap to be millions of years. But like 1 (a) it will not explain the existence of life before about 4000 B.C.

2. This can be fitted easily to the Bible record and gives an explanation for the fossil record of previous life but does so by introducing a universal cataclysm at about 4000 B.C. for which there is no evidence whatever either biblical or in geology, or archaeology. An attempt has been made to say the Genesis record would carry the meaning "became without shape and void." But against this is the overwhelming evidence of the fossils, that some millions of fossil plants and creatures exist today in identical form.

In addition, such a cataclysm to fit the Bible record would not only have had to wipe out all life, but also render the earth "without form" and so shroud it, that there was no light. That such a cataclysm did not leave tangible evidence is difficult to believe. It need not surprise us that Dr Thomas accepted this view. In his day there was much less evidence than there is today and in addition the evidence was less well assembled and presented. In addition we know he would be looking at the matter solely to vindicate the Bible while acknowledging the fossil evidence. Today whether we like it or not this is insufficient. We have to meet scientists on their own grounds if we wish to help them to acknowledge Christ.

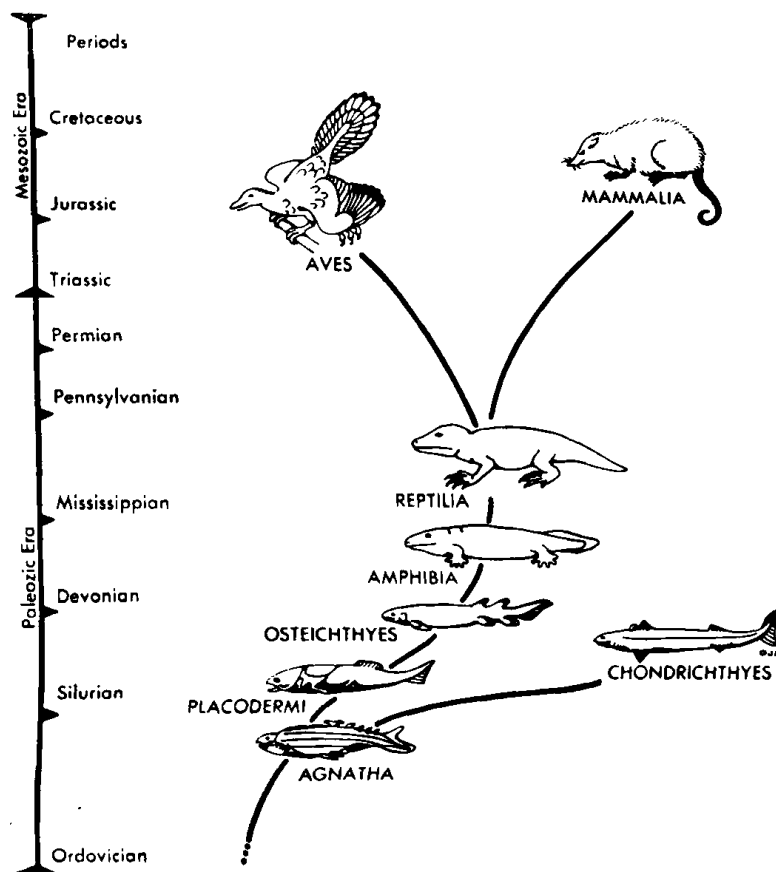
3. This may appeal to some in view of 2 Pet. 3: 8, but again is difficult to square with the fossil record, where, as we have seen, epochs can be defined but not of equal duration and it would be quite arbitrary to divide them into six.

4. (a & b) These are in fact identical except for the interpretation of the "days." The record in Genesis 1 which starts from the beginning seems to be a continuous one without gaps. Thus it is not unreasonable to take these as "Days of God", long periods of time, or alternatively, creation in six great epochs which were revealed to the writer in visions presented on six consecutive literal days.

⁷ The term being used to define those that consider that the whole Bible, including the early chapters of Genesis, should be interpreted literally.

⁸ A view first put forward in the nineteenth century but restated by P. J. Wiseman.

