Faith and Thought

Newsletter of the
Victoria Institute

General Editor: Dr. A. B. Robins

Number 4 · April · 1988

ISSN: 0269-2570

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

This issue of the Newsletter contains two items which are of interest to readers of *Faith and Thought*, but which are not judged to be of sufficient weight for the journal itself. It is hoped that readers will find them of interest. 'Faith in the Chip' is, in fact, the press release of a meeting held in the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity last March. The full papers from the meeting are to be published this May, and details are given at the end of the press release. The second article, on Bible Numerics, has arisen as a result of the author's association with the late Dr. R. E. D. Clark, and correspondence with him. It has been submitted by Kenneth Bayman from the Republic of South Africa. If any readers find this of sufficient interest for them to comment on the subject of numerics, the Editor would be pleased to receive correspondence. One such letter has been received, and is included in this Newsletter. Two other letters are also printed here, sparked off by our last issue of *Faith and Thought*. It would be encouraging to think that these may be only the first of many such communications.

BOOKS FOR REVIEW

The Editor has the following volumes awaiting review, and would be grateful if any readers were interested and able to undertake the task of reviewing one or more. Please would the person(s) who are so interested write in as soon as possible, indicating which volume they would like to read.

B. Kuklick *Churchmen and Philosophers* (Jonathan Edwards to David Dewey).
T. Shaw *E. M. Blaiklock—a Christian Scholar*
W. Granberg-Michaelson *Tending the Garden* (Essays on the Gospel and the earth)
T. A. Smail *The Forgotten Father* (The Godhead)
P. Toon *About Turn* (Conversion)
P. King *Leadership Explosion*
O. Guiness *The Gravedigger File* (New edition)
M. Green *Baptism*
C. Baxter *Stepping Stones* (Unity between Anglican Catholics and Evangelicals)
J. S. Preus *Explaining Religion* (Criticism and theory from Bodin to Freud)
D. F. Wells *God the Evangelist* (The working of the Holy Spirit in lives)
A. P. F. Sell *Defending and Declaring the Faith* (Scottish examples from 1860 to 1920)
D. L. Petersen *Prophecy in Israel* (Issues in Religion and Theology 10)
A. McGrath *The Enigma of the Cross*
A. R. Peacocke and G. Gillett *Persons and Personality*
C. R. Churn *God, Life and Man in the Space Age*
O. Segerberg *Riddles of Jesus and the Answers of Science*
D. Guthrie *Exploring God's Word* (Bible guide to John's gospel)
C. Colson *Loving God*
M. Lloyd-Jones *Why does God allow War?; Out of the Depths* (Both re-issues)
P. Kreeft *Making sense out of Suffering*
N. M. de S. Cameron *Biblical Higher Criticism and the Defense of Infallibilism in 19th Century Britain*

FAITH IN THE CHIP?

How should we view the new technology? Do we place too much 'faith in the chip' at the expense of social and ethical values? A 'week-end consultation for Christians involved in information technology and its growing applications to the contemporary world' was held jointly by the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity and the Shaftesbury Project at the beginning of March 1987.

About 65 delegates attended, many of whom came from the 'coal-face'—computer consultants, instructors and programmers; systems analysts; managers and engineers—while academics, publishers and journalists in related fields were also represented. The aim of the exercise was 'to provoke biblical thought and action on information technology . . . and to produce a document for wider circulation as the basis for further prayer, thought and action'.

David Lyon (Senior Lecturer in Sociology, Bradford and Ilkley College, Visiting Research Fellow, Leeds University and author of *The Silicon Society* and other books), spoke on 'Third Wave or Third Way?'

Rejecting technological utopianism, he suggested that information technology was in danger of becoming an idol. Far from 'eliminating authoritarianism, war and strife' (Stonier) it was itself tied up with powerful economic and political forces and 'often appeared to bolster the position of those who enjoy power'. Once erected, the 'technological idol binds us and blinds us' and 'its supposed imperatives have to be obeyed'.

He attacked the myth of technological neutrality. 'These machines are not neutral—this is a decoy. They are the products of a distinctive Western form of rationalism'. Often, they were surrounded by 'fear, hesitation and uncertainty' and concealed 'hidden agenda' of questions which were seldom asked.

Does this mean we should turn tail in the face of IT imperialism? Far from it, says Dr Lyon. Recognizing technological idolatry should make us realists, not escapists. We need join neither the 'litanies of the techno-freaks' nor the 'laments of the techno-phobes', but must seek a biblical 'third way'. In the Bible, technological activity, while liable to gross distortion, is seen as fundamentally worthwhile. Jeremiah urges the Jewish exiles to seek the 'shalom' of Babylon and to pray for it; swords may be turned into plough-shares and spears into pruning-hooks (Isaiah 2:4); technology may be transformed.

In his address, 'Must skills go?', Howard Rosenbrock (Professor of Control Engineering at Manchester Institute of Science and Techno-

logy) challenged the notion that technological development must inevitably have a de-humanizing effect. Attempts to apply the techniques of control engineering (often developed in such totally alien areas as rocket-control) to the industrial setting often proved unsatisfactory—the computer couldn't necessarily cope with the 'real problems' of the shop floor. 'Nevertheless', said Professor Rosenbrock, 'we couldn't persuade the control community to leave the process in the hands of the designer—we couldn't persuade them to leave a space.'

