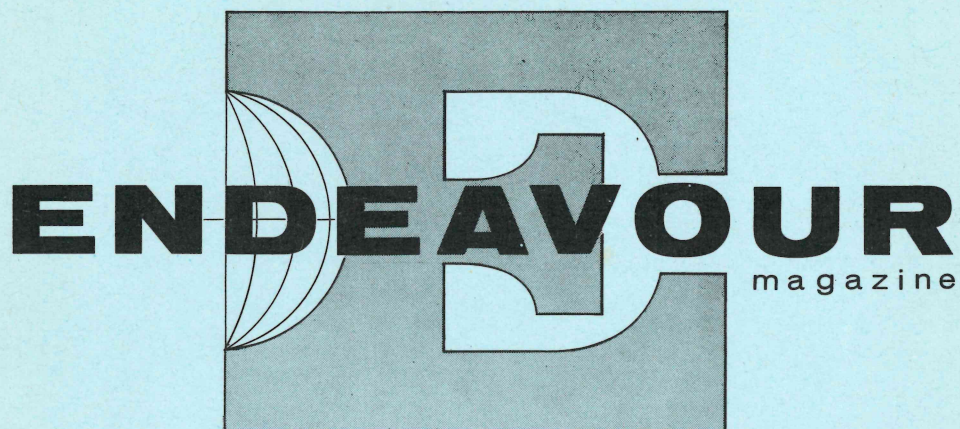




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ATONEMENT.

The English word, "atone", means, as its spelling indicates, to bring two persons into a state of harmonious personal relationship. "At-one", usually implies that previously such a relationship did not exist, hence the similar word, "reconciliation".

The Hebrew word, "kaphar", is clearly defined for us, without going to Lexicons, from its usage in Leviticus 16 for the Day of Atonement, when the Children of Israel were reconciled to God by being cleansed from their sins.

The Septuagint, a useful language link between the Old Testament and the New Testament, translates this word as, "exilasma".

Oddly, this word does not occur in the New Testament and we might well ask if this is significant. The idea of atonement, however, is constantly present and one wonders that the word does not occur in either Hebrews or Romans. Relevant quotations are: 'But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever ...' (Hebrews) and '... through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the atonement'. (Romans) However, the word used here is not that which is used in the Sept. for atonement but, katallage, which comes from the Greek word, "to change", especially of money but also from enmity to friendship, hence, "reconciliation", as in the R.V. and A.V. Margin.

## THE SAYINGS OF JESUS

by Ralph Lovelock.

### "THAT THEY MAY BE ONE".

The whole context of this saying is in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of John. This is the great prayer of intercession which Jesus offered as High Priest on behalf of his people when about to make the atonement for sin which should be effective through all eternity. His work on earth has drawn to its conclusion, it has been a shining forth of God's glory, and Jesus is about to leave his disciples to carry on the visible Ministry to the world, and to dwell in person with the Father in Heaven.

That for which he prays is not a passing temporal feature of the Apostolic age. "But it is not for these alone that I pray, but for those also who through their words put their faith in me. May they all be one." (Jn.17:20 N.E.B). From then onwards the presence of Christ was to be mediated by other men who were his servants, and the glory of God was to shine out from their lives. "It is as if God were appealing to you through us" (2 Cor.5:20 N.E.B). While on earth, Jesus was so completely one with his Father that he could say to Philip "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." (Jn.14:9 N.E.B). It is for this reason that he prays for the same unity between himself and them that had existed between the Father and himself, for without it this continuing manifestation and appeal could not be effective "The glory which thou gavest me I have given to them, that they may be one, as we are one; I in them and thou in me, may they be perfectly one. Then the world will learn that thou didst send me, that thou didst love them as thou didst me." (Jn.17:22-23 N.E.B).

The salvation of the individual depends upon the relationship between himself and Christ, no other man can come between them, or take it from him. "For my part, if I am called to account by you ... it does not matter to me in the least ... My judge is the Lord" (1.Cor.4:3-4 N.E.B) and "Who are you to pass judgement 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" (Rom.14:4 N.E.B). The object of this unity between the disciple and Jesus is the same as that between Jesus and the Father - that the glory of God may be manifested and men drawn within the net of salvation. As individuals the twelve were the friends of Jesus "You are my friends ... I call you servants no longer" (Jn. 15:15 N.E.B) but as a team working in unity they were "fishers of men."