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This theory of Wiseman's cannot be proved or disproved as the revelation is silent on the matter, but as demonstrated in previous articles, although the brevity of the account is such that it cannot be all-embracing, nevertheless the pictures presented broadly accord with the geological and fossil record which is clear evidence of divine inspiration. There are difficulties. Land plant life (3rd day) comes before "living creature" of the sea (5th day). The earliest record of the fossils places seed-bearing plants in Upper Paleolithic (Devonian). Sea creatures had existed before this. R. Lovelock's explanation, however, seems sound when he says that in a brief account that which is of interest to man is important, and thus the primitive sea creatures are ignored. A form of shark appears in Devonian but the familiar bony fish with a skeleton and scales did not appear in any number until the Triassic and thus the order is preserved. It continues through true birds

(first in Jurassic: Archaeopteryx) then modern birds (in the Cretaceous) followed by the mammals, common only after the Oligocene, then modern animals as we know them in Quaternary, and finally man. God could have created all these species *ab initio* and in this section we will assume He did. 5. We are not told in Genesis Chapter 1 which method God used and many may think it more likely that God used an evolutionary process. For instance, the late Dr Young was heard to say, "If God wanted to make a cauliflower would He start with dirt or a cabbage?" Needless to say, we believe He could have done either, but other parts of the Bible and fossil evidence lead us to believe that He works in a "natural" way. "Laws of nature" are "Laws of God."

The succession of life forms is seen today in the colonisation of a rock niche by small simple plants which gradually prepare a site suitable

to support larger and more complex plants.

Bare rocks > lichens > mosses V
Trees < shrubs < grasses < ferns

This kind of succession (lythosene) can occur in 30, 40 or 50 years, provided that the soil and climatic conditions are suitable and that the right kinds of plants to provide the seeds grow fairly near.

This gradual process suggests in a telescoped form how vegetation might have developed in geological time:— new forms having to be evolved instead of blown, or brought in from a neighbouring area.

We think that this idea should by no means be discounted.

6. In the fauna of the earth there is, or has been, an enormous number of species estimated as 5,000,000,000. More than three-quarters of these are insects.

Some may find it difficult to believe that God would deliberately make so many, particularly creatures like the preying mantis, and lethal bacteria. It may be an analogy of doubtful validity but we recollect that God creates evil as well as good. But we do not imagine that He deliberately creates evil but that evil is an inevitable by-product of giving man the freedom of choice between good and evil. Likewise, therefore, it seems feasible that some of the millions of creatures may be, we do not say are, the by-product of God's working necessary to produce refinements of nature.

7. Finally, we come to the Neo-Darwinist's evolution-theory of life. For good or bad motives they feel they can leave God out of it. Julian Huxley⁹ is such a person.

This proposition is of course easily answered from the Bible but this will not satisfy an enquiring young man who has been brought up in a scientific atmosphere and only just perhaps begun to take an interest in the Bible. We believe, however, that we can answer the agnostic evolutionist on scientific grounds. Our first argument is the time factor. If we ask an evolutionist for fossil evidence of evolution he usually replies with the horse. Here as we have seen he can produce a series of fossil specimens, starting with Eohippus (Dawn horse) found in the Eocene (about 50 million years ago), a small specimen 12 inches high

⁹ Many Neo-Darwinists claim to be Christian, but believe God did not intervene in evolution by overt acts.

at shoulder with four toes. In the Oligocene (about 32 million years ago) he finds *Mesohippus* with three toes and somewhat larger size. Both these animals are, from the tooth shape, presumed to have been browsers, which nibbled the shoots of young trees and shrubs. With the Miocene (20 million years ago) we find *Merychippus*, "spring" footed, as compared with the earlier specimens, which were pad footed. In the Pliocene they were grazers rather than browsers. *Plihippus* (8 million years ago) had the single hoof of modern horse. Finally, modern horse (*Equus*) of the last two million years approximately, had a larger and more complex brain and larger and stronger teeth.

