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834TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, on MONDAY, MARCH 18TH, 1940,
AT 4.30 P.M.

WILSON E. LESLIE, ESQ., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the Meeting of March 4th, 1940, were read, confirmed and signed.

The CHAIRMAN then called on the Rev. L. Wyatt Lang, M.A., to read his paper entitled "A Psychological Approach to Christ's Teaching in the Gospels."

The Meeting was then thrown open to discussion, in which the following took part: the Rev. A. W. Payne, Dr. Barcroft Anderson and the Rev. C. W. Cooper.

Written communications were read from Principal Curr, Colonel A. H. van Straubenzee and Mr. George Brewer.

*A PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO CHRIST'S
TEACHING IN THE GOSPELS.*

By the REV. L. WYATT LANG, M.A.

AT the risk of being "tiresome," I will raise the hackneyed question: What is wrong with the Church? and answer it immediately by saying that it is the existence of doubt where no doubt should be. It is the same weakness, of course, which Christ saw in the faith of the Apostles, and it will always exist in the Church.

The problem is acute in these times; indeed, a question mark against every article of the creeds seems to be regarded by some thinkers as sign of an honest mind. Far be it from me to urge an unreasoning acceptance of religious belief, yet it must be recognised that an attitude of uncertainty, insecurity or hesitation weakens the working capacity of religious faith.

When we remember that a person's energy is regulated by decision to use it we can see that an attitude of indecision or doubt inevitably hinders his conduct.

The importance of a sure foundation on which to build experience is shown by psychological experiments in visual perception ; for it is upon the permanence of the horizontal base line with the vertical arising from it that we organise our perception of the world about us. Also in the use of language and in the ability to recall ideas we depend upon the durability and cohesion of past impressions ; for how could we recognise writing and attach meaning to it if, in our memory, words changed their position and lettering ? In the sphere of behavioural psychology we find that a shock to the sense of habitual security is deeply disturbing, such as comes from ground movements in an earthquake which destroy assurance of secure foothold, or the eruption of a sudden, loud noise.

There can be no doubt that the sense of security is a necessary fundamental factor in life. While, on the one hand, we need a sense of permanence in the process of living, we know, on the other hand, that conditions of life during the last 100 years have been fluctuating widely. There have been frequent wars with disturbances in economic structure and political organisation.

An important change, of course, has been effected by the use of the scientific method in the sphere of education, but most potent of all, as it seems to me, has been the change in the sense of security in home and family from its local environment, maintained by a Christian ethic, to dependence upon an all-embracing State organised as a power-materialistic unit. People have been unable to adjust themselves properly to an ever-widening cultural and geographical environment. We find, therefore, a general feeling of uncertainty in the basis of affairs and an unwillingness to face up to the deeper meanings of life.

These influences are specially acute in the sphere of religious belief. The old sense of permanent security in religion which was upheld by faith in the verbal inspiration of the Bible or in the infallibility of the Church is no longer reliable and, moreover, an attitude of uncertainty has caused widespread doubt in the basis of religion.

To meet this grave situation, Christian scholars have worked unremittingly to re-examine the foundations of belief in the Bible and the Church and to re-establish the sense of reality in the Christian Faith. Unfortunately, as it seems to me, they

have been far from successful. The mass of English people have not recovered confidence in what the great Mr. Gladstone described as "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

The main reason for this failure may well be that theologians have been unable to make the Bible and the Person of Jesus profoundly significant in the affairs of life. Here, for instance, is a recent statement of an American theologian. "The religion of Jesus has been offered as a substitute for the Christian faith by men who believed that it could be made to fit into nineteenth-century ideas of evolution and social reform. But to-day we realise that 'The religion of Jesus' is at best a precarious reconstruction from documents which were not primarily interested in the religiousness of Jesus of Nazareth. They were to promote faith in him as Messiah and Lord." ("Current Trends in New Testament Study," by Clarence T. Craig, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. LVII, Part IV.) In another article he says, bluntly: "The modern study of the gospels . . . makes clear that Jesus cannot honestly be made into a modern figure." ("Sacrament in the Fourth Gospel," by Clarence T. Craig, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, March, 1939, page 32.) With this conclusion I completely disagree and the quotations show the bankruptcy of this type of theology.

I do not wish to enter into a controversy on theological speculation; the aim of this paper is to show from psychological investigation the trustworthiness of Christ's teaching. This investigation starts from a different point of view. The difference is fundamental. Whereas theologians come to their conclusions by virtue of their personal opinion, the psychologist approaches Christ's teaching from the study of human nature—a study which he shares with Christ himself.