This attitude went back to Taylorism—the doctrine of the fragmentization of labour ultimately traceable to Adam Smith. Under this system, 'the workman is told minutely what to do—any improvement he makes is fatal. He is an object to be manipulated by management.' The logical outcome of Taylorism was that because people, unlike machines, were not infinitely perfectible, they ultimately became a nuisance.

Was it possible to change this? Given the flexibility and power of micro-technology, Professor Rosenbrock thought that it was. Faced with this idea, decision-makers often demanded an example—a difficult feat in itself, since most technology was conceived in the spirit of Taylorism.

Hence the institution of Professor Rosenbrock's own project at UMIST: an exploration of the possibilities of flexible manufacturing systems which leaves room for the designer himself. 'Throughout the world, university groups are working to remove areas of responsibility from the operator. Our aim is to give the operator the same sort of assistance as in evolving machine take-over, but to leave opportunities for him to insert his own options'.

What sort of response had his work met with? 'Out of a technological audience', said the Professor, '20% are normally interested, 80% are still uninterested'. There was no need for Luddism, however. Our technological future was not 'out there, fixed and ready to descend on us'. Although some technological choices were not easily reversible, it was always possible for us to take new ones and avoid creating unhelpful precedents which caused the problems of de-skilling to intensify over the years. In 'Technology: Possible = Permissible?', Ronald Ragsdale (Associate Professor, Department of Computer Applications, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto) warned of the need for discernment amidst technological euphoria. 'Computers are often seen as the answer to everything', he said, but 'we have to question the assumption that computers *must* have positive effects'. 'Permissible or possible does

not always mean beneficial or constructive'; sentiments for which we need look no further than the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 10:23).

There was a danger that 'technological needs would be allowed to determine human ones' and that, in the words of C. S. Lewis, 'Man's conquest of nature would turn out at the moment of its consummation to be nature's conquest of man'. He quoted Jacques Ellul's example of the mechanization of bakeries, a failure, apparently, because of the need for two alterations: (1) to the nature of bread and (2) to human taste!

Some will be more familiar with another of his examples:

'We have a computer in our classroom: what can we do with it?' Looking at what is sometimes called 'strong AI' (artificial intelligence), he called for a 'theology of AI', and asked, 'What are the important human needs addressed by AI?' Whether or not according to Tom Stonier, 'Computers will eventually surpass human intelligence', expectations of 'strong AI' would still have important effects on human thought and behaviour and, 'When one sees minds and machines as functionally equivalent, certain harmful effects are assured.'

Like his fellow-speakers, Professor Ragsdale was not attacking technology, but its idolatry—machines that could prove invaluable as tools and servants could easily become masters and idols, with disastrous results (see Psalm 115: 'Their idols are silver and gold, the work of mens' hands. They have mouths but do not speak; eyes, but do not see . . . Those who make them are like them; so are all who trust in them'.)

We need to be constantly questioning: 'How does my use of technology affect me/others? How does others' use of technology affect others/me?'

A meeting between an IBM Systems Analyst and a theologian must rank fairly high on most people's list of unlikely encounters, but this is what in fact took place between John Mullaly of IBM and David Field of Oakhill Theological College in their dialogue, 'Different Worlds? Ethics versus Technology'.

How user-friendly were the IT mega-corporations? Did IT foster human relationships? Did it create more job gains than losses? Did it care? Was it not founded upon dog-eat-dog selfishness, greed and competitiveness? Why were free libraries being replaced with expensive data-bases? Had research on AIDS proved less profitable than IT in the arms race?

In the face of such heavy artillery, John occasionally flinched. 'Productivity', he admitted, 'is what drives the industry. The world has become a productivity race-track and the computer industry has

always been driven by businessmen. Without them it would disappear.' There was no doubt that this made for 'an aggressive industry' in which 'change was the only stable fact'.

(N.B. VDUs are likely to fall 15% in cost each year.)

Given this state of affairs, John was 'surprised there hadn't been more disasters'. Although some companies showed more care than others (e.g. in creating alternative employment), up to now the prevailing ethic had been, 'All problems are teething troubles and let's make it work'. What was needed was an industry-wide code of conduct.

In his closing sermon, Roy McCloughry, economist, and Director of the Shaftesbury Project, warned that, 'The glossy world of information technology can become idolatrous'. There was in our day, more than for some decades, a need for a 'prophetic community . . . to look beyond mechanistic explanations of God's norm and technology's own sense of its importance to God's perspectives and priorities'. Christians were 'called to abolish the myth of sacred technology'.

There was a need to de-bunk the 'Tomorrow's World' approach to technology, to say, 'It's only silicon, it's only metal—you can pull the plug out'. Isaiah was a great de-bunker, pointing out in Chapter 33 how people bowed down to a block of wood, half of which they had already used to light a fire and cook their food. If people could be slaves to carved wood, how much more can we be slaves to modern technology?