This might at first sight seem to be strong evidence in support of Neo-Darwinist evolution and as we have noted it is used for this purpose but two facts immediately emerge. First they all belong to the same family and secondly it took an enormous time, 50,000,000 years to accomplish. We have already noted that at the end of the Cambrian period (500,000,000 years ago) there were only comparatively simple sea creatures. This is a period of only 10 times that of the evolution of the horse from *Eohippus* to *Equus*, a small change within a family. So whatever course the evolution of horse or, for that matter, man is supposed to have taken, a period of 500,000,000 is completely inadequate. Few evolutionists take any note of time factors, but when questioned they refer one to G. G. Simpson.¹⁰

Also one should consider the complexity of the human eye, that can only be crudely copied by the modern camera. The eye automatically focuses on near or far objects, adjusts the pupil for correct light intensity and interprets the image in the finest range of colours. Many valid points are brought forward by Dewar,¹¹ of which a few are noted here:—

The whale, a mammal, suckles its young under water. Unless the apparatus for this was immediately effective the young whales would get a dose of salt water instead of milk.

70 per cent of the fossil creatures in the Cambrian Era remain unchanged to the present, a period of 500,000,000 years.

The coelocanth remained unchanged for at least 200,000,000 years.

Other points are the great sparsity of transitional forms, popularly called "missing links", and although it is rightly pointed out that conditions have to be ideal for a fossil to be formed it still means that the various "chance" theories of evolution are based on slender evidence. In a similar category comes the fact that the Cambrian strata yield abundant well formed fossils (e.g. trilobites) yet in the pre-Cambrian there is little more than traces of animals and presence of carbon. Although there may be some good reason for this, nevertheless we see complex living creatures appearing comparatively suddenly without any record of ancestors.

8 and 9. These last two alternatives we may consider together. They relate to biblical exegesis (methods of interpretation) rather than attempts to formulate what actually happened. Thus 8 or 9 could be held in conjunction with several of the explanations listed above.

We are perhaps inclined at first to think that myth or legend implies that the records are false or of little value. This, however, is not the belief of serious expositors who hold these views. Legend implies an historic event that has been handed down by word of mouth for some centuries before it was committed to writing. When finally written down, the event would probably be cast in a kind of poetic form and idiom peculiar to the later time.

Myth differs from legend in that it does not generally start from an historic fact, but is a story or parable to convey a truth that might be difficult to understand if it were expressed in exact terms. Thus Skinner¹² states, "The flood-story is a legend if Noah be an historical figure and the kernel of the narrative an actual event. It is a myth if it is based on observation of a solar phenomenon and Noah a representative of the Sun-god." In fairness we should make it clear that Skinner is only giving this as an illustration and neither view necessarily represents his belief. One reason that some such views are held is that there are ancient Babylonian myths of both the creation and the flood. Many theologians consider that these myths have been taken as a basis for the inspired record of Genesis and re-cast.

Skinner states, "The religious beliefs of Israel have transformed and purified the crude speculations of pagan theology and adapted them to the ideas of an ethical and monotheistic faith."

Those who hold these views would still be satisfied that they convey the truth that God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

Summing Up

It would be presumptuous to call this section "conclusions". However, from the material that has been examined in this and previous articles certain factors emerge that we believe most people with scientific training will feel are clear beyond reasonable doubt.

1. That life has been present on the earth for a very long time, millions rather than thousands of years.
2. That there is no evidence of any clear cut and universal break in the fossil record of this life.
3. That life on the earth was originally of simple animals and plants in the sea.
4. That some evolution within families, e.g. the horse, is backed by good fossil evidence.
5. That the theories of evolution postulated as a complete explanation for all life, if relying on distinct chance, are by no means proven. The fossil evidence for transition between species is small and sometimes conflicting.

All these facets are derived from scientific argument, and if we accept them we may believe that God created by a direct process or an evolutionary process, but in neither case we can take the Genesis account as strictly literal. It is either partly symbolic, poetic, legendary, or mythological. Those who do not accept the scientific evidence as valid may take a literal view of Genesis, but whichever view we accept this does not mean that the account is uninspired and almost all thinking Christians would accept that it conveys in beautiful and concise terms the great truth that "God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth." [Readers may care to refer back to earlier articles which have appeared in *Endeavour* on this general topic. They are: "Geology and Religion" (Spring 1963); "Dating the Past" (Spring 1964, Summer 1964); and "The Fossils" (Summer 1966, Autumn 1966, Spring 1967).]

¹⁰ C. G. Simpson, *Tempo and Mode in Evolution* (Columbia Biol. Ser. 15, 237ff.), New York, 1944.

