





## THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST 18

## MEETING WITH ABIGAIL

By MICHAEL J. LAURENCE

DAVID's clemency displeased his followers, but he forbade them to touch or harm the King in any way.

When Saul left the cave, David followed him at a distance, then caught him by name and when he turned round in surprise and looked back, David, observing the courtesy due to the King, bowed down before him and told him he ought not to listen to the calumnies and slanders he heard about those who were his friends, but should judge each man by his actions, saying, "words in deed, in their own nature, may be either true or false, but men's actions expose their intentions nakedly to our views".

He then showed Saul the piece of cloth he had cut off from his cloak and explained how he had cut it in his power, saying, "I, for certain, have abstained from taking a just revenge upon thee, yet art thou not ashamed to prosecute men with unjust hatred".

Joseph goes on to say that Saul, amazed at the moderate treatment he had received from him whom he considered his inveterate enemy, was ashamed of what he was doing and groaned in great anguish and grief.

## DAVID GROANED

David groaned too, but Saul told him he had the greater opportunity for groaning. "He said," "thou hast been the author of good to me, as I have been the author of calamity to thee, and thou hast demonstrated this day that thou possesseth the righteousness of the ancients who have said that men ought to save their enemies, though they caught them in a desert place." The King went on to say that he was certain after the way David had behaved when he was in his power and could so easily have killed him, that he would be the King of Israel and begged him not to take revenge on his

family because of the evil he had done, but to intercede with God so that he might die.

David promised in the Name of the Lord that he would do as Saul desired of him and Saul left him, cursing him, and returned to his palace, but David was not at all worried that in his life he would no longer be in the favour, went with his men even further to the wilderness of Engedi.

It was about this time that Samuel the Prophet died and all Israel gathered together to be present at his burial, for every man felt he had lost a personal friend.

After Samuel's death, David and his men went down into the wilderness of Parah where Hagar and Ishmael had wandered hungrily for years.

While David had been living in the cave, he had lived tributes on some of the big block-owners in return for protecting their flocks. One of the richest was a man named Nabal who lived in the pasture lands of Maon on the southern side of Mount Carmel.

David, thinking him to be worthy, as Joseph says, "charged his associates to keep peace with him, and to do them no harm, nor because they were in the wilderness, and so could not be easily discovered, but to send gifts to another man at least above all other motives, and to show upon the touching of what he thought to be a horrible crime, and contrary to the rights of justice."

At shearing time, David sent his men to Nabal, who owned three thousand sheep and one thousand goats, bidding them to give him a gift. He was angry for such a gift as he could give since his shepherds had been able to assure him while under David's protection.

When they were come, they brought him gifts for himself and his companions, assured Nabal would never regret anything he gave to David, but Nabal who had been drinking, rudely demanding to know "who was David?" and when told, "the messenger of the Lord," cried out contemptuously, "Now is the time that I might have killed him and made a figure and leave their matters."

## AGAINST NABAL

When David heard how his message had been received, he immediately took four hundred men, gave two hundred to guard the camp, and set out against Nabal, declaring vengeance by nightfall, he and his entire house and all his possessions, and he utterly destroyed them.

In the meantime, realizing how he had been deceived, Nabal's wife, Abigail, sought out David and gave him assistance and told him how, despite their own hatred, she and her husband's men had protected Nabal's entire flock from harm and injury.

Without hesitation, Abigail ordered her slaves to be saddled and to take tribute her husband should have paid as well as her own.

many extra gifts, set out without consulting him, to intercede with David before he reached the household.

As she descended a hill, she met Nabal and his four hundred men, and, cursing him, and returned to his palace, but David was not at all worried that in his life he would no longer be in the favour, went with his men even further to the wilderness of Engedi.

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interference. Nabal had a stroke and died before David's return.

When David learned of Nabal's death, he first gave thanks to God that he had not in anger slain his own revenge but had been able to bring about his death and then sent messengers to Abigail asking her to come to him and his wife.

Although she at first protested she was unworthy of so great an honour, Abigail yet made haste to set out on her as accompanied by her five female servants, went with David's messengers and became his wife.

David had seven other wives besides Michal, Saul's daughter, who had been taken from him by her father and given to Phalti the son of Achish, though she was later restored to him.

His other wives were: (1) Ahinoam, a native of Zereel whom he married during his wanderings; (2) Abigail, Nabal's widow; (3) Michal, Saul's daughter; and (4) Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah the Hittite.

