

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity
as it was in the beginning.*

VOL. 32. No. 2.

FEBRUARY, 1965

The Origin of Species

RECENTLY, Sir Julian Huxley, internationally famous biologist, predicted that a new order of thinking will doom all religions. Speaking before some 2,000 scientists who had met in Chicago to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Darwin's "Origin of Species," he said:

"There is no longer either need or room for supernatural beings capable of affecting the course of events in the evolutionary pattern of thought . . . The earth was not created; it evolved. So did all the animals and plants that inhabit it, including our human selves, mind and soul, as well as brain and body.

"Evolutionary man can no longer take refuge from his loneliness by creeping for shelter into the arms of a divinized father figure whom he has himself created, nor escape from the responsibility of making decisions by sheltering under the umbrella of divine authority, nor absolve himself from the hard task of meeting his problems and planning his future by relying on the will of an omniscient, but unfortunately inscrutable, providence . . . A religion of some sort is probably necessary, but it is not necessarily a good thing."

A closer look at the theory

The theory of organic evolution, so commonly held by many and taught in schools, colleges, and universities of our time, has been stated thus: "Out of nothing something came, and out of that something an amoeba came, and out of that amoeba a fish came, and out of that fish an amphibian came, and out of that amphibian a reptile came, and out of that reptile a bird came, and out of that bird a mammal came, and out of that mammal a man came."

On the other hand, the majestic language of Genesis tells of the origin of man thus: "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them . . . And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7).

To assume that one can believe what the Bible says about the origin of man and the evolutionary theory at the same time is to assume the impossible, for they directly contradict one another. If life originated on the earth from purely natural causes, and if man developed through the blind workings of force and chemical action, the Bible story of creation is not true. And if the Bible story of the creation and the fall of man is not true, the Bible is not true; for the rest of the Bible grows out of the Genesis story of the origin of man and his early history.

It is true that there are many good people who claim to believe the Bible and who hold to a modified version of the evolutionary theory, called theistic evolution. That is to say that in their reasoning God is not ruled out of the universe, as is the case with extreme organic evolution. According to theistic evolution, God originated the first life upon this earth and set in order the processes of gradual development from lower to higher forms which finally resulted in man. But this is a poor compromise with organic evolution, and very little more satisfactory. It would make an allegory out of the plainest and most literal Bible language, and it contradicts what is claimed in the Bible and proved in nature—that all species of living things have always existed essentially as they are and distinct from one another.

An unproved hypothesis

Although the theory of evolution is often taught with the finality of clearly demonstrated scientific fact, the theory actually does not qualify as true science. Many of the leading scientists admit that there is no positive proof of the evolutionary theory—that it is simply a working hypothesis, an unproved guess! For example, Prof. M. M. Caullery of the University of Paris, as long ago as 1916 said, "We must recognize that, since the time of Darwin, natural selection has remained a purely speculative idea, and that no-one has been able to show its efficacy in concrete, indisputable examples. As far as the theory of evolution is concerned, the results obtained up to this time have been rather disappointing." Many other eminent scientists, since that time, have admitted the same.

The theory breaks down

There are two fatal weaknesses in the theory of organic evolution. It does not account for the origin of life, and it does not prove transmutation, or change, from species to species. It has never been proved that life originated spontaneously, or that dead matter gave birth to life. All life depends on antecedent life. As an illustration of this principle, I read of a lecturer who appeared before a group of boys to explain that the first cell, from which all other forms evolved, was generated from scum caused by the pounding of prehistoric seas. One small boy upset his whole line of reasoning by inquiring about how all that water got there in the first place.

The oldest law of nature is that every seed produces after its kind (Gen. 1:11; 5:3). While there are variations and improvements within the species, there has never been such a thing as the crossing of the boundary lines between the species, or the producing of a new species from an older one. For instance, you might have a great variety of roses, or chickens, or horses. But roses never develop into orange trees, nor chickens into cows, nor horses into rabbits.

Dr. Austin H. Clark, of the Smithsonian Institute said, "So we see that the fossil record, the actual history of animal life upon the earth, bears us out in the assumption that at its very first appearance, animal life in its broader features was in essentially the same form as that in which we now know it." Again, he said, "Thus, so far as concerns the major groups of animals the creationists seem to have the better of the argument. There is not the slightest evidence that any one of the major groups arose from another." Dr. Etheridge, examiner of the British Museum, said, "In all this great museum, there is not a particle of evidence of the transmutation of species. This museum is full of proofs of the falsity of this theory."

Charles Darwin, the father of the theory of evolution, said "But it must be said today that, in spite of all the efforts of trained observers, not one change of a species into another is on record." Many other similar quotations could be given. Thus we see that the theory of evolution breaks down in its most vital points.

"Supporting evidence" will not stand up

Not a particle of dependable evidence to establish the theory of organic evolution has been found in any branch of science. So-called proofs of the theory are all found wanting. The Piltdown Man, supposed "missing link" between man and the ape, has been demonstrated by eminent scientists to be a deliberate fraud. Similar findings have come to light concerning other so-called "missing links." The "missing link" is still missing! Professor Haeckel, eminent embryologist, admitted that some of the drawings in his book, supposed to prove the theory of evolution, were forged. The arrangement of rocks by geologists to "prove" the theory, have been shown to be purely arbitrary. Fossil remains show the fixity of the species—that the same species that appear today have always existed as they are. When pressed, the paleontologist appeals to the biologist to prove his claims about evidence of evolution from the rocks. When the biologist is pressed, he appeals to the paleontologist! Thus we see a vicious circle leading nowhere.