¹¹ D. Dewar and H. S. Shelton, *Is Evolution Proved?* Hollis and Carter, 1947.

¹² See *International Critical Commentary, Genesis*.

A Time for Action

(iii)

by David Preston

Our attitude to secular society

THE FIRST two articles in this series have been devoted to considering the need for Christian witness in a rapidly changing world. Implicit in them has been the idea that as a community we are not only failing to see the urgent need for that witness but are refusing to recognize the extent of the changes which have taken place in society during the past decade.

An even more serious indictment is that we have virtually given up the attempt to win converts from a largely pagan world. We now confine ourselves, perhaps we always did, to seeking converts from other denominations and to hoping that our children will eventually "see the Truth." That this is so can be seen from the content of our written and spoken words, from our literature and our lectures. In both cases we assume a familiarity with biblical terminology which the present generation does not possess. Ours is perhaps the first generation since the Gospels were written which finds biblical jargon meaningless. A far cry from the days of the Nicene creed, for example, when songs about the Trinity were on everybody's lips. Many sincere and devout Christadelphians no longer see it their responsibility to communicate with people outside the Christian tradition. A comfortable attitude to take since it makes no demands upon either will or intellect. What such people fail to see is that each generation needs to discover afresh the basis of its own beliefs and to express them in the thought-forms of the times.

How can this be done?

Some principles of religious communication

Dr Francis Schaeffer in *The God Who Is There* suggests three general

principles which may be useful in helping our evangelism to become a thing of strength and beauty in the second half of the twentieth century. These are:

"1. The full doctrinal position of historic Christianity must be clearly maintained.

"2. Every honest question must be given an honest answer. It is unbiblical for anyone to say, 'Just believe.'

"3. There must be an individual and corporate exhibition that God exists in our century in order to show that historic Christianity is more than just a superior dialectic or a better point of psychological integration."

A Biblical faith

The faith we have must be maintained on a biblical basis. Once one knows what the Bible is really saying it is important not to be seduced by philosophies ancient or modern to abandon this basis. Equally important we must not attempt to defend the indefensible.

The present debate about basic principles can do nothing but good provided that it is carried out in a spirit of humility and earnest enquiry, remembering always that our ecclesias consist of members who are not all intellectually minded, but who nevertheless need to be spiritually fed.

The unity of all experience

Perhaps one important reason for the lack of real contact between Christians and non-Christians is a lack of assurance by Christians on these basic beliefs. A fear that they cannot stand up to the light of enquiry. Nothing could be further from the truth. For God is the God of Truth, a truth which extends to the whole of one's life. Only by pursuing

truth in every aspect of life, in the arts and sciences, and by integrating it with our religious beliefs and private practice can we be truly whole. It is only when we begin to see the unity of life in this way that we can begin to communicate. If our religious life is kept apart from the rest of our activities it will cease to exist in any real sense at all.

The need for honesty

It follows from this that at all stages we must be honest with ourselves and with others, that "nothing should be preached or taught which will have to be unlearned when young people and others read and discuss the deeper problems or go away to university." We might further ask whether our Sunday School material is of such a nature that it could be extended by eighteen years of honest study without it proving false.

In the first place, therefore, this problem of communication is dependent for its solution upon an attitude of mind. Just as a teacher needs to know his subject before he can teach it, so we must be quite sure of our beliefs before we can tell others about them. In the second place those beliefs must become part of the very fabric of our lives at one with our secular philosophy and thrashed out in the rough and tumble of life with all honesty. There is no activity in life which falls outside the scope of a religious interpretation. Thirdly, we must try constantly to express ideas familiar to us in contemporary terms. Perhaps each ecclesia could set aside time to discuss present intellectual and spiritual problems.

A suggested approach

It is not sufficient, however, to write the Gospel in "Scouse" or in

the language of the "hippy"—as has been done—but also an interpretation of that message must be given. For example, the term "sin" could be explained in the following way (given in note form):

(1) What "sin" is not: murder, adultery, stealing, etc. These are only symptoms. "Before sin becomes an act it is a state" (Tillich).

(2) What it is: separation—man from man; man from himself; man from God.

Biblical source: The Genesis story of the Fall: Adam felt guilty (separation of man from himself), he blamed Eve (separation of man from man), they were both expelled from Eden (separation of man from God).