In his first epistle John meditates upon this unity of Christ in us and God in Christ. He uses a normal Greek word of his day which was in common use for the affairs of mundane life; this word denoted a sharing together by several people of some commodity or experience, but unfortunately the earlier versions of our Bible have chosen to translate this ordinary word by a technical term "fellowship". In the New English Bible however the content is made clear again by using everyday terms in our own language as John did in his "We here declare to you the eternal life which dwelt with the Father and was made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we declare to you, so that you and we together may share in a common life, that life which we share with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ ... If we claim to be sharing in his life while we walk in the dark, our words and our lives are a lie; but if we walk in the light, as he himself is in the light, then we share together a common life" (1 Jn.1:2-7 N.E.B). This "fellowship" or "sharing of a common life" is no mere theoretical idea; it is (if it exists) a practical fact, for if we walk in darkness and claim to be sharers in it, we lie, and it is only those who really share this common life, and walk in light as he walked, who are so related.

Thus, this unity, this fellowship, this sharing of a common life, was, as Jesus prayed in the passage we are considering, a living of his life, a manifestation of his love, as he had lived the Father's life and manifested the Father's love. Its prime object was the manifestation of God's glory and the call of God's love to men in need of salvation. John has already spoken of this relationship at the beginning of his Gospel as a "new birth."  
" ... To those who have yielded him their allegiance, he gave the right to become children of God, not born of any human stock, or by the fleshly desire of a human father, but the offspring of God himself" (Jn.1;12-13 N.E.B). This is the basis of "fellowship"

as that term is used in the New Testament. Because those sharing God's life were God's children "born from on high", they were "brethren", children of a common Father. It was no choice of man which made them so, but the will of the Father to whom they had been born. The relationship was a "fact", not a man-made decision, and the only decision which any man might be called upon to make was whether another was a child of God, or a child of the devil. No human fiat created a man a "brother", either he was or he was not, and it was the direct act of God which had made him such if he was.

We have tended to misuse the term "fellowship" because its real meaning derived from the words of Jesus and the comments of John have been hidden from us by the use of a special vocabulary. We treat "fellowship" as though it were membership of a club, and discourse at length about the necessity of all having an agreed "Creed" if we are to be in fellowship. There are many practical problems where a number of men and women are to work together with a common aim. Even Paul decided to part from an earlier companion and go forth with another, but this was nothing to do with fellowship. We might be wise to drop this term, and talk about membership, and thus remember that the issues we discuss are those of worldly wisdom associated with our temporal organisation, and not the divinely given "life" of which we are sharers together.

Perhaps if we were more conscious that the basis of our true fellowship is the sharing of God's life, and adopted the criterion of Jesus, who said "by their fruits ye shall know them (Matt.7:16 N.E.B) and, "as I have loved you, so you are to love one another. If there is this love among you, then all will know that you are my disciples"(Jn.13:34-35 N.E.B) then we might even be less cumbered about by the problems of membership, and more able to "be one" as Jesus requires.

#### ENDEAVOUR MAGAZINE

Selection of articles in past issues you might care to read -  
Write to: J.H.Weaving (address back cover).

"What Is Justice" - Sheila Harris. (Issue Nos.14-15-16-17).

"Prophecy of Hosea" - Wilfred Lambert. (Issue Nos 14-15-17-19).

## PARABLES OF THE SECOND COMING

by John H. Weaving.

Before getting deeply into our subject, let us state clearly that there was no doubt in the minds of Paul and the evangelists that Christ would return to the earth in visible form. Many statements come to mind, but loud above them all is that of the angel's "Men of Galilee, why stand there looking up to the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken away from you up to heaven, will come in the same way as you have seen him go." (Acts 1:11). It seems that the Church did not expect a long delay. Paul exhorted the Thessalonians - "About dates and times, my friends, we need not write to you for you know perfectly well that the 'Day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night' .... But you my friends are not in the dark that the day should overtake you like a thief." Yes, the early Church lived in the expectation that Christ would not delay his return.

The fact that Christ has not returned in visible form has made many feel that the early Church was mistaken not only in the time of Christ's return but in the fact.

Dodd is certainly one of such with his "Realized Escatology" i.e. "Last things" were realized at Christ's first coming. We may not like this interpretation but it is certainly pertinent to endeavour to find out what Jesus said on the subject. His clearest statements are in the Olivet Prophecy but this is a subject in itself and we are here only examining the Parables. But as these are largely stated to be parables of the Kingdom they must be an important source.