Today, the doctrine of progress must not be questioned. 'Those who question progress are regarded as saboteurs or fools.' (Schumacher). The hidden force behind technology was economics, with its attendant substitution of need for morality, and insistence that our need for security can be met by material goods.

To be part of a prophetic community took courage and compassion —the prophet spoke 'not out of anger or angst but out of loving concern'. We should not feel that 'we are few and they are many', for, 'a few with God can change a whole society'. We must take courage from Scripture, and, like Gideon and the Midianites, we might be up against a mighty army, but we must place our trust in God.

Christians working in information technology were sometimes in a difficult position. Was 'whistle-blowing' always disloyalty? But if they did not speak out against 'vulnerabilities and evils', no-one else would. Perhaps more Christians had to be prepared to put their jobs on the line. After all, 'to kick over an idol, you must first get off your knees'.

Ten work groups on different aspects of IT were also held, each of

which prepared a paper. Subjects ranged from 'High-Tech Medicine', 'Men and Women in IT', and 'IT-based Education' to 'IT and Human Needs in the First and Third World'. These papers, together with all other material from the conference, will shortly be published.*

* *Faith in the Chip*. Ed. David Lyon: Marshall-Pickering, Christian Impact Series, May 1988 (paperback).

BIBLE NUMERICS—VALID OR NOT?

Are Bible Numerics valid in the sense that they are real and meaningful?

The present writer corresponded briefly with the late Dr. R. E. D. Clark on the subject, and Dr. Clark repeated his views substantially as given on pp. 187–189 of *Faith and Thought* (the R. E. D. Clark memorial issue) Volume 112, No. 2/1986.

The subject arose as a result of my asking Dr. Clark to send me a photocopy of an address given to the Victoria Institute by Sir Ambrose Fleming on December 5, 1927. Dr. J. A. Fleming, M.A., F.R.S. (as he then was), was at that time President of the V.I. The address in question was entitled: 'Number in Nature and in the Biblical Literature indicating a common origin in a Supreme Intelligence'.

I had requested the copy because I was at work on an exhaustive treatise on the subject of Bible Numerics in all of its ramifications which were known to me at the time. I had subtitled my manuscript 'A Handbook of Bible Numerics,' and I tried to cover every aspect of the subject on which I felt competent to write, although I am no mathematician. However, I think that a mathematician would have found it difficult to deal with the subject in a fair and reasonable way because his background training would have tended to restrict him to a cold and lifeless analysis of probabilities. Such an approach falls far short of the attitude necessary for appreciating Bible Numerics.

Just as an expert in colour values may not be competent to judge an artist's masterpiece, and a philologist may be a poor critic of a poet laureate's work, so a mathematician may analyse numbers as such and yet fail to perceive their meaning and pattern.

In the course of my work on the manuscript I have mentioned, I came across an example of this. I had been given a detailed written

criticism of Ivan Panin's Bible Numerics by a friend who had obtained it direct from a Professor Emeritus of Physical Science. This professor had undertaken to show mathematically that Panin's work was fallacious and that his conclusions drawn therefrom were unwarranted. However, I found on examining the professor's report on his findings, that he had completely failed to grasp the nature of Panin's discoveries and was in fact totally ignorant of the letter's methods. Although he had been provided with examples of Panin's work and had even been in written communication with him, he still showed a strange inability to appreciate the significance of Panin's results. In fact, his own claim to be able to 'find more combinations of letters divisible by seven in any sentence of seven words' than Panin had found in the seven Hebrew words of Genesis 1:1 was simply ludicrous—for what he was doing with 'any seven words' bore not the slightest resemblance to Panin's discoveries in the text of Genesis, chapter one, verse one.

The most that could be said in favour of this professor and other investigators like him is that they had good intentions. The results of their ill-founded criticisms, however, were not so good: their 'expert' opinions were widely circulated by those who for various reasons opposed Bible Numerics, and this adverse publicity in turn led to a general loss of interest in the subject.

Whilst engaged in the extensive study of Bible Numerics, I collected over the years a number of varied criticisms of the subject, which I carefully evaluated. Among them was a parody of Ivan Panin's work. This parody was based on the nursery rhyme 'Three Blind Mice'. It purported to set forth 'numerics' as convincing as anything that Panin had written. A correspondent who had supplied me with a copy of this parody and the criticism of Panin's work that accompanied it did not know who the author was, but did say that he thought it might be the work of Dr. R. E. D. Clark. He did not say how he had come by the parody, but as he conducted an extensive correspondence it is quite likely that somebody who had obtained it from Dr. Clark has passed it on to him some years before, so that he had forgotten its origin. So although Dr. Clark's parody and criticism, as published in the memorial issue of *Faith and Thought* had never been formally published, it must have 'gone the rounds' by correspondence at some time.

Unfortunately, it never occurred to me to mention the 'Three Blind Mice' numerics to Dr. Clark during the time I corresponded with him, or a very interesting exchange of views may well have resulted. As it was, I dealt with these pseudo-numerics at some length in the chapter

of my manuscript devoted to oblique criticisms of this kind. A summary of my comments thereon follows as a matter of interest.