Modern application: All psychological disturbances, more today than ever before, are the separation of man from himself. Present worldwide disturbances (Vietnam, Nigeria, etc.) show the separation of man from man, our present escapist society illustrates the separation of man from God.

To know the separation of life from life is to experience in a very real sense the meaning of "Sin abounding."

Grace, the opposite of sin, is the reunion of life with life. It is not found by looking for it but occurs when we feel the separation to be at its greatest (e.g. Paul's conversion).

More than ever today this feeling of separation permeates the whole of mankind. Sin is not just an evolutionary hangover to be eradicated as man develops, it is something at the core of his being. The Bible approach is both realistic and optimistic. Etc., etc.

"A course in apologetics which does not consciously seek to implement these suggestions is really a preparation for failure and sorrow. In this way all could be fed, and, if introduced not too rapidly, with much emphasis on spiritual growth and love as well as understanding, in most cases there would not have to be two 'churches' under one roof, nor an explosion.

"Yet I would say that some ripples are worthwhile rather than allowing those, and our own young people who are longing for real answers, to choke in the all-too-present dustiness."

To these words of Schaeffer one can only say "Amen."

(To be continued)

Correspondence

The Editorial Committee,
Endeavour.

Dear Friends,

I was interested to receive three recent copies of the *Endeavour* magazine. . . .

They recall some of the problems and some of the atmosphere of a period that is now, for me, a good many years back. Of course, then you would not have lasted very long in the Christadelphian body if you had said the things you do. But they do not call up in me any desire to return to those outlooks. It is fundamental to a body that calls its particular creed "The Truth" that anyone who leaves it has, in some sense, fallen away. I have, however, moved to a different way of thinking altogether; I did not "leave the Truth," I went in search of it. Have I found it? I think I have found more of it, but none of us can do more than grasp its outskirts. There is a word of T. S. Eliot, for which I think Wilfred Lambert is groping in the opening sentence of his Summer 1968 article.

"... human kind

Cannot bear very much reality"

It means a lot more than, as he suggests, our natural unwillingness to listen to unpleasant home truths. It is rather a recognition of the baffling mystery of existence, the humbling realisation that we see through a glass darkly. But as I have gone on, through these 30 years, I have gained new insights and know that there are more vistas ahead. To go back would be, indeed, to go back . . . and life demands that we go forward.

There is a great deal that I could write, some in praise, some in criticism. But I would like to mention just two points.

In "Not by Bread Alone" (Autumn 1968, again Wilfred

Lambert) there is comment on contemporary happenings which contains some valid observation. But how angry and censorious it all is! Cannot you redeem yourselves from this Christadelphian trait? Everybody is materialistic, there are no principles in politics, the churches are compromised, the high churchman is sneered at in the words "sanctimonious aura of vestments and holy smoke." (Query, is that any more reprehensible than singing badly atrocious verse to poor tunes?) Christians are compromised as much as unprincipled politicians, and so on. Now this is not really true. Politicians are not all unprincipled, there are many earnest and dedicated men and women in politics who do conscientiously a thankless and difficult job. And while you may sneer at the churchman who uses visual symbology instead of words, do remember that, for example, Trevor Huddleston is a high churchman, and you can hardly accuse him of not having concern for human justice. And people *do* care. I enclose two documents, one of which, I am gratified to say, bears my name. They are self-explanatory. To take a phrase from his penultimate sentence, Wilfred may possibly feel that here, though it is indeed small, is something that "is worthy of being followed," and if he does, well, we are not too proud to receive his contribution.

But my criticism of this rather acid article is the whole attitude, which is not illumined by any glimmer of understanding of the human situation, nor of compassion, by which I do not just mean compassion for the destitute, but compassion for the whole struggle of the human spirit. This word, compassion, is perhaps the key to understanding. And, though it may not suit the Christadelphian apocalyptic which lives on declaring that everything in the world is going

from bad to worse (and has so declared for 120 years now) the up-rise of compassion is one bright sign in the world . . . we are living in exciting times when compassion is entering human consciousness on a wider front than ever before. Why Oxfam? Christian Aid? Help the Aged? War on Want? and all the rest? They are twentieth century features.