We will examine first, three short parables that are closely related - the parables of The Nocturnal Burglar, The Doorkeeper and The Servant Entrusted With Supervision.

## The Nocturnal Burglar

The text of this parable is almost identical in Matthew and Luke.

"Keep awake then; for you do not know on what day your Lord is to come. Remember, if the householder had known at what time of night the burglar was coming, he would have kept awake and not have let his house be broken into. Hold yourselves ready, therefore, because the Son of Man will come at the time you least expect him". (Matt.24:43).

"And remember, if the householder had known what time the burglar was coming he would not have let his house be broken into. Hold yourselves ready, then, because the Son of Man is coming at the time you least expect him". (Luke 12:39).

Matthew, however, places it clearly in a context of the Second Coming following the Olivet Prophecy. Luke, however, places it earlier in the mission of Jesus in what we might call a section of general teaching. We have to ask ourselves a searching question - In the Lucan context would the disciples have understood what Jesus was talking about? He had told them he must die and rise again (Luke 9:22) but as far as the records go, he had certainly not made it clear to his disciples that he was going to heaven and coming back at a later date. Dodd, followed by Jeremias, explains that the gospel writers were influenced by the situation of the early church at the time they were writing. Jesus had died and risen, the angels had spoken, Paul and Peter had preached and written letters about the ascension of Christ and of his subsequent return. The situation in which Christ uttered this parable was a sombre one. He had preached hard and long to the Jews in Galilee and Judea and as far as we can see had made little impression on their hard hearts. The clearest point that comes over in the records is that he had antagonized the religious rulers of his day, the Sadducees and Pharisees. It is significant that, as we have observed, he first starts to make it clear to the disciples that he has got to die after Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi.\*

\* There is admittedly an early hint of this in Mk.2:19.

Nothing but a major crisis would shake these self-righteous people. The thought that would be uppermost would be the facing of this crisis not the Second Coming. This does not mean that the final realization of God's purpose in this Kingdom would be ignored but it was not the immediate problem for either His disciples or the Jews, the hearts of all were to be revealed. The urgency lay immediately ahead.

Let us look again at the parable. A 'burglar' is hardly a fitting analogy for the Messiah, neither is the loss of possessions fitting for the joy of the return, particularly for the disciples. The Gospel of Thomas, although a gnostic work, has some value here.

Therefore, I say: If the householder knows that the thief is coming, he will watch before he comes and will not let him dig into his house of his kingdom to carry off his vessels. But you, be watchful over against the world. Gird your loins with a great power so that no robber may find a way to come to you.

It will be noted that the author has combined the parable of The Burglar with that of The Waiting Servants but there is no reference to the coming of the Son of Man.

In the light of the evidence, we shall probably consider that the thief, rather than being a herald of the Second Coming, was a warning of a very imminent crisis, His crucifixion. Yes, disaster was at the door - His Disciples must be ready to face it!

The Servant Entrusted With Supervision.  
Matt.24:45-51.

"who is the trusty servant, the sensible man charged by his master to manage his household staff and issue their rations at the proper time? Happy that servant who is found at his task when his master comes! I tell you this: he will be put in charge of all his master's property. But if he is a bad servant and says

to himself, "The master is a long time coming", and begins to bully the other servants and to eat and drink with his drunken friends, then the master will arrive on a day that servant does not expect, at a time he does not know, and will cut him in pieces. Thus he will find his place among the hypocrites, where there is wailing and grinding of teeth".

Luke 12:42-44.

"The Lord said, 'Well, who is the trusty and sensible man whom his master will appoint as his steward, to manage his servants and issue their rations at the proper time? Happy that servant who is found at his task when his master comes! I tell you this: he will be put in charge of all his master's property. But if that servant says to himself, "The master is a long time coming", and begins to bully the menservants and maids, and eat and drink and get drunk, then the master will arrive on a day that servant does not expect, at a time he does not know, and will cut him in pieces. Thus he will find his place among the faithless.