(Dr. Clark's parody of numerics and his criticism of Ivan Panin's work appear on pp. 185–189 of *Faith and Thought* Volume 112, No. 2/ 1986.)

(1) Although the little composition based on 'Three Blind Mice' is ingenious, its author has imitated *not* Ivan Panin's numerics but his characteristic style of writing. The 'numerics' are actually pseudo-numerics. They are pathetically limited both in scope and meaning and in this respect cannot be compared with true Bible numerics. This is just what we would expect of false or fortuitous numerics. In the case we are considering, the false has deliberately been contrived as an imitation of the true. Naturally the false must bear *some* resemblance to the true, or it would not serve the purpose of the critic! This is so, whether we are thinking of a *counterfeit* of art, of currency or of Bible numerics.

(2) Noticing that the 'sevens' he sought were apparent only if line 4 of the rhyme were omitted, our critic had to find a 'reason' to justify this omission—hence his statement that 'the fourth line contains the description of the crime which would seem to mar the perfection. It is, therefore, very interesting to observe that on omitting this line the number 7 becomes extremely evident.'

But we ask: if the mice were blind, where is the 'perfection' to which the writer of the parody alludes? This shows up the artificial nature of the 'logic' used. In any case, analysis shows that sevens are *not* 'extremely evident'. (Detailed tables were appended to my original manuscript in which this analysis was clearly set out, but for reasons of space these are not reproduced in this article.)

(3) Further revealing the artificial nature of the 'reason' for omitting the 4th line, the critic avers: 'after the 4th line the phenomena cease, as would be expected'. However, the detailed analysis shows that this is *not* the case, for the 'phenomena' occuring *after* the 4th line are similar to those before it.

(4) Again, the artificiality of the methods used by the critic to accomplish his results is shown by the fact that he has to count the article 'a' as both an initial *and* a final letter to get his results. *No* multiples of 7 result if the 'a' is omitted as being neither an initial nor a final letter.

(5) The parody author's statement that 'every one of the third letters from the end of each line has a value of 3×3 or a multiple' is not at all remarkable when we look at the detailed analysis and see

that 'every one of the third letters from the end of each line' is, in fact, in 5 out of 6 cases, the *same* letter!

(6) The writer of the parody states: 'needless to say, when the first three or seven letters, or when the third or seventh letters from the *beginning* of each line are taken, no results are obtained.' He appears to miss the point, namely, that rhyming (and thus the grouping of specific letters) takes place at the *end* of a line, not at the beginning. Hence there is no tendency for particular letters (and the numbers they stand for) to be found in groups at the *beginning* of a line in this rhyme.

(7) In the manuscript of his book (unpublished) the present writer gave the full analysis of the nursery rhyme and the pseudo-numerics accompanying it, and invited the discerning reader to compare it with the analysis of the Hebrew words of Genesis 1:1 (also given). The nursery rhyme has 37 words and 141 letters (or 28 words and 105 letters if line 4 is omitted). Genesis 1:1 has 7 words and 28 letters. *If there is any truth in the critics' assertions, there should therefore be many more numeric factors in the rhyme than in the first verse of Genesis.* Yet careful analysis shows not only *many more* numeric features in the much shorter Genesis passage, but the latter exhibit very remarkable symmetry and pattern—something which is totally absent from the longer literary passage comprising the nursery rhyme.

In his critical notes, Dr. Clark wrote: 'Nevertheless there is no doubt that the ancients did think in terms of numbers much more than we do today; so it is only to be expected that we shall find evidences of this in the Bible . . . The Apocalypse is obviously written with full regard to the meaning of numbers. Such methods may well have served to prevent a corruption of the text in ancient writings.' (This reference is to the fact that the Hebrew scribes used to count all letters and words when copying sacred manuscripts, as a check against adding or dropping a letter or word in the passage they were copying.)

Commenting that he once spent a railway journey from Scotland working out the numerics of 'Three Blind Mice,' Dr. Clark wrote: 'The results read as convincingly as anything Ivan Panin has published'. However, this statement is true only of a very superficial reading of Ivan Panin's works. A comparison of, say, the detailed analysis of Genesis 1:1 (as suggested in paragraph (7) above) with the detailed analysis of Dr. Clark's 'Three Blind Mice' numerics shows at once that no real comparison is possible. The same applies to any of Panin's

many other Bible Numerics as compared with any attempts to imitate them. This is just what we should expect, considering that Genesis 1:1 (or other biblical passage) is the product of Him Who has 'magnified His word above all His Name'. Does He Who counts the hairs of our head not count the letters and words of His written revelation to mankind?

It should be mentioned that the only point of resemblance between the Jewish Cabbala (mentioned by Dr. Clark) and true Bible Numerics, is that they both deal with number. Otherwise there is no similarity between them. Again it must be stressed that the difference between them is that of the false and the true, the counterfeit and the genuine.