You should try to understand people before condemning them, be more humble before the mystery of being, get away from this Christadelphian attitude of "we have the Truth."

The other point I want to make relates to Brian Tighe's articles on Dr Thomas. I am glad to see that some inroad is being made upon the mythology of Christadelphian origins, although there is still some reluctance to admit that the body began by schism of the "Churches of Christ" in 1848 as a result of John Thomas's activity. This is the fact, and their statistics show that their membership dropped by 50 per cent between 1847 and 1848 though the number of their meetings remained the same. But why is it still necessary to use the pejorative terms "Campbellite" and "Millerite?" These people have their own chosen designations. It is all rather discourteous, don't you think? You wouldn't like it yourselves, would you?

You may feel that this is a hard-hitting letter, but it is sent in sincerity. If you would like an article on "Why I am not a Christadelphian" I will write one for you, though you wouldn't print it, in all probability. But now that my beloved father has passed on, and my surname is no longer significant in the upper echelons of "The Truth," I am at liberty to say things that I have refrained from saying out of sensitivity for the feelings of others.

Yours sincerely,

A. H. BOULTON.

Reply: We welcome this letter from a former member of our community. Readers will perceive the value of much that is written in the above letter, though it is perhaps unfortunate that it is given as criticism of a body that is not unchanged since the writer knew it, and

of a magazine that has previously printed many of the things he says. The first point manifests a distinction of personality between the author of the editorial referred to and its critic. The author was indeed coldly rational, while the critic is more the emotional, sympathetic poet. Such distinct types have existed down the ages, Amos and Hosea for example, and it would be unfortunate if they despise the one the other because they are different. Each could render acceptable service to God, though it be different in kind. In defence of the editorial it may be said that it does not state that all politicians are unprincipled, and generalisations of course always permit exceptions. The finding of Christadelphian apocalyptic in it was also mistaken: its author does not subscribe to the idea that mankind has got markedly worse over the past century, though trust in mammon is more prevalent in those countries where material goods are so freely obtainable to many of the population. The rise of large-scale charities in this century, however, is likewise a reflection of changed circumstances. We can hardly blame previous centuries for not organising international relief when news travelled by word of mouth and sailing ships. Is it more Christian to be moved by a picture on television to collect money in the streets to alleviate distress, than to give some of one's scant food to a starving stranger at one's door? Old forms of charity may have lacked publicity, but their quality should not be judged by that. Also many civilisations have not needed a "Help the Aged" organisation, since old people were already well cared for in clan or family. To answer the specific query, sanctimoniousness is always reprehensible, but we would judge the Christian quality of the singing of poor words and music by the spirit of the singers. If they had Christ in their hearts we would not condemn them for lack of appreciation of poetry and music.

The second point came as a complete surprise to the author of the series on Dr Thomas's life and to the editors. They did not know that the term "Campbellite" is pejorative. It is the usual appellation for the Churches of Christ in Christadelphian circles and no discourtesy was intended. It is the same with "Quaker," which millions use as a convenient identification tag for a member of the Society of Friends completely without malice and consciousness of the meaning of the word. We have not ourselves been affronted to read the occasional reference to our own body as "Thomasites." We do not understand, either, the supposed reluctance to acknowledge how many of Dr Thomas's first followers had been Campbellites. Reference to the fact has occurred in *Endeavour* and no hostile reaction was expected or met.

In so far as we have been enabled by this letter to understand better what we lack, we are grateful. But we are saddened to learn that our correspondent has been nursing in his bosom for 30 years criticisms of a body he left so long ago. In this matter he has perhaps not moved so far as he might have done.

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I don't understand

I don't understand why my baby brother can't walk or why my sisters are covered in boils. I don't understand why my tummy is so fat if I haven't had anything to eat for two days. I haven't been a bad boy. I don't understand anything really. I only know I'm very frightened.

There are thousands of children who don't understand the terrible injustice of being born into the desperate half of the world. Oxfam is helping them to the very limits of its resources. Only more money, more volunteers and more things can help Oxfam do more, faster. Please send and do as much as you can.