Although Bathsheba's first child died, she had four other sons, Shimea, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon.

In all, David had thirteen sons, six of whom were born at the same time in Hebron after he became King of Judah; the other seven were born in Jerusalem.

## ORDINATION OF WOMEN

## APPROVED IN SCOTLAND

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Edinburgh, June 3  
The Church of Scotland, by a large majority in its General Assembly, voted last month to admit women to the ministry.

We have already made mention of the Church of Scotland today," said the Moderator, the Rev. David Longmuir, following the vote on May 22.

The action concluded a campaign extending back for almost 20 years. It was first proposed by a Presbyterian who later married a Church of Scotland minister, and was successfully petitioned the Assembly for ordination. Her action.

For some months after the vote, the Church of Scotland, by a large majority in its General Assembly, voted last month to admit women to the ministry.

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Geneva, June 3  
The most significant progress made in the last six months in collaboration of Council of Churches and various Roman Catholic bishops is in the field of international development, justice and peace.

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## DR Z. K. MATTHEWS' DEATH

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE  
New York, May 31  
Dr. Zachariah K. Matthews, Ambassador from Botswana to the United States and a former secretary for the W.C.C. Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugees and Disaster, died in Washington on May 11.

He was 66.  
Dr. Matthews was an Anglican who had been a lawyer in South Africa before coming to the W.C.C. in 1962.

As the first Africa secretary of the department, he worked in South Africa, undertook a fact-finding mission in Africa in 1964 to determine priorities for the churches there.

The result was the Ecumenical Programme for Emergency Action in Africa.

Dr. Matthews was to have spoken at the Fourth Assembly at Uppsala in July on "The Churches and Human Need".

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## BOOK REVIEWS

## A THEOLOGICAL CONFLICT

A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE. Charles Davis. Hodder and Stoughton. Pp. 241. 54.60.

CHARLES DAVIS, a leading Roman Catholic theologian, left the priesthood and the Church in December, 1966. The reasons he gave included the following:

"I have come to see that the Church as it exists and works at present is an obstacle to the progress of the committed Christians I know and admire. It is not the source of the values they cherish and promote..."

"(In the official Church) there is concern for authority as the expense of truth, and I am constantly saddened by instances of the damage done to persons by workings of an impersonal and unfeeling system."

He has now published a book which explores more fully the conflicts which led to his decision.

He emerges from the book as he did from the initial burst of publicity that surrounded his defection: clear-headed, careful, worldly enough to know the pitfalls of publicity and to handle the Press with clarity and sincerity, yet a man whose personal integrity and innocence are sufficient to silence cheap jibes of *cherchez le femme*.

For Davis certainly did not leave the Church simply in order to get married.

He examines his motive as sincerely as a man can. He agrees that the prospect of marriage was an aspect of the freedom which he sought. But it was not part of any of a much more complex problem, a genuine crisis of conscience. It is not possible to read his book and doubt that the struggle which preceded his decision was concerned with far deeper issues than that of celibacy.

It was the struggle of a man who found himself trapped in every direction.

He had committed himself to the institution which he believed would offer the best environment for all that he wanted to do in life: to learn truth, to serve humanity, to be uncorrupted.

Instead, he found himself in a topsy-turvy world where truthfulness and innocence were sacrificed in order to maintain a power structure.

Practising Catholics who themselves held no definite beliefs were amazed that Davis should get out: the important thing was to maintain the institution.

"Sometimes I feel I should ask my too friendly critics to request the Church authorities that I should still be admitted to the sacraments with Roman Catholics while retaining my present position, because I apparently have no greater disbelief than many practising members."

He found the Church simply

not credible as the bearer of the Word, because it was no longer sensitive to truth. "Words were used as a means of evasion, but as a means of preserving authority without regard for truth. Words were manipulated as a means of power."

In his discussion of his problems with Cardinal Heenan, "the Pope's representative" there was lacking. Truth understood in any other way than as the consistent avoidance of any questions or discussions that disturbed the status quo, was regarded as simply irrelevant."

The Church has a corrupting influence upon its members. People are either "open" or "closed."

"Open people are those who are open to all reality. They are prepared to go beyond themselves. They are open to all questions, including ultimate questions."

BUT the conditions of Church membership make it impossible to be declared belief in God or Christ or the Church is not necessarily the sign of an untroubled faith. Prejudices, clinging to the familiar, and similar mental attitudes easily be confused with faith.