Let us study and accept the overwhelming evidence of the truth and inspiration of the Bible and not have our faith destroyed by the unproved and unprovable guesses of men.

—"Gospel Tidings."

No man was ever so much deceived by another—as by himself.

Ignorance is always the pedestal of pride.

No matter what your lot in life may be, build something on it.

If we are careful where we step, those who follow us will not stumble so often.

Some people's will-power is weaker than a cigarette paper.

It would be easier to skin some people alive than to strip them of their habits.

The Lord's Feast

(An excerpt from "The Messiah's Ministry," by T. H. Milner)

"THE ordinance of the feast commonly called The Lord's Supper, requires a variety of remarks. The terms used regarding it are not the most accurate. The Greek word *dipnon*, rendered feast and supper, is more properly the former than the latter, because it denoted the chief meal alike of the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, and might as well be called breakfast or dinner as supper, as indeed it is found so used in Greek writers. It were more proper, therefore, to call it 'The Lord's Feast,' than 'The Lord's Supper.' Again, the word *artos* should rather be read 'loaf' than 'bread' in relation to the Lord's feast, both because of the common use of the Greek article by the sacred writers whereby they specify it as The Loaf in particular, and not as Bread generally, and, because, on the fact of its being one whole loaf, not a piece or pieces of one, the Apostle, in 1 Cor. 10:16, 17, argues for the union and communion of the Church as the body of Christ, saying 'Because there is one loaf, we, the many, are one body; for we all partake of that one loaf. It is not amiss to name here that it was unquestionably 'unleavened bread' that the Saviour used in instituting the ordinance, none else being lawful at the time of the passover. And though Jewish custom is of no weight in Christian practice, yet in this we have the practice of Christ, and the Apostle alluding to this use of unleavened bread, argues from it for the purity of the Church, saying, 'Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump without leaven; for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Let us therefore keep the feast not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the non-leavened qualities of sincerity and truth.' It is certainly correct to keep the feast with one whole unleavened loaf. Then as to the popular use of the word 'wine,' it is never employed by the sacred writers respecting this ordinance. 'The fruit of the vine'—expressly its product—is what the Saviour used, Matt. 26:26. Of the vine there are many species; our common currant is one, and the fruit of it therefore is the proper element for our use. Of course all this will be called 'non essential,' but what is not so called?

"The meaning of this ordinance was expressed by its Institutor in saying to His disciples: 'This loaf is my body which is broken for you. This cup is the new institution in my blood shed for many for the remission of sins,' Matt. 26:26, 27; 1 Cor. 11:24, 25. As the loaf indicates the body not only in itself considered but as broken for the participants, so the cup is the index not only of the blood of the institution but of the institution itself. As the body was broken for the many, so the blood was shed for the remission of their sins, and is the symbol of that institution through which there is forgiveness. It thus shows the institutional connection between the observers of the feast and its author. It denotes their joint participation in the blessings which flow through Christ. So asks the Apostle: 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' Certainly. Their joint participation shows their fellowship in the blood and body of Jesus, their passover sacrificed for them.

"But the institution is memorial. It is sacred to the memory of Jesus. 'This do,' said He, 'in remembrance of me.' There must therefore be a believing and grateful recollection of Him in the breast of the participants. Without this the communion between the Saviour and Saint is lost. And it is doubtless to foster this pleasing remembrance of the absent but beloved Lord on the part of those for whom He poured out His soul unto death, that such an ordinance was instituted. The Saviour knew the frailty of the human heart, and the perpetual influence of things seen and temporal to the withdrawing of its regards from Him, and thus in gracious consideration of the present pilgrimage position of His followers gave them the memorial feast.

"Ordinances that are fraught with blessing in the due observance become means of condemnation when improperly observed. Blessings then become curses. This ordinance is no exception. 'He,' says the Apostle, 'Who eats and drink unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.' This shows that a proper understanding of the ordinance is essential to its right and beneficial observance. Therefore the rule, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.' Self examination to the benefit accruing. Forgetful of this, many in the Church at Corinth were weak and sickly, and many slept. Their spiritual life declined, and in some cases terminated in death, 1 Cor. 11:23-30. Many well-disposed, but unwisely timid persons refrain on this account from obeying the Lord in this appointment, forgetting that a course of non-observance is quite as unworthy and disastrous as one of thoughtless observance; they fail to consider that there is but one proper and safe course, namely, that of doing the thing commanded according to the command.

"The ordinance being commemorative of the Lord's death, every occasion of its observance shows forth the Messiah's dec ease. It is a monumental testimony to the gospel: The observance of this ordinance every first day of the week since the death of Jesus is one of the best proofs possible of the verity of His evangel. And that it was intended to be so the Apostle intimates, in saying that the death of the Lord is shown forth till He come. The ordinance is thus a perpetual testimony to all of the reality of the accomplished gospel, and the certainty of the second advent of the Messiah. The partial or non-observance of it is therefore a refusal in part or in whole to bear the testimony intended."

Words

SECOND SECTION (concluded)

SINCE the authorised version of the Bible made available to ordinary men the reading of scripture in their own tongue, there have been many translations—of the New Testament especially—to our better understanding of what was written.