Oxfam, Room 72, c/o Barclays Bank Limited, Oxford

Review

H. Tennant, *The Man David*. The Christadelphian, Birmingham, 1969.

BOOKS BY CHRISTADELPHIAN authors have never been abundant, and the present time is no exception. The Publishing Association has long been concerned to issue more books of serious content for the instruction of members of our community. In an age of vastly increased educational opportunities we must expect our young people to ask questions that did not concern their elders, and to expect serious answers. If our literature gives them less help than, say, school textbooks, then we shall have only ourselves to blame if our young people do not consider our doctrine as worthy of their support. However, this very laudable aim of the Publishing Association has not yet met with the success that we all desire, and this work, the most recent one to appear, is symptomatic of the situation.

We are by tradition a lay community, without paid ministers or theological colleges. The preaching efforts in which we engage are undertaken by adult male members who, with the chief exception of the retired, have full-time jobs. The study necessary for preaching is not usually undertaken in any systematic way due to lack of opportunity, for which the now fashionable weekend and holiday courses are not adequate compensation. On the surface the results of this situation are not always apparent. Little study is needed for a fluent person to occupy the platform for 30 minutes, and if the address can be repeated up and down the country, then the percentage of study-time to delivery-time can be quite small. In any case when something "new" is needed, usually a quite different topic is selected, for which (often) little time is available, and the minimum study yields another half hour of preaching. It is, of course, one thing to address a meeting for 30 minutes on a particular topic. It is entirely another thing to write a book on that topic. This is one of the reasons for the shortage of books by our writers. The prolonged, deep study that is needed for book-length treatment of any topic has no place in our

community. The few that have the talent and inclination are either too busy as preachers, or having studied deeply and having innocently talked about the results, they have been subject to un-Christian attacks from some with zeal not according to knowledge so that their books never get written, or, if written, never get published.

The author of *The Man David* is more in the former category than the latter, a popular preacher well known for the fluency of his words. The book is biography as would be expected from its author: a readable book unencumbered by scholarly footnotes. There is an important place for such books. Not all Christians can or should be scholars, but all need to know something of both Old and New Testaments. A popular style is to be commended if it helps the reader to appreciate the points being made. One could cavil at a few phrases, "Riding on the back of Saul's discontent" (page 26), "Joab was deaf as an adder" (page 175), but generally the writing is smooth and pleasant. But style is not everything. Even the simplest books should have sound content as well, and it is on this point that some misgivings must be voiced.

The book gives the impression of resulting from hasty glimpses at the Biblical narrative on the part of a busy preacher rather than of detailed study. The author is indeed as concerned to bring home to his readers the moral lessons from the narratives as much as to impart understanding of the facts of history. This again is a thoroughly laudable aim, but even a devotional book should not neglect to get matters of history right.

A major fault of method, as the reviewer sees it, has been the lack of sufficient attention to the major source of information, namely the Books of Samuel, and too much attention to subsidiary sources, that is the rest of the Bible. The Books of Samuel contain some of the most wonderful narratives, judged merely by literary standards, that have come down from any ancient civilization. Their anonymous author either witnessed the events himself, or had direct access to eye-witnesses. The events of David's life are told with

a simplicity and directness that is altogether marvellous. The most important thing for any writer who has to depend largely on these narratives is to understand them and to sympathise with them. On neither point can the work under review escape some criticism. For example, on page 14 there is reference to 1 Sam. 13: 19-22, which describes how the Philistines prevented the Hebrews from learning the art of the smith and so from making weapons for themselves. This provokes the author to comment, "Hence, no doubt, the development of the stone and the sling, and the bow and the arrow." A little familiarity with the historical background of the narratives would have revealed that both of these weapons were in use for centuries before and after this emergency and were in no sense substitutes. A more intimate knowledge of the times would have revealed that this was the time when the working of iron was becoming common, and this needs heat to work it, while copper can be shaped by simple hammering. Another misunderstanding occurs on page 110, where the Philistine god Dagon is called "the fish god", which is entirely mistaken. Lack of sympathy for the narrative occurs in several places. For example, on page 42 the preconception that any lying is a sin is allowed to alter the plain meaning of the passages where David absented himself from Saul's court (1 Sam. 20). The narrative is quite unambiguous. Jonathan, with David's foreknowledge and consent, told Saul that David had got permission to go to Bethlehem for a family festival, when in fact he lay concealed in the countryside not far away. If one lets the narrative teach, it is that lying to a maniac to save a man's life is permissible. A similar insensitivity is shown about Saul's outburst to Jonathan when he realized that David would not be present, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman." The comment is made: "What secret lay behind those words the Scriptures do not reveal." The spontaneous vituperation of an unbalanced man, like the modern equivalent, should not be pressed for hidden meanings! A more substantial case occurs on page 162, where David is condemned for lack of courage and determination when Absalom revolted and David fled from Jerusalem. Not one hint of this can be found in the narrative: it is entirely interpretation.