In this parable a servant is put in a position of trust and the unexpected return of his master will prove whether or not he is worthy of this trust, or alternatively whether he has taken advantage of his master's delayed return to abuse his power by terrorizing his fellow servants and indulging in riotous living. It will be noted that the language of these parables is almost identical except for their endings, in which the punishment is described should a servant betray his trust. Both Matthew and Luke refer the story to the last day. Luke says he "will be cut in pieces" and "find his place among the faithless", that is the rejected at the Last Judgement. Matthew says "find his place among the hypocrites, where there is wailing and grinding of teeth".

The difference in the endings lends support to the interpretation of Dodd and Jeremias, that originally the parables ended with the servant being cut in pieces with the despotism of the day if he proved unfaithful. The going on a journey is not stressed and is not essential to the story. In this light it is then a severe warning to the Scribes and Pharisees, like that of the vineyard, that a day of reckoning was imminent and would come when least expected. It can be argued that Luke expressly says it was for the disciples (Luke 12:41). Matthew, however, does not mention this, presumably it was also absent from "Q"(1)

### The Waiting Servants

The third short parable is that of the Waiting Servants.

Mark 13:33-37.

"Be alert, be wakeful. You do not know when the moment comes. It is like a man away from home; he has left his house and put his servants in charge, each with his own work to do, and he has ordered the door-keeper to stay awake. Keep awake, then, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming. Evening or midnight, cock-crow or early dawn - if he comes suddenly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Keep awake".

Luke 12:35-38.

"Be ready for action, with belts fastened and lamps alight. Be like men who wait for their master's return from a wedding-party, ready to let him in the moment he arrives and knocks. Happy are those servants whom the master finds

(1) "Q" Quella is the supposed document from which is derived common material in Matthew & Luke that is absent from Mark.

on the alert when he comes. I tell you this:  
he will buckle his belt, seat them at table,  
and come and wait on them. Even if it is the  
middle of the night or before dawn when he  
comes, happy they if he finds them alert.

These parables differ so much that they might be considered to be different parables. In Luke it is The Master returning from a wedding party, In Mark, "a man away from home". It is most unlikely that an earthly master would "fasten his belt, seat them at the table and wait on them after coming back from a wedding". However, Jesus did just this before the Last Supper and a Wedding Feast is a symbol in revelation of the Coming of Christ and His Bride.

Different though the parables are they have a common core - servants awaiting an absent master, who has told them to be alert and to keep awake; to open the door when he returns. The times of possible arrival in one of three watches though given in both Roman and Jewish terms are evidence that both are based on one story of Jesus.

If we take Mark as the original story it comes as an imminent warning of crisis rather than presaging the Second Coming, though clearly Mark uses it for the latter purpose by placing it in the context of Christ's Second Coming.

#### The Talents and Pounds

Matt.25:14-30. Luke 19:12-27.

Though the differences between these two parables are considerable, nevertheless the salient points are so similar as to make it probable that they were based on one original parable given by the Master. However, there are points against such an interpretation and there is not such a common body of text as to postulate that Luke and Matthew simply took it from 'Q' and modified it to suit the purpose of proclaiming the gospel. We will first look at the parables in detail and we may be then in a better position to make a judgement.

The main difference lies in the journey. In Matthew, it is a merchant going abroad leaving a considerable sum of money, 5-3-1 bags of gold, with his servants. In Luke, it is a nobleman going on a journey to claim a Kingdom, his fellow citizens attempting to frustrate his purpose by sending a deputation after him but he returning as king and having his enemies slaughtered before his eyes. This story reflects the historic incident recorded by Josephus of Archilaus' journey to Rome, to get his kingship of Judeas confirmed, - B.C: A Jewish embassy of some 50 persons went to Rome to oppose him. On his return Archilaus took a sanguinary revenge which would not have been forgotten.

Luke makes the purpose of the parable of the pounds clear - "Because He (Jesus) was near to Jerusalem and because they supposed that the Kingdom of God would appear immediately". Matthew groups it with his Parousia\* parables after the Olivet Prophecy. On the strength of this Jeremias suggests that Luke may have combined a "Crisis" parable which Jesus would have told on the basis of Archilaus' Journey. In order to find the original story told by Jesus, Dodd suggests we should take the common parts of the two parables with an eye on the focus of the parables, which is surely the rejection of the cautious one. If we do this the parable reads:

"A man called his servants and gave them sums of money in trust, and went away. Later he returned and called them to account. Two of them had largely increased their capital and were commended. A third confessed that he had been afraid to risk his master's money, and had carefully hoarded it: he now restored the precise sum he had received. It is implied that he expected to be commended for his caution and strict honesty. The master however retorted (and here the agreement between the two versions is at its maximum): "Wicked slave! You knew me for a man to drive a hard

\* Gk parousia - presence or coming.

bargain. You ought to have invested my capital, and then I should have got it back with interest." The third servant is thereupon deprived of his money, which is given to his more enterprising colleague. There the story ended, so far as we can reconstruct the earlier version.