So that we should not blunder through being too imaginative in passing on what we believe we have to say, an examination of John's Gospel, first chapter, in as many translations as are available to us—18 in all—has been carried out, Bro. Ralph Limb assisting—to whom we owe thanks, the major portion of translations used being his.

It is not possible—nor is it necessary—to state when the two words involved in our enquiry were first used, but our readers will be interested to note that the word "became" in "And the Word became flesh"—as far as our knowledge goes was first used by Alexander Campbell, in his translation published in 1839. The word "so" was first used—as far as we can discover—by James Moffatt in 1913.

The last two of our 18 books came to hand in a rather roundabout way. The 17th by J. B. Phillips, said by some to be the best translation, came to me through an accidental remark by a young lady assistant in our office. She said "the New Testament I have is Phillips'." Not having seen the book, I at once asked if I could borrow it. Two or three days later my daughter, her husband (Ralph Limb) and their children came to see me, and they brought with them the 18th book, entitled, "The Authentic New Testament," a translation by Hugh J. Schronfield, a Jew. These two last books to be examined deal with the words considered here as do the more recent translations. They however do raise other questions which may be looked into later.

Towards the end of the first part of this section, in January issue of S.S., it was said concerning two translations of the same N.T. passage that they did not agree, and therefore could not both be true. The quotation from the A.V. reads: "The Word was made flesh." The new version of the same original text, reads "So the Word became flesh." That there is a difference between the two we think obvious and real.

Anything of which it can be said, it was "made," implies the use of power from outside of itself. When it is said of a thing that it "became" the implication is that, whatever the result, the power which produced it was from within itself. The saying, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow," teaches not only the lesson the Lord drew from the lilies, but also how lilies come to be. Unless I have learned wrongly, the lilies of the field of the Bible belong to the same species of plants as the anemones which, in their season, are to be seen in the florists' shop windows and, to our delight, on our tables: a joy to behold, because that is how they grow—is a purpose of their being. They grow from the first state of their existence, by constant development within themselves, from the corm until perfection (completion—the flowers) is reached. A parable indeed. So, the Word became flesh.

Of the proof of this, we have the clear testimony of Paul in Phil. 2:5-8. The quotation is from Rotherham's version as being more literal (translation, rather than interpretation) but is not easy to read: "Christ Jesus, who in the form of God subsisted, not a thing to be seized accounted the being equal to God, but himself emptied, taking a servant's form, coming to be in man's likeness, and in fashion being found as a man, humbled himself, being obedient so far as death; yea, death upon a cross."

So far as it is possible for us to say, every translation examined said, each in its own way, precisely the same thing: that no change in the state of the Word was imposed from without, but that each development from the state of being in the form of God to becoming human in form, was initiated and actuated throughout by the Word Himself.

One of the wonderful things the Bible does for us is to give brief glimpses of Divine activity in the process of time. We may even be taken back beyond time, as we know it, into eternity. John writes of a "Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." (Slain, we suppose, in thought and purpose). Later, when time as we know it had begun, we read concerning the first woman, that a child of hers, or of her seed, would wage war against the evil one. Then, hastening through the record, and through time, we read of an old man who had long lived in ardent anticipation of the coming of this promised child, and, suddenly—perhaps to his surprise—there was again activity in the heavenly realm. A messenger came to tell him that he was going to be a father. There were reasons why he should think that an impossibility—so he doubted. The messenger dealt with his doubts by making the old man dumb, perhaps as a reminder of what was required of him. He was given the name the child should bear, even before the child was on his way.

Six months later (again in time, due time) that prospective mother was visited by a young woman, in some haste and excitement because she also had a tale to tell, and strange enough. An angel, Gabriel, had called upon her, to say that she also would bear a son—and they talked, as women do at such times—Elizabeth saying to her cousin Mary, "Blessed is she that believed." Probably the most vital of all words that passed between them.

Thus were born, first John the Baptist, then He who was born in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord.

There are those not yet mentioned here of whom John writes in the first chapter. "He entered his own realm and his own would not receive him. But to all who did receive him, he gave the right to become children of God, not born of any human stock . . . but the offspring of God himself."

It has not been easy to put into words what we believe is revealed for our learning. If the pre-existence of Christ is to be accepted as a necessity to the right understanding of what is revealed, then everything we affirm must be in accordance therewith. Paul's words above quoted must be placed alongside those of John and Luke, and an attempt made to weld them into one clear statement. He who—at the beginning—without whom no living thing came into being—was He who became flesh, was born at Bethlehem, lived among men, who beheld something of His glory, who also saw Him die, and risen again—was throughout the same God in a continuity of existence. Thus stated, it appears impossible of belief, yet believe it we must. To understand it should be our aim and endeavour, with the words of John. "In like manner the Word became flesh" before us as an open gateway on our journey.

We have used a saying, "Consider the lilies how they grow," now see it in reverse, as we must—not from the corm to the flower, but the flower to the corm: "for the Word became flesh": from glory to the very extreme of humiliation, as Paul described it. In the lily it is the life force which works perfection. What was it that brought about the downward course in the life of the Word? Doubtless, His own obedience to the Divine purpose. When He sank to such insignificant dimensions as to become a child with the life force of a child; His actions were still initiated and actuated in obedience to the Divine purpose, for His life existed in continuity—which is what pre-existence entails.

W. BARKER.

want to consider and learn from their reaction to the encounter.