'It seems clear that numerics might easily destroy the meaning of the Bible and replace spirituality by competence in juggling with figures,' wrote Dr. Clark. Many other critics have echoed this view, but it is completely groundless for the reason that not only are Bible Numerics *not* used like the Cabbalistic gematria, but on the contrary the number patterns are invariably supportive of the text of Scripture so far as their symbolical meanings are concerned.

It should also be pointed out that the invariable testimony of those who have delved most deeply into true Bible Numerics is that their apprehension of the wonder of the Word of God has deepened and as a result their spiritual life has been enriched. Typical of these testimonies is the following by Dr. Daniel B. Turney, an American theologian contemporary with Ivan Panin:–

> 'The numerics worked out by Ivan Panin are fatal to the foes of verbal inspiration and are invulnerable. My own examination of Scripture arithmography sustains emphatically his claims and conclusions . . . A sincere effort to find numerics in Homer proved unsuccessful, but as soon as I tried 3 John my labours were abundantly rewarded. I took up this epistle because it is short and in Panin's writings I had not seen it discussed. My investigation thus began with as little to guide me as in the case of the Iliad, but the result was so perfect a scheme of numerics as to leave no room for doubt. The inspiration of the Bible as the production of one Designing Mind is now clearly and convincingly established.'

Another and very authoritative witness to the validity of true Bible numerics is the late Sir Ambrose Fleming who, as Dr. J. M. Fleming, M.A., F.R.S., was President of the Victoria Institute from 1927 to 1941. In 1927 he delivered before the 704th ordinary general meeting of the Victoria Institute, an address entitled: 'Number in Nature and in the Biblical Literature Indicating a Common Origin in a Supreme Intelligence.'

In his address, the President said, *inter alia*:

> 'The object of scientific investigation is to understand and predict phenomena, and this can only be done when we have precise numerical knowledge of them.' He went on to give instances of the many remarkable aspects of the physical creation which depend for their nature and characteristics entirely on numerical factors.

The President then went on to give many examples of the highly significant use of number in Holy Scripture. In dealing with New Testament gematria based on the Greek text, he drew attention to the prominence of the number 8, this being the number associated with resurrection or new life, the first day of a new week being the 8th day in a series. 'Thus a large number of the names and titles of the Saviour of mankind have gematria which contain the factor 8. For example, take the supreme title, *Lord Jesus Christ*. The Greek words are *Kurios Iesous Christos*. Translating these letters (Greek) into numerical values, we have 20,400,100,10,70,200 = 800 or 8 × 10 × 10 (Kurios; 10,8,200,70,400,200 = 888 or 8 × 3 × 37 (Iesous); 600,100,10,200, 300,70,200 = 1480 or 8 × 5 × 37 (Christos).

(Note: The President pointed out that in the Greek and Hebrew alphabets every letter had its numerical value, and therefore every word its *gematria*, or sum total of these numbers. Although the classical nations had words for numbers such as 10, 50, 100, etc., they signified them also by letters of the alphabet.)

As a significant pointer to the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, Sir Ambrose said: 'There is an important New Testament word *theotes* which means Deity or Godhead (see Col. 2:9). The gematria of this is 592 = 8 × 2 × 37.' If we add the gematria of *theotes* or Deity (i.e., 8 × 2 × 37) to the gematria of Jesus Christ which is 8 × 8 × 37, we get the following:– 8 × 10 × 37. This is significant for it is the gematria of 'Son of Man' and, as Sir Ambrose remarked, 'There was no title our Lord applied more often to Himself than "Son of Man" '.

The Apostle Peter earned our Lord's special benediction when he acknowledged His Deity: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God'. Observe how the gematria give the same testimony:

> Son of Man (Greek) *huios tou anthropou*; the gematria of these words is 680 + 770 + 1510 = 2960 or 8 × 10 × 37. So—
> Son of Man = 8 × 10 × 37
> Jesus Christ + Deity = 8 × 10 × 37

'These instances,' said the President, 'are capable of many extensions, but at this stage we may pause to express the opinion that

these gematria properties cannot be merely an accident. it cannot be merely the "long arm of coincidence." '

It should be noted that Sir Ambrose Fleming recommended the study of *Spiritual Arithmetic* by Reginald T. Naish, and *Verbal Inspiration Demonstrated* by Ivan Panin. He also gave many instructive examples of the use by astronomers of soli-lunar cycles to harmonize the movements of sun and moon, and pointed out that these cycles appeared in the Book of Daniel in the form of prophetic time-periods. He went on: 'There are other departments of numerical fact in Nature and in the Scriptures between which there is a close relation, viz., in astronomical soli-lunar cycles and the prophetic periods or times . . . It is clear, therefore, that these prophetic times mentioned in the apocalyptic books of the Bible have a close relation to important astronomical periods. At the date when these books were written, the length of the solar year and of the lunation were not known with sufficient exactness to bring these soli-lunar cycles within the range of the then human knowledge. How also were the remarkable arithmetic properties of the gematria, to which attention has been directed, in New Testament words and phrases, brought about? It is beyond question that it is not due to the skill or ingenuity of the authors of those books, and it is indeed quite beyond human powers in any age. Here, then, is a question for our Modernist advocates of the theory of a purely human origin of the biblical literature to consider carefully.'