Dodd says that the details of the journey are subordinate to the dramatic climax; the interval is necessary to provide a time of proving - "It has no independant interest." The man will not risk the loss of the pound by investment but hides it in his stocking. However, the money belongs to someone else. His over-caution amounts to being an unprofitable servant - a lazy rascal; this coupled with his denunciation of his Master as a hard man, reaping where he has not sown, on the earthly plane, makes his rejection more than justified.

Considering this story in relationship to the evidence - is it not just the position of the Scribes - Pharisees? They have kept the Law of Moses wrapped in a Napkin! - "I have kept all these things from my youth" - "We have Abraham for our Father." How had they responded to the pleas of Isaiah to feed the Fatherless and Widows? How much had they tried to spread the oracles of God to other nations? Even this teaching of Christ was rejected - only his death and resurrection accomplished a breakthrough. Some have been tempted to allegorize this parable, but to make Christ a hard man reaping where he has not sown is scarcely appropriate. Whether or not we believe this parable to have been originally a 'Parousia' parable or not, the sword thrust stands clear and is as appropriate today as it was then. God had committed riches to us. Woe betide us if we did not use them. If this were so for the Law of Moses - How much more for the Gospel!

## The Ten Virgins

Matt. 25:1-13

From the context after the Olivet Propheet, it is clear that Matthew uses this parable to teach the Second Coming. For this he needs to imply an allegory - Christ is the heavenly bridegroom, the ten bridesmaids are the Christian Community, the tarrying is the postponement and the unexpected incidence of the bridegroom, the Second Coming; the rejection of the five - is the final judgement. But Jeremias asks - "Was all this the original meaning of the parables?"

To the Jewish crowd this story would be that of a typical wedding where the bridegroom arrived so late that they had almost given him up and all slumbered and slept. Suddenly he arrives at night and five are prepared and five are not.

The main point that comes over is that five are prepared for the sudden crisis and five are not. The final comment 25:13 "Keep awake then; for you know not the day or the hour" must belong to another incident perhaps the Watchman Mk.13:35, as the accepted bridesmaids were also asleep.

Jeremias rejects the allegorical interpretation on the grounds that the bridegroom was not at this juncture a symbol, but was a figure used by Paul and in the book of Revelation and has only real significance once the bride is identified with the Church. Against this, however, we have noted that Jesus uses this figure of himself with regard to fasting. Mk.2:19. To my mind, the tarrying of the bridegroom in this interpretation is passed over with insufficient evidence. Jesus could easily have depicted the bridesmaids as five awake and five sleeping, but the emphasis is more on preparedness.

There is, apparently, no clear cut description of a wedding ceremony at the time of Christ, but Jeremias, p 172-3, goes to a lot of trouble to assemble evidence to show that this was a typical procedure and that the bridegroom's lateness may have been due to dispute over the dowry. This seems to be special pleading, but be this as it may, one feels that there is much more detail than necessary to warn the hearers of the impending crisis of the crucifixion.

## JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE.

by Ian McHaffie

"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling." (Ephesians 6:5).

In an exposition on this verse and its relevance today, an article in the July (1972) Christadelphian reads:

"One thing, incidentally, which the apostle's words make clear is that he would have given short shrift today to those who demonstrate and agitate against what they call social injustice. That is no part of Christian duty; and here in his attitude to one of the most obnoxious practices perpetrated by men (slavery), the Apostle gives the complete answer to any question of Christian participation in social and political activity, however good the cause and however reprehensible that facet of life against which the human spirit rebels." (page 312 - italics ours).

Can a concern for social justice, actively expressed by so many Christians outside our body, be so easily dismissed? Does Paul's advice to slaves give "the complete answer" and rule out all attempts to correct injustice to ourselves, and more particularly, to others?

This appears to be a view held by many in the brotherhood with the result that there is little written to encourage interest in social problems or social work.