Felix. A series of Roman procurators had been governing the Jews for many years after the death of Herod the Great, the murderer of the infants at Bethlehem. It was a time of continual discontent, breaking out from time to time in rebellion. This condition gradually got worse and worse until finally in A.D. 70 Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed. However there was some truth in what Tertullus said about Felix (Acts 24:2 and 3) because he had cleared the countryside of robbers, and drove out the Egyptian mentioned by the chief captain (21:38). He came to power after his predecessor had so irritated the Jews that a deputation to Rome secured his banishment.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

FOR FEBRUARY 1965

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|--------------------|---------------------|
| 7—Jeremiah 37 | Acts 24:22 to 25:12 |
| 14—Genesis 39 | Acts 25:13-27 |
| 21—Genesis 40 | Acts 26 |
| 28—Genesis 41:1-16 | Acts 27:1-26 |

"NOT MANY MIGHTY"

1 Cor. 1:26

IN our readings this month we meet some of these men, and they, through the apostle Paul, meet the Saviour. We

He was a favourite with the emperor Claudius and had the support of the High Priest Jonathan, whose murder he afterwards instigated out of spite. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote of him, "In the practice of all kinds of lust and cruelty, he exercised the power of a king with the temper of a slave." If this is the verdict of a heathen, what a character indeed he must have been! We have also another side revealed in the fact of his wife being Drusilla, as he had obtained her by enticing her away from her husband. She was sister to Agrippa and Bernice. Apparently Drusilla was curious about the Christian religion, and this provided an opportunity for Paul to preach the gospel. He did so in such forcible terms that "Felix trembled." This might have been the beginning of wisdom, but too long had the world, the flesh and the devil had dominion in that heart.

We sadly record that consideration given to Paul seems also to have been a matter of greed rather than any real feeling for the prisoner or for justice. Like his predecessor, his cruel and unscrupulous rule caught up with him and he left Paul in bonds in an effort to conciliate the Jews, whose complaints brought about his removal from his position. Those in high position have sacrifices to make if they are to have salvation—nothing less than a complete humiliation, and repentance is needed. "The convenient season" never came. (24:25).

Festus. The long delay in dealing with Paul's case, was inexcusable. It must have been relieved by the visitation and company of his friends, and at least he was safe from his Jewish enemies, but the appointment of another procurator gave opportunity for his enemies to recommence their efforts, and renew their plots against his life. What we know of Festus inclines us to esteem him a better man than Felix. He refused to be stampeded into delivering Paul to the judgment of the Jews, and insisted that a man must have opportunity to defend himself and have his accusers face to face (25:4 and 5:16). However he did make a concession by asking Paul to go up to Jerusalem and as Paul knew what this would mean, he was compelled to insist on Cæsar's judgment. This Festus could not refuse.

It was indeed a weakness on Festus's part to make the conciliatory offer for he knew perfectly well that Paul had done nothing worthy of punishment. He may not have known of the plot, and did in fact say "be judged of these things before me." Further he did apparently feel baffled by the accusations. The courtesy call of Agrippa and Bernice gave opportunity for discovering what was really the cause of the trouble. Eventually he got no further help in

preparing the case to set before Cæsar, for the conclusion of Agrippa was simply that Paul could have been acquitted. We are interested in the reaction of Festus, a cultured heathen, to Paul's story and setting forth of Jesus. It was foolishness to him! He thought Paul had been studying overmuch and was therefore "imagining things." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit" (1 Cor. 2:14). Culture, authority, judicial wisdom put an impenetrable barrier between this man and the gospel.

Agrippa. This man was the last ruler of the house of Herod, and was entitled "King of Chalcis"; to him was committed by the Roman government the management of the Temple, care of the priestly robes, and appointment of the High Priest—this as conciliation to the Jews on account of his being a Jew. He had been acquainted from his youth with the Jewish law and customs, and something of this must have been known to Paul, so that he could address him as one believing in the prophets. History gives him an unsavoury character, in some respects like most of the family. We may be sure that both Felix and Agrippa were well acquainted with the main points of the Christian Way (24:22; 26:3 and 26), but this may indeed have been their first close meeting with it in a personal way. Alas, this opportunity was lost upon them in spite of the obvious innocence and sincerity of the preacher. In the case of Festus, he may have had less acquaintance with religion of any sort but he knew an innocent and earnest man was being unjustly accused.

"The god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving" (2 Cor. 4:4). Faithful, truthful and forcible words made one "mighty" one tremble, one thinks them foolish and another treats the speaker with scorn. But we wonder—did any one of them forget the man, the message or the Way?

R. B. SCOTT.

A PRAYER

Be thou, O Lord, my guiding star
Throughout life's long dark night.
Lead onward to the coming day
Of everlasting light.

Dark is the road, the clouds hang low
My way I cannot see;
But every step, dear Lord, you know;
O walk each step with me.

With my hand firmly held in thine
Thy strength to lean upon,
I shall not stumble, Saviour mine,
But through the night go on.

Companion of my hope and fear,
Be Thou my constant friend,
Until the day dawn, bright and clear
And I reach Journey's End.

F. M. Blundell,



(Conducted by
A. E. Winstanley,
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Kent.)

Talking to Teenagers . . .

"WHEN I CONSIDER . . ."

DAVID said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him . . . ?" (Psalm 8:3-4).

No wonder David was amazed. We know much more about the universe than he did, and ever-increasing knowledge brings ever-growing amazement.