But faith demands openness. The extent to which a person is closed to truth or lacking in concern for truth is the measure in which his faith has suffered corruption."

The Church is directly responsible for this corruption, and this may be done by the Church by its empty boast, or worse.

"To damage or destroy persons in the way of faith in God is an ugly perversion."

Humanity not served, believers are corrupted, truth is blinded. When Pope Paul's preaching statement on birth control in October, 1968 forced this realisation on Davis, there was only one thing he could do: he was known to it.

But the irony of it is, that it was not the Church which he had defected from, it was a corruption, it is, in a way, a corruption, it is the Roman Catholic Church.

Any institution which itself takes a hard line, an uncompromising attitude on a definite position, is a breeding-ground of prophets, no matter what their ultimate creed.

Many an Anglican in the same position has reason to envy Davis (and we have recently seen some local examples of this). It is very difficult for an Anglican to rebel, what he is rebelling against.

It must be frustrating to agonise over the way out of the impasse and limiting outlook of both the

parish churches and the hierarchy, only to be put on the head by that same hierarchy and similarly deflected again. *O vis media via mori!*

This is an incomplete work, but it is interesting to see how evolution is still incomplete.

He leaves himself open to the suggestion that he would be happier in Protestantism, because he does not tackle the pressing problems of theological re-definition that are causing the same sort of crisis among Protestant theologians.

Both kinds of crisis are essentially moral, and revolve round the same questions of credibility. At present, and very naturally, Mr Davis is rather more concerned with the credibility of the Church as an institution than with the possibility of holding recognisably Christian positions.

He is still fighting the battles of sixteenth-century Protestantism, and it is interesting to see whether he eventually tackles those of twentieth-century Protestantism.

Whether he does or not, he remains the paragon of the modern crisis in the Church as a whole.

His protest was clear cut, and his personal sacrifice very great. He left, not failure, but success in the Church's home, a profession, and power.

Domestic happiness is likely to be offset by the tensions of his position.

Isolation, not death, is the fate of twentieth-century martyrs, and he will no doubt know this to the full, as well as doubt and despair.

But like many others at the moment, he will have reason to reflect on the irony of the fact that he is learning at last the meaning of the Cross.

—B.T.

## AIDS TO MEDITATION

MEDITATION GUIDES. Susan W. Goodson. S.P.C.K. Pp. viii + 151. 35.00.

It is very hard to guess whether this is any new book of this kind. It may well be suitable for a large public library. This one has at least many of the qualifications for being so.

The author, who is also a qualified architect, is an itinerant spiritual counsellor, in a kind of succession to the late Fr Somerset Ward, and it is very clear that he knows exactly what he is trying to aim at in his hundred and thirty outlines here presented.

They are distributed for use in the various seasons of the Christian Year, on Saints' and Holy Days, and during one of his own takes up more than one page, and some take barely half a page.

Each consists of four or five short paragraphs, with headings of differing according to the kind of result that is being led to: for instance Peace, Contemplation, Intercession, Thanksgiving, and so on.

Each group of outlines is preceded by a page about the kind of meditation which is to follow.

## GERMAN WORK

## TRANSLATED

THE WORLD OF THE ARAB. Anton J. W. Winkler and Nicholas. Pp. 247. 37.

This is a translation in a series of "The World of the Arab" by the German scholar, Professor J. Winkler, first published ten years ago has been translated by E. Winkler.

The writer considers the period of the second millennium B.C., and traces something of the influence of it upon the Jewish peoples.

As an epilogue, consideration is given to the present position of Israel both by Greece and Rome. Sixty-four pages of bibliography with 10 pages of descriptive notes make this a useful addition to the student's library.

—A.V.M.

## FIVE ESSAYS

## ON POLITICS

INTERLUCE AND POLITICS. F. Knopfelmacher. Nelson. Pp. 196. 15.50.

Even if the author's name had been unknown there would be no difficulty in identifying this delightful book as the product of Central European mind, streaked with originality and permeated with a subtle and graspable essence. No Anglo-Saxon could conceivably have written it.

The book consists of five essays on the problems of politics (and politics): Catholics and Communists; Freedom and on Max Weber; They are stimulating, unfair, penetrating, illogical, full of guile and innocence — from the pen of Knopfelmacher, the polemicist, not Knopfelmacher the academic. They make good reading, despite a few patches of treacherily tragedy, because they will accompany agreement and furious dissent, depending on the reader's own basic prejudices.