In so far as commentators adopt a subjective attitude, it is inevitable that they should throw into Biblical exegesis their prejudices and systems of thought. Even when they are aware of the danger of private interpretation and wish to conform to the meaning common in the Church, this teaching arises from the ideology acceptable in their time. This interpretation of the Gospels may be true as far as it goes, but it may not be the interpretation which Jesus had in mind. Stress has been laid on one aspect of the evangel in one generation and on another in the next. For instance, the view-point of the Church as the organised Kingdom of God dominates our present age, and it is natural that this aspect should be "read into" present-day

interpretation of the Gospels. The same aspect has asserted itself in past generations. Thus the statement "He that heareth you heareth me" (St. Luke x, 16) has been held to refer only to the ordained ministers of the Church by virtue of their office, as well as the assertion "whose soever sins ye forgive they are forgiven" (St. John xx, 23 (R.V.)). The Roman Church, for instance, holds the opinion that our Lord's commission on the Cross to St. John "Behold thy mother" (St. John xix, 27), was spoken not only to St. John but also to the whole Church. It is not intended here to agree or disagree with these interpretations but only to stress the fact that they are points of view which have no validity except that given them by the authority which supports them. They do not necessarily represent the opinion of Christ.

We find the same prejudices at work when the Kingdom of God is regarded as the Divine Reign in the human heart. Here again, when the Church is impressed with the mystic process of conversion and movements of grace, scholars turn their attention to the conflict of good and evil in the spirit of man and interpret the Gospels from this view-point. At such periods stress is laid on the need of conversion and regeneration, and the doctrine of predestination receives new emphasis. This attitude is well illustrated by John Bunyan in *Grace Abounding*. He is passing through "the dark night of the soul" and longing for conversion. "How lovely now was everyone in my eyes that I thought to be converted men and women! they shone, they walked like a people that carried the broad seal of heaven about them . . . But that which made me sick was that of Christ, in Mark, He went up into a mountain and called to Him whom He would and they came unto Him (St. Mark iii, 13). This scripture made me faint and fear yet it kindled fire in my soul. That which made me fear was this, lest Christ should have no liking to me for He called 'whom He would'." In this passage Bunyan was projecting his own unhappy mental condition into the words "called to Him whom He would" which the words should not bear; he was reading into the text a meaning applicable to himself.

In the sphere of Biblical criticism known as "Higher Criticism," the prejudices of theologians are obviously at work. Frequently negative considerations are given far too much weight. Scholars of this school seem determined to defend their position at all costs. As Schweitzer put it in his *Quest of The Historic Jesus* (Edition 1922, page 310): "Since the 'sixties the critical study of the life of Jesus in Germany has been un-

consciously under the influence of an imposing modern-religious nationalism in art. It has been deflected by it as by an underground magnetic current. It was in vain that a few purely historical investigators uplifted their voices in protest. The process had to work itself out. For historical criticism had become in the hands of those who practised it a secret struggle to reconcile the Germanic religious spirit with the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. It was concerned with the religious spirit of the present . . . But the historic Jesus and the Germanic spirit cannot be brought together except by an act of historic violence which in the end injures both religion and history . . . Therefore both the theology and its picture of Jesus are poor and weak."

Prof. E. J. Bicknell, in his article on the Function of Literary and Historical Criticism in the *New Commentary*, said: "We must recognise the limitations of pure historical criticism. Strictly speaking, no historical event can ever be proved to have occurred. It is always possible to explain away the evidence and to adduce reasons for maintaining that the alleged witnesses were mistaken. In other words, when the critic is weighing and sifting his data, mental presuppositions derived from elsewhere inevitably come in and influence his judgement."

It is clear that we cannot hope to recover the sense of permanence in Christian belief from the methods of the Higher Critics; it seems that their attitude of critical uncertainty weakens confidence, although critical investigation into the basis of belief may be necessary and should precede reconstruction.

However this may be, what is needed to restore confidence is a basis which is independent of the prejudices of Biblical scholars and by which the teaching of Jesus can be tested and understood. We should then have ground on which a firm foundation of belief can be laid.

Let us consider this important matter further. We cannot hope to recover a sense of security in the exegesis of the Gospels from a subjective point of view, whether in the name of the Church or of an individual or of a group of commentators. What, then, should be our procedure? We should endeavour to be objective, *e.g.*, to discover the system of thought in the mind of Jesus, and to be able to say with the assurance of St. Paul: "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii, 16). We should not treat the Gospels as records of isolated statements but as a body of co-ordinated teaching. The genuineness or otherwise of a statement should be considered in reference to its cohesion in the

system of ideas incorporated in the Gospels. We are accustomed to do this in the case of philosophers, musicians, scientists and others who share in a common learning. Estimates as to the value of their theories, statement of fact and their ideas in general can be taken in relation to the accepted body of learning of which their work forms a part. The philosophy of Spinoza, for instance, has its place in philosophy as a whole to which it can be related and understood. This is true also, of course, of any person contributing to a recognised system of thought. There seems to be no reason why the teaching of Jesus should not be tested by the same method. He was a student of human nature and his teaching forms part of a psychological system which students to-day can test by their knowledge in the same field.