Scientists now fire rockets at the moon and we tend to forget that the moon is over a quarter of a million miles away. To illustrate: if you could go there by jet, travelling at the speed of sound (760 m.p.h.), it would take you 13 days of non-stop travel to get there. If after that you just "kept going" to the sun (of course you'd never reach it, but assuming you could) that journey would mean you would have to travel non-stop night and day for nearly 14 years (at the speed of sound) before you arrived!

And yet this distance (from earth to sun) is the merest fraction when compared with our distance from other stars.

You see, our solar system is just a tiny speck in a vast star system which is believed to contain 100,000 million stars. The next nearest star (Alpha Centauri) is 25 million million miles away. If, on your imaginary journey you kept going after reaching the sun, it would take you altogether 3 million, 800,000 years to reach Alpha Centauri. And you would still be in our own galaxy—the system of which our own solar system is just a tiny part.

Talk about immensity! Listen: from Alpha Centauri you would need to travel for another 9,000 million years to reach the end of our galaxy, at its nearest point. And modern astronomers claim that there are another 100 million such galaxies in the sphere of space explorable by many huge modern telescopes.

The Glory of God

It is not surprising that the psalmist also said, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handywork" (Psalm 19:1). Here are immensity, vastness, distances and measurements beyond the grasp of the human mind. That is why astronomers have to measure astronomical distances in light-years. A light-year is the

distance a particle of light travels in one year, i.e., 186,300 miles per second for a year, or about six million million miles.

No wonder the Bible speaks of God as the "Almighty," that is to say the omnipotent or all-powerful one. The universe speaks of his glory—testifies of the existence of One who has unlimited power at his disposal.

"It just happened!"

Sometimes we have put the question to those who deny the existence of God: "How do you explain the universe?" And they have given the answer, "It just happened." Mind you, the answer is sometimes clothed in big words and high-sounding phrases. But it amounts to the same thing, this: once there existed nothing and nobody; then the universe came into being, and nothing—and nobody—was responsible! Just like that! The beliefs of unbelief require a remarkable degree of credulity, and one feels tempted to say that a person who can believe that can believe anything, and ought not to scoff at "unreasonable" Christian belief.

Isn't it much more reasonable to accept that before the universe came into being there must have been a self-existent Being who acted in creation? Or, "In the beginning **GOD . . .**" Then, "In the beginning God **CREATED . . .**"

The wonder of Christianity is this: that the God whose glory is seen in the wonders of the heavens has revealed himself even more clearly in a Person, through whom the Creator, seemingly distant and mighty, can be our Father, loving, concerned, intimate and near. John said of Jesus: "And we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father" (John 1:14). And to his faithful ones it is given "to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

"What is man . . . ?"

Amazed before the immensity of the universe David asked, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?"

The immensity of the universe might tempt one to think that man is an unimportant little creature crawling about on a piece of cosmic dust in limitless space. Why should the great and mighty God be concerned about us?

For many reasons. Here's just one. Man is unlike every other creation of God in this, that God created him "in his (God's) own image" (Genesis 1:27). Made in God's image—what does this mean? That man was made to be like God—and to be God's friend, to share God's life. Obviously something went wrong somewhere—for man as we know him is often a very ungodly being. The Bible tells us what went wrong. Man sinned. The image was marred but the grace of God provided a remedy. Jesus came to put "things right. To accept Him as Saviour and Lord is to say we are willing for Him to make us what man was meant to be—such as bear the divine image. And that is why He gives us "of His Spirit." What He wants for us—and can do for us if we are willing to work with Him—is well expressed in a verse:—"As some rare perfume in a vase of clay Pervades it with a fragrance not its own;

So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems
around it thrown."

Paul put it like this: "Be ye therefore imitators of God. . . ." Let us try—always, and with God's spiritual help—to do that; to let HIS image brightly shine. A. E. WINSTANLEY.

CORRESPONDENCE

WHITHER NOW?

A few brethren have already expressed their thoughts on the very grave situation that exists in this country amongst the churches and little notice seems to have been taken—perhaps it is true therefore, as has been suggested, that heads are being buried in the sand and a pretence being made that "everything in the garden is lovely."

In last month's issue of the "S.S." Brother Philip Partington referred to the great help we are receiving from the brethren from the U.S.A. and I am sure we appreciate help from any quarter and are great admirers of American generosity and zeal. Many in this country have benefited from American liberality, and in recent years it has been good to see a few new congregations springing into existence as a direct result of the activities of our American brethren.

At the same time, however, few can but be appalled at the enormity of the cost to the brotherhood in Britain of the establishment of these congregations. One wonders if it has been profitable—a few new congregations at the cost of dividing asunder the existing brotherhood, causing dissention amongst certain congregations and separating many brethren.

How can it all be justified? This must undoubtedly be by far the greatest setback the church in this country has ever suffered and it is difficult to envisage any recovery. Therefore one often finds oneself asking the question as to whether the churches in this country have been helped, or catastrophically hindered, by our American brethren. Their intentions have doubtless been good and one can't help thinking that they have been ill-advised by some British brethren who, for reasons best known to themselves, have seemed swift to precipitate this present sad situation.

Surely, however, the saddest feature of all is that apparently it need never have been. Even now one still does not know why the practice of the use of individual containers at the Lord's supper was ever introduced into Great Britain and there seems a lamentable lack of forthrightness on the subject. Was it because, after centuries, we have suddenly become afraid of microbes, or have we suddenly acquired huge congregations or are we carrying out the prescribed policy of our financiers in U.S.A.?