Dr Knopfelmacher spends a good deal of time on the Church and the Melbourne Catholics and Communists' essay. His views on the Church are not so much pharisaic as pharisaic in his pharisaic, "erratic ideological posturing" of the Church of Australia. Catholic political self-censorship, "aggressive" Catholicism, and his judgement that the tone of the Church is "pharisaic", "unusually pious, policy in a personal sort of way, contradictory and politically innocent."

It will be seen that this is not a wholly "serious" book in any accepted sense, but it is good to read well written, and-reading, note the last. One hopes that the author will not never become fully assimilated: plenty of foreign travel can show us dull-witted locals the all pervasive potentialities of our own native tongue. —A.W.

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## FOUR LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF S. MARK

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL. C. F. Evans. S.P.C.K. Pp. viii + 88. 35.00.

HERE are four lectures by the Professor of New Testament Studies at King's College, London, which were given under the auspices of the intermission, national Chaplaincy at the newbury.

They do not seem to have been often attended for publication, though an appendix has been added which contains a complete bibliography, and there is an occasional footnote of the main text. The subject is S. Mark's Gospel.

The author — one ought rather to say, the lecturer — has not been afraid to introduce complicated points, or to weigh differences of view on matters of principle as well as of detail. This must have given a very welcome impression of candour in the lecture hall at Canterbury, and it is no doubt the right thing to do for such an audience. And

the author's academic knowledge is very well known.

As lecturer, the matter here printed was no doubt just what he had in mind. It is not surprising that the Master of Eliot College, in a Foreword, thanks Professor Evans for "starting the series so successfully."

Still, it is not so certain that it will be as useful in the help of the emphasis and the personal rapport which can be made in a lecture room.

Students may rather feel that the complications and the details given here with the help of the larger standard books to which the bibliography refers them.

As an epilogue, consideration is given to the present position of Israel both by Greece and Rome. Sixty-four pages of bibliography with 10 pages of descriptive notes make this a useful addition to the student's library.

—A.S.







## BATHURST UNITY MEETING

### ARCHBISHOP YOUNG ON SWIFT RESPONSE

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

**Bathurst, June 3**  
Christian churches and communities everywhere had begun to look at one another in love, the Archbishop of Hobart, the Most Reverend Guildford Young, said here on June 26.

He was addressing a gathering of more than 500 people at a meeting in the City Hall, planning as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity by the Bathurst Ministers' Fraternal.

The Bishop of Bathurst, the Right Reverend E. K. Lisle, was among the church leaders present.

The Mayor, Alderman J. C. Matthews, said that the church in Bathurst cooperated in an atmosphere of charity.

He led the gathering in the recital of the Lord's Prayer.

The Presbyterian minister, the Reverend D. Murray, read the Bible lesson; prayers for unity were offered and the blessing given by Bishop Leslie.

Archbishop Young said that the glaciers, picked apart by the conflicts of history, national rivalries, psychological differences, misunderstandings about wars, refusal to converse and too-human sins, had begun to melt.

"Christians are beginning to reach out to one another, to attack, but to understand and embrace," he said.

Both the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church were now pledged to go forward in the quest for the unity of all Christians.

The Vatican Council's decision on ecumenism had the highest authority, plunged the Catholic Church and Catholicism into its greatest historic period which is under the control of the Archbishop said.

Groups, both on the highest level and in local communities were meeting to talk with each other, and learn more of each other's religious traditions.

"In thousands of churches this week mixed congregations were kneeling side by side, experiencing with joy, the awareness of the unity Christ already has given them by uniting them to Himself in baptism, and yet enduring the tragedy of their division and, therefore, all the more determined to work towards the fullness of community in faith, hope and love which He wills for them."

Ecumenism, he said, could be the most significant event of this last third of the twentieth century.

It could be more radically effective in the shaping of the new age of Man than the spirit of the twentieth century.

## NEW BOAT FOR NEW GUINEA

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

Port Moresby, June 3

A new boat is to be built for the Church in Papua-New Guinea by the New Guinea Shipbuilding Corporation, Rabaul, at a cost of more than \$4,600.

The boat, a steel hulled vessel, will be 70 ft long and will carry 60 tons of cargo and 60 passengers with a crew of ten.