The President concluded: 'The only answer that can be given is that they were not solely the product of human intelligence, but that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost".'

It is interesting to observe from the transactions of the Victoria Institute recording the above meeting, that the usual sceptics were present in the audience: the substance of their criticism was that there appeared to be some exceptions to the gematria examples given by the lecturer. They felt that if the gematria were indeed valid as a supporting indication of divine authorship of the Scriptures, they ought to be invariable. This is typical of the quibbles put forward by those hostile to Bible Numerics. On the grounds that numerics do not always appear on the very surface of the Bible text, so that they may have to be searched for, and that the numerics are not uniformly the same in all cases, they refuse to consider as valid the numerics that *are* present in the text, ignore their implications, and loftily dismiss the whole subject as unworthy of further attention.

For instance, one critic in the Victoria Institute audience said: 'Dr. Fleming states that twenty of our Lord's titles are characterized by the

factor 8; but he does not tell us how the percentage of titles containing this factor compares with the percentage of words containing it in the rest of the New Testament. We are consequently left without sufficient data to form a judgment.'

Another said: 'If a vast number of instances can be cited in support of the unvarying evidence of gematria, pointing with mathematical precision to concurrence in certain numerical powers and co-related truths, this will afford valuable supplemental evidence of the Divine and plenary inspiration of the Bible. But it is essential that the evidence should be uniform and not casual, based not on a few but on many instances.'

Another critic added, after a number of quibbling remarks, 'The statement that twenty names and titles of our Lord, the gematria of which all have 8 as a factor, requires examination; these instances do not seem to warrant it.'

Dr. Fleming's reply to these critics embodies an important principle which today is widely recognized in scientific circles but as yet receives little attention from those engaged in biblical exposition: 'In making a short reply to some of the remarks and criticisms on my paper which have appeared in the discussion, one or two preliminary suggestions may be perhaps permitted which apply especially to objections raised to certain points ... One of these is that the *doctrines and latent truths in Scripture are not given to us with such complete, unexceptionable proof as to compel intellectual assent without possibility of refutation.*

'All that we are afforded are powerful indications or converging lines of argument which give influential suggestions and provide an opportunity for the exercise of faith. In the next place we do not find either in Nature or in the Scriptures that absolute uniformity of events or statement which leave no room for difference of opinion. *Hence to demand the complete demonstration without exception of uniformity in any of these gematria phenomena is to ask what is not possible, or at any rate not granted.*'

The above statement by the President of the Victoria Institute is of very great importance. He added: 'It is, of course, essential to ascertain that we are not following cunningly-designed fables or pretending to detect an order which we ourselves have created. All that is essential is to try to discover whether that order or numerical phenomena are of human or super-human creation.'

It should here be remarked that although the occurrence of significant numerics is so general in the Bible, nevertheless different numbers are prominent in different parts of Scripture, so there is no

drab uniformity. Ivan Panin referred to these as 'kaleidoscopic numerics' and it was the presence of these characteristic numerics in variant readings of the Bible text which enabled him to determine their genuineness as against spurious texts which exhibited no such numerics. In other words, the original text of the Bible was truly 'God-breathed', because it is quite impossible for any human being to construct a text conveying an intentional and sensible verbal message and at the same time exhibiting the many remarkable numeric features arising from the fixed numerical values of the different letters of the words used.

There are thus good grounds for claiming that the numerical phenomena exhibited by the true Bible text are indeed a 'super-human creation'. This is the 'essential discovery' contemplated by the illustrious past president of the Victoria Institute.

CORRESPONDENCE

BIBLE NUMERICS

Dear Sir,

In ancient times, the Greeks and Hebrews represented numbers by attaching numerical values to the letters of their alphabets. Consequently, each word, phrase and sentence had a numerical value—called its gematria (from 'geometry') by Jewish scribes—which was found by adding the values of the constituent letters.

From time to time interest is aroused in the so-called 'spiritual arithmetic' of the Bible, which purports to show that numerical relationships based on gematria are convincing evidence of divine inspiration. During the past hundred years or so books have appeared by E. W. Bullinger, R. T. Naish and Ivan Panin, among others, drawing attention to some interesting biblical numerical phenomena. A recent paper by Kenneth C. Bayman, *Biblical Numerics—Valid or Not? A study based on the comments of Dr. R. E. D. Clark and Sir Ambrose Fleming*, supports the arguments of Panin and similar writers.

it cannot be too strongly urged, as Dr. Clark pointed out some years ago in an (unpublished?) article, *Numerics in Scripture*, that the Bible does not stand or fall with the discovery or non-discovery of such phenomena. The problem, though of interest, is not to be proposed as

a test of Christianity. This is not to deny that, to the ancients, numbers did have a special, sometimes mystic, association and that in some parts of the Bible—notably OT and NT prophecy—certain numbrs repeatedly show themselves.

In his paper Dr. Clark took the first five verses (AV) of Genesis and assigned arbitrary values to each letter of the alphabet—partly because English letters are not used for numbers, and to avoid the special pleading that the AV is divinely inspired. He then arbitrarily chose the number 9 and found 36 features of interest, all connected with 9, in the five verses.