Why was the practice introduced here? To date I have heard no straightforward answer. To say each congregation is autonomous is not an answer to this particular question. And so the church is in disunity over a practice of which the world knew nothing prior to 1894—surely "our plea" of being "silent where the Bible is silent" must have a hollow ring to it now.

"Anti-American" is usually the tag given to anyone who deprecates the events of the last few years amongst the churches. I am in no way anti-American and have the very highest regard for many Americans I know, but I am bound to say, with great respect and sincerity, that I think they have acted unwisely in the matter under discussion, and if they truly wish to help the brethren in this country they should seriously review the situation and graciously give way on this matter of personal preference.

The position is not improving and is unlikely to unless something is done by someone. I am told that the practice of the use of individual containers at the Lord's table is a personal preference by the users thereof and not a matter of faith, and that one cup would be equally acceptable. If this is so, brethren, then surely we ought not to be divided on such an issue and the remedy should be implemented this very hour. Surely, brethren, if we have the interest of the church at heart we will joyfully set aside any personal preference in the cause of church unity and be speedily reconciled to our brother. We hear many prayers for unity but surely the remedy is in our own hands.

This is the situation as I see it and if I have said something which constitutes a misrepresentation of the position I sin-

cerely hope some brother will put the record straight. I also ask that a spokesman for the users of individual containers will tell me if the practice is indeed only a personal preference and if so what obstacles prevent the setting aside of this preference in the cause of unity and in the restoration of the churches in this country to an active, strong and united force.

JAMES R. GARDINER,

88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington,
East Lothian.

Church of Christ,
32 Church Street,
Woodstock.

Dear Bro. Melling,—On behalf of the above congregation I wish to bring to your notice and all connected with the "S.S." that for more than 30 years, many of the members have been subscribers to same, which made it thus both a privilege and a blessing to have also consistently forwarded news reports to it.

In this manner we have received spiritual strength and learnt to love each other as brethren, knowing that we were one and all "contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints," in other words N.T. pattern. Then owing to the congregation deciding to have a "Bulletin" news reports were no longer forwarded on their behalf, but it was hoped and anticipated that excerpts from our "Bulletin" would be used instead, and we were glad to note that this was executed as space in your paper was available, for which we are thankful.

But when receiving a copy of the November issue of the "S.S." we as a congregation were more than surprised when it was brought to our notice that a quotation published in your news column, and sent in by a Bro. George Ntungwe representing the church of Christ at Nyanga, after giving a very fine testimony to the late Ephraim Makhoti, states "Through new teachings practised at the Woodstock assembly, we withdrew from them in 1958." For all the years as a church of Christ, our teachings have been none other than that of the N.T. pattern.

But by this statement being publicly made the church as a whole (within which are fine brethren with years of good and faithful standing) has been innocently and unjustly misrepresented by the brethren concerned and responsible for the quotation referred to in your news column. I have been asked to write, that on behalf of the congregation, statements such as this or at any time should have first been clarified before publication of same. More so in view of the fact that the "S.S." passes through congregations of those in Christ throughout the U.K., Rhodesias, and

Republic of South Africa, this places us as a congregation in a very unfair position to all who have learnt to know us.

However, we would plead with you that these brethren make a public apology through your news columns, or point out in which manner we have introduced what they call "new teachings."

Further we ask you in a spirit of Christian love on behalf of the Church of Christ at Woodstock to publish this letter, since our character and purpose have been defamed. Hoping it shall be rectified.

T. W. HARTLE.

[Editor's note: If the statement in Bro. Ntungwe's letter was untrue, we unreservedly apologise to Bro. Hartle and to the whole church at Woodstock for the injury and injustice done to them. The fault is entirely ours for publishing the report without verifying the facts. We are writing Bro. Ntungwe to try to clarify the true position.]

INFANT BAPTISM SENSE IS DAWNING AND THE REVOLT GROWS

From time to time extracts and letters from newspapers have been reprinted in the "S.S." revealing a growing realisation of the futile and meaningless rite of infant sprinkling. It is remarkable that this rejection is arising from within the religious denominations practising it. We print further extracts below:—

Sir,—So the "Church Times" finds it difficult to justify infant baptism as indiscriminately administered in our land today. As one who has recently had to leave the Methodist ministry and is now debarred from preaching in Methodist churches for teaching active disbelief in the practice. I find this highly interesting, especially because of the present Anglican-Methodist proposals for uniting the two Churches.

Almost the only surviving argument for the retention of this unscriptural rite amongst Methodists is that it is a testimony to the universal love of God (and therefore, presumably, as fitting for the children of materialists, agnostics, humanists, etc., as for the children of believers). For Heaven's sake let us inside the churches "come clean" in this whole matter and acknowledge that we are at present guilty of offering something as Christian baptism that is not baptism at all, and that Christian baptism belongs only to those who have come to personal faith in Christ.

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES ESTENSON.

35 Lambeth Road,
Middlesbrough.

S.S. JT

He says baptism isn't for babies

THE bishops are bothered. They fear that this weekend more parsons will support the vicars who have begun refusing to baptise babies.

Congregations shrink. Yet baptism is still sought by parents.

Nearly half-a-million babies have been baptised this year. Mothers who have never been inside their parish church badger the vicar to have baby baptised.

Why are clergymen in such dioceses as Ely, Rochester, and Chelmsford turning the babies away?

The answer comes well from a benign, blue-eyed parson who has been in many a church row, and is enjoying this one.