Paul's words can usefully be applied today to mean that we should be conscientious in our daily work, and this is the point made in the article mentioned. But this is only one aspect of the Bible's teaching and it is in a very specialised context. Biblical teaching in general, when taken to its logical conclusion, demands a concern for social justice and requires that the people of God should do something about it.

Consider first what is said about God's attitude to injustice:

"For crime after crime of Israel  
I will grant them no reprieve,  
because they sell the innocent for silver  
and the destitute for a pair of shoes.  
They grind the heads of the poor into the earth  
and thrust the humble out of their way." (Amos 2:6-7)

"The wages you never paid to the men who mowed your  
fields are loud against you, and the outcry of the  
reapers has reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts."  
(James 5:4).

Both the Old Testament and the New declare God's opposition to injustice and his intention to punish those responsible for it. It follows, as all would agree, that we should take no part in oppression or injustice (though with the complexity of modern society and economics it is more difficult to take no part in injustice than it might at first seem).

However the issue is whether we as followers of Christ should make efforts to remove injustice and help those affected by it.

If we put into practice the positive teaching of the Bible, it is difficult to see how we can do anything other. Jesus told the lawyer to love God and love his neighbour, and by the Good Samaritan story illustrated what loving a neighbour means: helping anyone in need. James wrote: "The kind of religion which is without stain or fault in the sight of God our Father is this: to go to the help of orphans and widows in their distress and keep oneself untarnished by the world." (James 1:27).

There is no clear-cut dividing line between loving your neighbour or helping orphans and social reform. Helping people frequently involves contact with government departments and with various groups concerned with the welfare of those in need. Such contact leads in turn to pressure for change (e.g. in providing more facilities for the handicapped).

Perhaps it is because there is no logical stopping point once one gets involved that Christadelphians (officially, but certainly not in actual practice - we are glad to say) frown upon "participation in social and political activity." It is so much easier and (to appearances) safer to follow a known narrow path: keep to ourselves; read the Bible; pray; attend meetings; preach about the coming Kingdom; be nice to your friends and brothers and sisters, and work conscientiously.

The alternative cannot be tied up in a secure little parcel: do all of the above things, but because of them be concerned about social issues. Each of us cannot do something about them all, but we can do something about some. Take a lesson from Isaiah (1:16-17):

"There is blood on your hands;  
wash yourselves and be clean.  
Put away the evil of your deeds,  
away out of my sight.  
Cease to do evil and learn to do right,  
pursue justice and champion the oppressed;  
give the orphan his rights, plead the widow's cause".

or from Paul, who said:

"Love in all sincerity, loathing evil and clinging  
to the good."

"Do not let evil conquer you, but use good to  
defeat evil." (Romans 12:9 & 21).

Like love, concern has no bounds. One's work can never be finished (until Christ's return) in helping the afflicted. But it is not only a permissible activity for Christians, it is their duty as part of their service to God.

If this is so, why did not the Apostle condemn slavery? He could be (and has been) quoted in its defence, yet the principles of conduct laid down by Paul (and of course Jesus) are what have led to the eventual abolishment of slavery.

More needs to be said. Paul did not envisage the world he lived in as about to endure much longer. As can be seen from many passages in the New Testament, the early Christians expected the Second Coming to be in their own life-times in the first century. This did not make them slacken their efforts to help the poor and afflicted, but it did mean that there was no point in trying to bring about any change in the social order. Hence James, after listing injustices suffered, encouraged the Christians: "Be patient, my brothers, until the Lord comes ... for the coming of the Lord is near." (James 5:7-8).

The Lord did not come then and has not come yet. The outcome of following the teaching of the Bible is to make an attempt to correct now the injustices suffered by people around us. To refuse to do so, and simply to encourage them to be patient, is not loving our neighbours but almost the opposite. This does not mean we should support violent revolution or (say) industrial action such as will harm other people. (In fact the Christian's position is most difficult in the sphere of industrial action. We must beware of quick, glib, easy answers.) Paul's words should be applied in the sense that we have a duty to act with concern for our employers as well as for our fellows. They are certainly not a bar to reasonable discussion in an attempt to remove injustices suffered by others - or by oneself. Nor do they give "the complete answer to any question of Christian participation in social and political activity." What Paul says here must be taken in the wider context of the Bible as a whole, for it will not be enough to say on the Day of Judgement: "No, of course we did not feed the hungry, clothe the naked, help the ill or visit those in prison. We are Christadelphians and we take no part in social or political activity."