Since such results can presumably be obtained from a study of almost any literature, then great care must be taken in drawing conclusions about the inspiration of the text: not least because none of the original texts of the Old or New Testaments is known to exist.

Yours sincerely,
D. A. BURGESS

Dear Sir,

Can I be the only reader of *Faith and Thought* who was puzzled by M. W. Poole's article 'Perspectives on Creationist Apologetics' (*113*, 2 October, 1987)? Coming from someone who seems keen on logical distinctions and on issuing fog warnings, the article surprisingly does little more than muddy the waters of the evolution/creation controversy. Creationists are accused of making a definitional retreat when they accept that the peppered moth exhibits 'micro-evolution'. Whose definition are they retreating from? They are also attacked for misrepresenting evolutionists who disagree about the mechanism of evolution but Poole himself has not eschewed the well-known 'straw man' method.

If Poole persists in defining evolution as a process of descent with modification, i.e. Darwinism, and if he really believes that evolution 'stands or falls with the scientific evidence' (p. 154), how much of the following is he prepared to ignore?

> 'We question the adequacy of the evolutionary paradigm in relation to its failure to provide any satisfactory theory of the production and reproduction of biological form . . . the theory of evolution and, in particular neo-Darwinism, has extremely limited explanatory power' (Webster and Goodwin);
>
> 'There is little evidence from the fossil record of modification within species, or of forms intermediate between species, because neither generally occurred . . . If evolution proceeded according to Darwin, why

do "primitive" forms such as bacteria still exist? Shouldn't there be, today, only mammals and flowering plants?' (Eldredge);

'. . . the Darwinian theory of natural selection . . . is false' (Lovtrup).

Poole makes no mention of cladistics or of G. A. Kerkut's important book *Implications of Evolution*.

R. J. Berry's definition of evolution as a synthesis of disciplines is quoted with approval (p. 146) as ammunition against Professor E. H. Andrews; had Poole forgotten that, at the beginning of his article, he had chosen to define evolution solely as a biological process? Contrary to Poole's assertions, evolution *is* an ally for atheism, and evolutionary ideas were extant in the earliest Greek philosophy. Humanists will continue to use evolution as a buttress to give scientific credibility to their beliefs. Arguments from incompatibility are barely mentioned. Altogether absent was any mention of human evolution, and what becomes of man's special relationship to God.

Throughout his article Poole appears to subscribe to what Dooyeweerd called the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought, that is, the view that scientists do their work free from all metaphysical or religious commitments.

Yours sincerely
F. J. PEACHEY, L.R.S.C.

Dear Sir,

With reference to Mr. Peachey's letter, I offer the following comments:

In his first paragraph, he says, 'Creationists are accused of making a definitional retreat when they accept that the peppered moth exhibits "micro-evolution".'

What in fact I said was the opposite, that one creationist quoted seemed to be making a definitional retreat by *denying* that the peppered moth exemplified evolution (p. 133f.).

It is not clear to me what 'straw man' I am supposed to have set up. I was acutely aware of this danger and took particular care to present what I believe to be a typical compendium of creationist beliefs (p. 132).

On paragraph two: It is not a case of ignoring criticisms of evolutionary theory, such as the ones quoted. I neither set out to champion nor to denigrate evolution. The complex undertaking of arguing its strengths and its weaknesses is the task of trained biologists. The main purpose of my paper was to examine the logical

status of some of the arguments used by certain Christians and certain non-Christians in connection with the alleged incompatibility of evolution and divine creation.

On the penultimate paragraph: I cannot agree that 'evolution *is* an ally for atheism'. I said that 'Evolution has been welcomed and borrowed in the mistaken view that it is an ally for atheism'. The thrust of much of what I said centred on the key distinction between what legitimately follows from the biology and what some atheists have imagined to follow from it. Unless the distinction between 'evolution' and 'Evolutionism' is constantly borne in mind, I see little hope of the abandonment of the 'conflict thesis'.

On the final paragraph: In order to dispel uncertainty, let me make it clear that I do not 'subscribe to . . . the view that scientists do their work free from all metaphysical or religious commitments'.

Yours faithfully,
M. W. POOLE

ACADEMIC FREEDOM?

It appears that in some areas at least there is cause for concern over the matter of the freedom of university staff, and in particular with regard to the religious views they espouse. Dr. J. Bergman has been denied tenure by Bowling Green State University, Ohio, since 1980, and is now suing the university. He claims that tenure was denied because of his creationist views. He also claims that in no way did these views affect his teaching of the curriculum. The university, on the other hand, states that denial of tenure has had nothing to do with Dr. Bergman's views, but no other reasons have been given. In fact, the policy of the university is not to show reason for any failure to grant tenure or to dismiss, i.e., they have no case to answer.