The Rev. Christopher Wansey, vicar of Roydon, Essex. A Proctor in Convocation, much liked, unflagging in pastoral zeal.

Mr. Wansey baptised a baby last October. That was the finish. Now he will name and bless a baby, but baptism, with him, is strictly for adults.

"It is absurd," he says, "to give the Sacrament to a baby. The Revised Catechism commended by the Convocations of Canterbury and York requires that persons to be baptised "should turn from sin, believe the Christian faith, and give themselves to Christ." That means baptism for adults, not babies."

Sympathy

Men like Wansey say today that for hundreds of years the Church of England has been doing things the wrong way round.

Baptism should come after a declaration of penitence and faith. Eagerly, these men point out that "in the New Testament, adult baptism is the norm."

This is central in the thinking of the ban-the-baby parson.

Many clergy sympathised with Christopher Wansey in his earlier refusal to baptise babies where the parents were indifferent to the Church and wanted mainly an excuse for a party.

But now many people think he has gone too far. Said the Rev. Henry Cooper, Master of the Royal Foundation of St. Katherine in Ratcliffe and a great fellow for Church unity: "It is one thing to insist on a Christian upbringing for a baby who is brought to church and quite another to say 'No babies!'"

"In baptism a child is received into Christ's flock. It is the gateway to all the other sacraments."

"He won't"

Last word from a young mother, Mrs. Veronica Scott, of Bethnal Green, London.

She has boys aged four and two and is expecting another baby. "I thought a lot of my boys' baptism. I have gone to church regularly since I took Arthur, the elder.

"If our vicar refused to baptise our next he would get a proper telling off. But I know he won't."—"Daily Express," December, 1964.

END BAPTISM OF BABIES —ANGLICANS

A NUMBER of Anglicans at a conference of ministers and clergy of different denominations have voted in favour of abandoning baptism of babies.

The decision was reached after deliberations by a commission on indiscriminate baptism at the Parish and People Conference held in private at Swanwick, Derbyshire.

The Rev. Christopher Wansey, Vicar of Roydon, Essex, who was at the conference, said only six Anglican votes were cast in favour of baptising infants.

There were 21 for discriminate baptism of infants, he said, and 23 for discontinuance of the practice.—"Lancs Evening Post."

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Wigan: Albert Street.—From October 5th to 18th, 1964, the church held a short gospel mission, the preacher being Bro. David Dougall, of Scotland. We had meetings on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings, and the usual meetings on the Lord's Days. An additional support to some gospel messages was the use of projector and slides. We were much encouraged by stirring messages and support at week-end meetings, and feel that the seed that was sown will bring forth fruit in the future. Our best thanks are given to all members of the district churches and to Bro. Dougall and the churches who support him in Scotland for his services in the cause of the Master.

W. Smith.

[We regret very much the delay in publishing this report. The fault is the editor's in having misplaced it.—Ed.]

Slamannan District.—The New Year social gathering was held in the Blackridge church meeting-house on January 1st, 1965, under the presidency of Bro. David Dougall. There was a large attendance and our thanks are due to the Wallacestone brethren, who were responsible for the catering arrangements and to the Blackridge brethren for the use of their meeting-place and the assistance given in the work entailed in catering for such a large gathering.

Bro. Dougall welcomed all present and exhorted all to take as their motto for the New Year the text "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy heart." Bro. David urged us all to do now, to

put our backs into it, to love God with all our heart and work to save others by preaching and living God's word.

Bro. William Hunter, Motherwell, our first speaker, gave us a fine address based on Malachi Ch. 1, and Romans Ch. 12 Vs. 1 and 2, exhorting us all to use wisely the liberty that is ours in Christ Jesus and to devote ourselves to our salvation. We should sacrifice all for the cause of Christ as Christ sacrificed all for us, and realise that God expects the best from us. Bro. Paul Jones, Birmingham, our other speaker, spoke on the theme contained in 1 Cor. 9:16—"Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel"

Bro. Jones reminded us all that Christ commanded us to preach the gospel, as preaching the gospel is the means given to save men, and that it is our privilege to preach the gospel.

He also exhorted that all practice what they preach, as practice purifies.

We were favoured with choir pieces from the Wallacestone brethren and a combined district choir, also male voice pieces, solos, duets and a mixed quartette by members of the Wallacestone, Slamannan, Motherwell, Dalmellington and Dennyloanhead churches, and a recitation from our Bro. Duncan Stewart. All were much appreciated.

We look forward to a happy and prosperous year in the work of the Lord.

H. Davidson.

CAMEROONS EVANGELISATION FUND

Again it gives me great pleasure to give the latest information concerning the above fund. The response to the gospel paper "As The Oracles of God" published under great difficulties by Bro. Elangwe has continued to be rather disappointing and not many brethren have yet taken out subscriptions for the magazine. The reaction has been more favourable in Australia and several brethren from that country have decided to give their support by sending their year's subscription. Copies for the whole year cost only 6/- and as the circulation widens the price may even decrease.

The printing press fund, however, has been doing very well and now stands at £57 4s. A very substantial gift was received from the church at Wallacestone. An anonymous gift was received from a brother in the Kirkby-in-Ashfield area, and another contribution from a brother locally. Our grateful thanks to you all, brethren, and to all those expressing an interest in the work.

The fund has still a long way to go and we hope and pray that financial aid will continue towards this good cause.