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I would like to comment on the article by Arthur Gibson - "Towards An Ontology of Moral Law." The criterion of good writing is that it should be readable. I find, however, that this article is written in a language which must be quite unintelligible to many readers, and is in this respect dissimilar to the usual contributions to Endeavour.

I am convinced that true Christian love (agape) is the yardstick by which all things are judged. I am convinced of it, not because John Robinson may have said so in the "New Morality" chapter of "Honest to God" but because it has been the fundamental principle of Christian living since the days of Christ, who summed the whole law in two commandments of love; and Paul, who wrote that "love is the fulfilling of the law". If love is included, both the decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount are but the highest possible advice to society and to the individual respectively as to how love may be best expressed. If love is excluded, then both canons of commandments are capable of being transformed into an empty shell, capable of legal and illegal avoidance.

The New Testament is clear about the meaning of "agape". It is a love which "is patient and kind", and the distinction between it and the "expression of love in adultery" ought to be so apparent to those familiar with the real meaning of the word that much of his argument becomes a play upon two distinct meanings of an English word. John Robinson does not argue that "agape" will find its expression in adultery. It is, in fact, quite different to argue that people engaged in adultery may or may not possess some degree of "agape", as John Robinson does. The thing which produces adultery is certainly not "agape". I am not, of course, arguing the situationist viewpoint but restating a fundamental which Arthur Gibson has attempted to destroy, that "love" is the fulfilling of the law.

With love in Christ,  
(D.Pitt Francis).

Dear Editor,

I have found the article, "Interpretation of the Parables", very interesting and think that in using material from Jeremias the author is utilising one of the more helpful works on this subject. There are, however, a number of points which Jeremias appears to miss and particularly, in the case of the three great parables of the lost (lost sheep, lost coin, lost son). I feel some additional matters are worth airing and maybe discussing by other correspondents in future issues.

It is true, as he says, that the three may not have been uttered in close juxtaposition and it is obvious by comparing matter in the three synoptic writers that they have selected a few items from a much greater mass and arranged them in an order which will serve to perpetuate and make clear the basic teaching of Jesus. We must never forget that their object was not to record facts (as in the celebrated Cambridge Histories) but to preserve the basic teaching; but in their selection and arrangement they were working upon a foundation laid in the teaching of Jesus and the fact that they saw a cogent connection makes it extremely probable that there was such a connection in the mind of Jesus which was passed on to them in his teaching. Despite your rejection of the idea that the parable of the lost sheep in Matthew was not uttered at a different time from that recorded in Luke, I think this so probable as to be a near certainty. In the continuous teaching stemming from an active mind, the same basic illustrations will be used again and again. The parables of Jesus were not broadcast to a wide audience on a television network, and he will be certain to have repeated them in different locations. In the same manner, the same story will be used to illustrate different facets of the basic teaching. The parables of the talent and the pounds are an excellent illustration of this principle in action and I think the story of the lost sheep will have been used in similar manner.

I would also question the wisdom of altering the order of presentation of the three parables of the lost. It is certain that Luke will have had an important idea in mind when he selected the order which he used and we are in danger of losing the development which he had in mind and substituting a different one of our own when we forsake his arrangement of the material. The new connection which we see, may well have existed in the mind of Jesus together with that which Luke sought to perpetuate, but we have far stronger evidence for that of Luke than we have for that of our own intuition.

It is possible, taking Luke's arrangement in the context of his complete Gospel, to make a fair guess at his ideas and intentions. He is consistently interested in persons, in the individuals rather than the groups of nationalities and since he obviously considered these parables as uttered in criticism of the religious teachers of that day, the basic point is likely to be the relationship between the Pharisees or Scribes with the "common people". John has recorded (7:49) the view which they took of those common people. "As for the rabble, which cares nothing for the Law, a curse is on them". It is fatally easy for us to fall into the same trap, and come into judgement from these three parables; it is fairly common to canvas a district, enquiring at each door, "Are you interested in the Bible?" and pass over the 99 who are not and hence in need of our attention, concentrating on the one who is and in much less urgent need.