If one really allows the narrative to speak, then its silence on this point is telling. Had there been any exaggeration in the reports of the extent of the support for Absalom the inspired writer would surely have let us know, since it would have been misleading to mention the reports without allowing the reader to know the truth. Hence we see no reason to blame David for fleeing from Jerusalem, and the brevity of the narrative is no excuse for assuming that the decision was taken in a couple of minutes. David can be blamed for not having checked Absalom earlier, but once the whole country was on his side, then David may have had no real choice, and the flight seems to have been the best solution at that stage.

This willingness to add to the inspired narrative partly results from the overexploitation of other parts of the Bible which are not necessarily relevant. The Psalms, to take the most frequently quoted source, are an unequalled collection of spiritual songs. But they will only illumine the life of David if one can be sure that they really are written by David, and especially if the point in David's life at which they were written can be specified. In the Psalter there are titles to some Psalms which do just this, but due to variations between the ancient authorities it is now generally acknowledged that these titles were not an original part of the book, but are later additions, the first attempts at interpretation in fact. The author does not state his position on this question, but simply assumes that these titles are completely reliable. However, when these same titles attribute Psalms to authors other

than David, this fact is tacitly ignored. For example, on pages 41 and 47 Psalms 81 and 42 are quoted as David's, though the titles attribute the former to the Asaph and the latter to the sons of Korah. On other occasions it is not clear when Psalms are quoted whether the author considers them Davidic, or simply as offering words that fit a situation in David's life, as when Proverbs, the prophets, or New Testament Epistles are quoted. On page 105, for example, Psalm 132 is quoted, but this is certainly not Davidic. It may be replied that it does not really matter whether David or another godly Hebrew wrote it, since David was a godly Hebrew. But this amounts to admitting that in such a study the clear-cut figure of the historical David is not of primary concern, and types of Hebrew piety are in fact being studied. For devotion there is much value in this kind of study, but one should always distinguish it from study of an historically known figure. With most of the Psalms there is no way of ascertaining for certain who wrote them, and much more spiritual benefit will be got from them if the attempt is not made to attach them artificially to some point in David's life.

A further distraction from the primary purpose of the book occurs in the numerous diversions which are characteristic of the author's style. Some, like the moral exhortations to the reader, are very fine in themselves, others are of more doubtful value. The interest in etymology only leads to error, as in the mistaken renderings of Ephes-dammim (page 26), Jezreel (page 85) and Baal-perazim (page 107). Jesus' title "Son

of man" (page 32) is not one which we may all bear. An "interesting point for further study" gratuitously inserted on page 113 should have been settled by two minutes' consultation of a reference book.

Much more could be said, but the reviewer does not wish to weary readers. To sum up the book one may say that there is much valuable devotional material to be found and assimilated, but this is not a serious contribution to the life of the historical David. For those who want a simple, readable book, and who are not too critical of historical matters, this will no doubt prove a rewarding thing to read, but it will not serve as a source for the student. The misfortune with books of this kind is that if it were to fall into the hands of any outside our community who happened not to be scripturally illiterate, it would suggest a very low level of scriptural study among us.

At one point the author puts forward what seems to be a new doctrine for an official Christadelphian publication: "Our attitude to the body is our attitude to Christ." This theme is developed with the author's considerable eloquence. Yet one major qualification has to be made, that service to God takes precedence over loyalty to any human community. We should not forget that sentiments similar to these were expressed by temple authorities to Jeremiah and later to Jesus, by synagogue authorities to the apostles, by popes and prelates to the early reformers, and by Protestant divines to early Christadelphians.

Wilfred Lambert.

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