Donations large or small to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

OBITUARY

(Hamilton Street) Blackburn. — Once again the church has suffered the loss by bereavement of a brother in the Lord, in the person of Slater Wilson, at the age of 80 years. He was the last of the family of our late Bro. John Wilson and as was said at the service for our departed brother, it will be hard to think of Hamilton Street without a Bro. Wilson. For about 60 years, Bro. Slater had devoted his life to his Lord and church. He was always prepared to champion, and when necessary, defend the faith. It can be truly said of him, "He fought a good fight, that he kept the faith." With his family we "sorrow, but not as those without hope," and wait in expectation for that day when we shall meet again. J.P.

Bro Slater Wilson

The death of Bro. Slater Wilson so soon after his brother Harry was sad, but not surprising, as he was in great physical distress at Harry's funeral. For some years he had been failing, and found movement exacting.

His death closes a long period of Wilson fellowship in Blackburn church, and also of ministry. His father, John Wilson, was a commanding figure for a long life time, a man of conviction and sound in the faith. Bro. Slater had a good presence, was able, and served the church well and with dignity for many years.

He was, in a different way, a worthy successor to his father in the ministry of the church.

I recall how impressed a sister was at the able and dignified way he conducted the funeral service of Sister T. E. Entwistle, so many years ago.

A. L. FRITH.

Kirkby-in-Ashfield (Beulah Road). — We deeply regret to record the passing of our aged Sister Taylor, on December 29th, 1964, at the age of 83. She was immersed into Christ in October 1945 and, until circumstances prevented her, was a faithful attender. Of pleasant and cheerful disposition, our sister was well liked by all. We extend the deepest sympathy to those near and dear to her. To her daughter, Sis. Winnie Longden, and son-in-law, Bro. Fred Longden, and the family, we commend the love of God in this time of sorrow. The funeral took place on Friday, January 1st. Bro. Allen Murray conducting the services in the meeting-room and at the interment.

T. Woodhouse.

COMING EVENTS

Birmingham: Summer Lane.—1965 August Bank Holiday. This holiday will take place at the end of August this year, holiday Monday being on the 30th August. This coincides with the date when the church at Summer Lane, Birmingham celebrates her anniversary. As this will be the centenary of the commencement of the church in this district, it is hoped to make the meeting on Saturday, 28th August, one that will be remembered for many years. Book this date, brethren, keep the weekend free, and we will give you an invitation to a mountain-top experience.

P.J.

Blackburn: Hamilton Street.—We invite brethren and friends to a series of meetings to be held during the month of February, 1965 (D.V.), each Saturday, the 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th; to commence at 7 p.m. The speaker will be Bro. T. Kemp, Hindley.

Services on Lord's Days to commence at 6 p.m. February 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th. Speaker, Bro. W. Clarke, Hindley.

We would appreciate your presence and your prayers.

J.P.

◆

 THANKS

 TUNBRIDGE WELLS BUILDING
 FUND APPEAL

We have received an anonymous gift of £10, postmark Haddington, East Lothian, November 19th, by a Christian who states simply "Yours in Christ." We thank this fellow-disciple sincerely, and thank God for "the love of the brethren." To date we still need £70 to pay the two accounts outstanding.—A. E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

SPRING CONFERENCE

17th April, 1965

Meeting Room: Hamilton Street, Blackburn, Lancs. Business session 2 to 3 p.m.

Two periods of study in the background of John 17 will be introduced by three fifteen-minute addresses. It is not intended, today, to go into the pros and cons of suggested methods to achieve unity in a divided Christendom, but rather to learn from the Scriptures the nature and objective of the oneness for which Jesus prayed.

Subject Jesus said:

The WORD. "They have kept thy WORD."

The NAME. "I have made known thy NAME."

The GLORY. "The GLORY—I have given to them."

3 to 5 p.m.

The UNITY. "that they all may be ONE as we are."

The BELIEF. "so that the world may BELIEVE."

The CONFESSION. "so that the world may ACKNOWLEDGE."

6.30 to 8.30 p.m.

TEA will be served in the meeting-room, 5 to 6.30.

HOSPITALITY enquiries to the church secretary, James Pritt, 31 Goldhey Street, Blackburn, Lancs.

PEN PALS WANTED

I have had requests for pen pals from two overseas brothers, both faithful gospel preachers. One a Nyanja brother in Malawi and the other a brother in America. Will any willing to correspond with them please write me? A. E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly. Prices: Home, one copy for one year, 12/-; two copies 20/6; three copies 28/6 post free. Canada and U.S.A.: one copy, one dollar 80 cents. All orders and payments to the 'S.S.' Agent and Treasurer: PAUL JONES, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22B. Tel. Birchfield 5559.

All correspondence, including articles, news items, coming events, etc., to be sent, before the 10th of the month to the Editor, C. MELLING, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, Lancs. Payments to PAUL JONES, address as above.

NOTICES. Scale of charges: 3/- for first 3 lines or less; 8d. each subsequent line. Repeats (if notified when sending copy) half original charge. Payments to PAUL JONES, address as above.

EVANGELIST FUND: Contributions to R. McDONALD, who is also Secretary of Conference Committee, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, York.

NYASALAND Mission: Contributions to W. STEELE, 31 Niddrie Road, Portobello, Edinburgh, Mid Lothian.

Hymn Book Agent and Treasurer: FRED HARDY, 73a Bridge Street, Morley, Leeds, Yorkshire. Tel. Morley 255.