This information has come to us by way of the *Bible-Science Newsletter* September/October 1987; Volume *6*, No. 5). Althought *Faith and Thought* and its *Newsletter* does not necessarily share Dr. Bergman's views on the creation-evolution issue, the situation which has arisen does seem worrying from the point of view of the freedom of faculty members. Dr. Bergman's final remarks in the interview were:- 'From my research—and I have consulted a number of attorneys who specialize in discriminatory cases—it seems that there has never been a case of religious discrimination against a secular institution which has been won by the aggrieved person. And to me, that is frightening.'

Perhaps readers might care to comment. The matter of academic

freedom has recently come up also in the U.K. In the national press it has been reported that a physiologist has been encouraged to take early retirement, in his view because of his unpopular research results. He has shown for some years that many electron microscope photographs exhibit artefacts have proved unsettling to other workers in the field (Guardian, London, March 8 1988). The University, for their part, claim that financial cut-backs have forced them to ask those over 55 to consider early retirement. The question is, what is the basis for selection of individuals?

Book for Review: The REST Principles
How to update the law on Sunday Trading

The Keep Sunday Special Campaign has revealed its proposals for updating the Sunday Trading laws—The REST Principles. This is in response to claims that the law on Sunday Trading is full of anomalies and the current debate surrounding the Sunday Sports Bill

The REST Principles is a consultative document backed by both trade and Church organizations, including the National Chamber of Trade, the Cooperative Union, the Baptist Union and the Methodist and United Reformed Churches.

The book claims that the present Sunday Trading Laws are in fact based on a simple and workable set of principles which just need updating.

The REST Principles proposes four categories of exemptions from a general prohibition on trading:

R—Recreation
E—Emergencies
S—Social Gatherings
T—Travelling Public

To narrow these principles down further, goods qualifying for exemption would have to meet two further conditions:

(i) Could the item have been bought before or after Sunday?
(ii) Would its sale harm the special character of Sunday?

If the answer was 'yes' to either of these questions the item would be excluded from exemption.

The REST Principles puts forward a workable compromise: limited Sunday Trading whilst keeping Sunday a special day.

More information:
David Blackmore, Keep Sunday Special Campaign
Work: (0223) 311596
Home: (0206) 240858

The Editor has a copy of this publication if any reader would care to review it for *Faith and Thought.*

BIG RETAILERS TO RAISE £ MILLIONS TO PUSH SUNDAY TRADING

Large retailers are planning to raise an astonishing £4.5 million over the coming months to promote the case for a Sunday trading free-for-all.

This revelation follows a decision taken at a secret meeting of company heads in London to discuss the strategy of the pro-deregulation lobby. It is believed that this decision was taken in response to government prompting.

The director of the Keep Sunday Special Campaign, Dr. Michael Schluter, said this news was confirmation that there would be a second attempt at scrapping the Sunday laws in the Autumn: 'Press reports have been conflicting on the issue up to now, but this is final proof that the government is going to try again soon. The call for Sunday trading is coming from a few large stores who stand to make a profit at the expense of smaller stores, shopworkers, family life and Church life.'

Dr. Schluter called on all churches, unions and retailers who support the Keep Sunday Special Campaign to prepare for another battle to keep Sunday free from the commercialism which characterizes the other six days of the week: 'Like last time, it's a David against Goliath struggle. We are competing with large vested interests with millions at their disposal. We're running a campaign on a shoe-string, so we need lots of ordinary people to support us by writing to MPs and raising the profile of the issue in their own area.'

He encouraged people concerned to protect Sunday to attend Jubilee Week, a major national training conference to be held from April 5–8 in Cambridge. The conference is to help Christians become more active in their own constituencies, with a particular focus on how to keep Sunday a special day. More information is available from David Blackmore. Keep Sunday Special Campaign, PO Box 111, Cambridge (Phone 0223–311596).

More information:

Dr. Michael Schluter:	Work—(0223) 311596
	Home—(0223) 353014
David Blackmore:	Work—(0223) 311596
	Home—(0206) 240858

The Farmington Project on Science and Religion in Schools

(14–19 age group)

In the minds of many secondary school pupils—and others—there appears to be a feeling of tension between the clarity and apparent certainty of science and the lack of consensus and precision in religion.

The aim of the project is to examine the nature of some of the confusions about science-and-religion which exist in the minds of many young people and to produce audio-visual materials to help to rectify some of them.

An earlier part of this project, under the directorship of Derek Sankey, concentrated on work in the 8–13 age range. The intention of this part of the project is to produce

(i) a set of audio-visual resources (such as tape/slide sequences and/or videos, students' materials and a Teachers' Guide) which could be used in sixth form General Studies and Religious Education, and

(ii) a simpler version which could be used with the 14–16 age range, in Humanities lessons and in GCSE Religious Education. The Teachers' Guide will indicate how the resources might be used and provide further background information for use with classes.

Some of the materials could be used in science courses by those teachers who wished to present science in its broader context and to point out the strengths and limitations of the scientific enterprise as a mode of enquiry.

They could also be used outside the classroom, for instance in religious discussion groups which are to be found in churches and elsewhere.

Further information about this project is available from:

The Director
Farmington Institute for Christian Studies
4 Park Town
Oxford
OX2 6SH
Telephone No. Oxford 57456