It is hoped that the new boat will be ready next year to join the 21-year-old Maclearen-King II on trips to coastal Mission Stations at far away as Milne Bay and New Britain.

About \$50,000 towards the cost of the boat will be given by the Diocese of Milne Bay in America, which is New Guinea's M.R.I. companion diocese.

In recognition of this, the new boat will probably be named the "Minnetta".

## NEW PROJECT FOR PORT MORESBY

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

Port Moresby, June 3

It has been decided to set up a new service centre at Koki in the parish of Port Moresby.

This was decided by a special group formed after the annual meeting of the Anglican Diocese of Port Moresby, when the Assistant Priest, the Reverend John Key, challenged parishioners to find some way of relieving the Church more deeply in the life of Port Moresby.

Definite plans for the centre still have to be made but it is hoped that it will include a youth employment agency and a recreational meeting place for young people.

The next meeting will be at the Anglican Mission, Koki, on June 5 when members will examine the existing facilities there and discuss ways in which they might be developed to form the centre.

So far members of St. John's, St. Francis', St. Martin's and the Army have been the group who feel that the most pressing problem, of the town are unemployment, particularly regard to school-leavers; recreational facilities; and housing.

## A LONDONER GOES HOME

BY BISHOP DONALD REDDING

I SPENT the first sixteen years of my life in London during five of which I attended the City of London School.

Later I spent two years as a student at the Royal School of Saffron Walden, Essex. Then I came to Australia.

I was born in England during the second half of 1940, and my memories of London were mostly of the air-raid sirens and screaming bombs.

London, however, too, of bomb-damaged buildings and of the lovely countryside of Wiltshire.

Many people who had visited England in recent years said that London was "just like it" and "everything is so changed".

I was not at Southampton and driven across country to Hove in Sussex on a beautiful Sunday morning in January in bright sunshine.

As the fields and farms died and we passed through villages with their quaint houses and towers, I felt "just like it" and "everything is so changed".

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## THE BIBLE NOW!

BY THE REVEREND R. A. HICKIN

ONE of the features of the London religious scene is the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, at eleven o'clock on a usually sunny morning in May.

This year's speaker was Dr. J. T. Watson, the society's general secretary, due to retire at the end of the year after twenty-two years' service.

His opinions in his last address as general secretary:

**The Bible, after all criticism**  
There had come about a much more intelligent interest in the Bible than in the past. It is now seen to be what, of course, it has always claimed to be: the Word of the living God, with a relevance for Man and his situation. Once again, the Bible has become the Church's Book, to be taken seriously.

**Its place in Mission**  
The floodgate of literacy is wide open, and with the chance to give new readers the Word of God in their own tongue. The Bible is not in opinion, it is THE BOOK NOW.

**On man (in an age of "translations")**  
"It is man's simple a collection of words."

In was days how often did we complain "too little and too late". The changes in England are too great and have too quick a tempo to allow of any one thing to confine myself to what is English and to ignore what is Latin or Greek or even to ignore the government's avowed intention to go to a multi-cultural state.

However ideal that may seem to the Christian community, the fact remains that you cannot, in a few years, introduce into a very small country a very large number of people who are totally different in ways of life and expect it all to be plain-sailing.

Colour is a very incidental problem (but it is just putting one's nose to the wall to deny it is a problem at all).

Different religions present a serious problem, but it is not a different way of life present a problem that is totally different by much thought, a great deal of planning and a lot of prayer.

**RACE PROBLEMS**  
It is not something that can be brought about overnight by Act of Parliament.

No sensible family would live their relations to live with without a great deal of thought concerning congeniality and accommodation. It is right to—because Jesus told us how unwise is the man who starts to build a house on a shifting sand.

What would have given much to have had the time the opportunity and the ability to really study the Bible in English.

But the ordinary Englishman does not quite know what has happened or how it has happened.

It is for all Christian people everywhere to pray that these wonderful people who in 1940 by their endurance and freedom possible for the peoples of the world; may find their leadership and have the courage, patience and faith to wait that show the quality of greatness which they will retain to the end.

"Oh," he has said, "it always happens, church attendances are at their peak between Sydney and South Africa."

But while I found so much of the English countryside unattractive, while I found so much of historic London unaltered but changed by the surface of a deep-seated change and unrest.

England very much needs our understanding, sympathy and prayers today, and she deserves them. I have found that the ordinary person is bewildered because the changes that have come, have come so quickly and all so far-reaching.

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