The lost sheep had wandered through sheer innate foolishness, as had so many of the common crowd, but the need to serve those who were still "in the flock" was not allowed to be an excuse for shirking a long and fatiguing journey to carry on his own back the wanderer now too weak to even follow where the shepherd led. The lost coin was, to the woman, a treasure she could ill afford to lose, even though of such small value. Lost through momentary inattention on her part, she undertook a mammoth task to find and recover it. To those "knowing God", the people were God's treasure placed in their hands, and loss was in some measure due to carelessness on their part, and no item of furniture was to be left unturned in the efforts to recover that which was lost. The lost son was the final example which we, in common with the Pharisees, tend to look upon as without excuse. He had

deliberately chosen to take the possessions of his father and spend them "on harlots". It is true that the attitude of the father is a comment on that of God, but it is the blindness of the brother which is our condemnation as well as that of the Pharisee. He obviously viewed the escapade as something to be (in measure) jealous of, rather than sorry for; something the son had enjoyed which was denied to him. The sting of the parable surely lies in the father's response to the brother; "You have been always with me and all which I have is yours". He grudged a mere meal to one who had been in need of husks, while he had been a secure member of his father's household and heir of his goods throughout the whole period. We can be blind to all the advantages we enjoy as members of God's household when viewing such a brother as was the prodigal son.

The teaching enshrined in the parables is of inestimable worth, being that of which Jesus considered that we, in common with all mankind, stood in need. There must be many facets which others have noticed in their reading of them and it would be helpful if they could air them through your correspondence columns.

Yours sincerely,

(Ralph Lovelock).

#### Film Review continued

Christ said of Jerusalem "You shall never see me until the time comes when you say 'Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord'" (Luke 13:35 NEB). This and similar passages it is argued cannot be applied to our present day situation with Israel largely irreligious and secular. It is as well to maintain an open mind upon such points. To sum up: this is a film well worth seeing, and quite suitable for use at Sunday night Christadelphian lectures.

FILM REVIEW - by D. Brassington

"HIS LAND" - Starring Cliff Barrows  
and Cliff Richard.

Following their presentation of Cliff Richard in a decidedly evangelistic film called "Two A Penny" the Billy Graham organisation have now produced a new film starring the famous British singer and Cliff Barrows, choirmaster for the Billy Graham Crusaders.

This is a remarkable film, well worth seeing for its photography alone. As might be expected from a Christian film, the "His Land" in question is, of course, the Holy Land, or the State of Israel as it is today.

I must be honest and say that I did not quite know what to expect when I went to see this film. I thought that it might be a sort of travelogue of Israel, in song; but it is much more. The film opens dramatically with Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, and immediately the tone is set.

With the theme of prophecy being fulfilled today in the return of the Jews to their Homeland, the two Cliffs set off to visit places associated almost exclusively with our Lord, and the colour photography is of an impressively high standard. The vocal talent of Cliff Richard is utilised on several occasions, but not to excess, while it is mainly Cliff Barrows who expounds the Biblical truths, as the two Cliffs wander round places of great interest to lovers of the Gospels.

Throughout, the prophetic scriptures are interpreted in their full, literal, meaning and one is left in no doubt at all where the film stands in relating its message of the imminent return of Christ.

From the Christadelphian viewpoint, the whole film is quite a revelation. Its theology is almost identical with current thinking in much of our Community, and, like our Community, it expects the return of Christ to an unrepentant Israel. Perhaps it should be here noted that another point of view exists:

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### Editorial continued

Reconciliation, implies a previous antagonism and although, "angry gods", was a realistic notion of the past, it is not an acceptable concept today. We regard the God of Love as being beyond anger and above having enemies and undoubtedly this is the position of the New Testament, reflecting the teaching of Christ. However, the New Testament does frequently use Old Testament ideas, as they were intelligible to those for whom it had been written - first Christians who were mainly Jews.

The basic concept of our relationship with God, nevertheless, is far deeper and more positive. We believe that if God requires us to love our enemies He must love them too. This is abundantly illustrated in the parable of The Prodigal Son.

It is possible that Paul and the writers of Hebrews do not use the Greek word for atonement, as they may wish to make a clear distinction between what God had accomplished in Christ and the O.T. ritual of the Day of Atonement, though of course we can find innumerable parallels. The difference between the two events is so great that the comparison is dangerous - an unwilling animal victim and one who throughout his life sought for some way to turn stiff-necked humanity to God.

The outcome seemed to be a failure but turned out to be the greatest victory in the history of man. It has changed the lives of thousands. How much has it changed us?

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