It seems strange that such an investigation has not been familiar to us long since. The reasons appear to be, in the first place, that Jesus clothed his teaching in pictorial language; it is easy to be content with a superficial interpretation of this pictorial presentation of truth; second, owing to the apparently disconnected ideas which form so large a part of the Gospels, the teaching of Christ has been considered (as Bishop Gore puts it in discussing the Beatitudes) as a string of pearls rather than a coherent system of thought; in the third place, a systematised knowledge of human nature has been slow in developing: it is only recently that attempts have been made to relate the teaching of the Gospels to psychological explanation of experience.

In meeting this somewhat difficult situation, we must first rid our minds of the interpretation which appears obvious. It is, I think, true to say that over familiarity prevents recognition of new interpretation. The need of reticence and a willingness to see Christ's teaching in the light of human experience is very well seen in that cryptic answer about "the eagles" being "gathered together" which our Lord made in reply to the Disciples' question, "Where, Lord?" This question, you will remember, was put to Jesus after the passage explaining when the Kingdom of God should come. "The Kingdom of God," He said, "cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say Lo here or there!" And yet He goes on to describe vivid occurrences in his customary pictorial style—lightning flashing under the heavens, the Deluge, the days of Noah, people occupied with their ordinary affairs, concerned with commerce, building and agriculture, and then intervenes suddenly a revelation of

“ the day of The Son of Man ” ; so suddenly, indeed, that there shall be scarcely time for a man to come down stairs ; yet such discrimination is to take place that “ there shall be two women grinding together ; one shall be taken and the other shall be left.” (St. Luke xvii, 35.)

Taking this passage in its surface meaning, anyone would think it refers to a definite time and place ; indeed, the disciples' question shows that they took the statement in this literal way ; the parallel passage in St. Matthew's Gospel has the same meaning and also this aspect of time and place is accepted by modern commentators. Here is the opinion of a prominent English Biblical scholar : Referring to this and some similar passages in the Gospels, he says, “ The consummation (of the Kingdom) is to be something which will take the world by surprise . . . That being so, it follows that it is not to be thought of as a peaceful reformation of the existing order, but as a drastic revolution by which a new order of things is introduced. The Kingdom of God in its final manifestation does not emerge by some evolutionary process out of the kingdoms of the world ; it displaces them.” (*The Teaching of Jesus*, by T. W. Manson, page 269.)

We must notice that this explanation disregards the assertion of Jesus at the beginning of the passage that the “ Kingdom of God cometh not with observation,” and Dr. Manson assumes here that the Kingdom is a visible community.

You will remember that the answer which Jesus gave to the point-blank question of the disciples, Where, Lord ? was “ Where the body is, thither will the eagles also be gathered together.” Here is the interpretation of Jesus himself and He is referring to the psychological situation arising between a dead body and the eagles or vultures ; the situation is one of desire to satisfy need—the dead body attracts the eagles through desire to satisfy hunger and to maintain life. The picture language which seems so expressive of time and place must be interpreted in the light of this psychological explanation. The place is in human personality and the movements so vividly described are spiritual movements in the process of conversion. The “ Day of The Lord ” is the time of conversion and submission to God. This explanation is not to be taken in isolation from the rest of the Gospel teaching ; this passage we are discussing, “ Where the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together,” is similar in meaning to the statement “ Where your treasure is there will

your heart be also " and has reference to the other " treasure " sayings and parables as well as to the beatitude " Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Also the same idea is seen in the assertion, " I am the bread of life " in St. John's Gospel (St. John vi, 35), and has reference to the use of bread in the Holy Communion. Jesus is describing movements in personality which can be verified by anyone familiar with them. This, then, is the common ground on which we can approach closely the thought of Jesus and test his teaching, *e.g.*, the science of human experience.

Let us consider the subject in further detail. Dr. Jung, at the Tenth International Conference of Medical Psychologists at Oxford in the summer of 1938, gave a list of conclusions which were accepted by Swiss psychologists of all schools. The most important of these agreed points was the opinion that childhood's experiences were capable of influencing the child's personality throughout life. The deep-seated, positive impulses which inspire creative effort, as well as those which inhibit effort, derive their strength from personal relationships in the early years of life.

It is significant, then, that Jesus " discovered " children and told his disciples to receive them in His name and blessed them as belonging to God's Kingdom and commended childhood as the best age in which to receive the Kingdom, *e.g.*, God's reign in their hearts. Also any psychotherapist would agree with the fierce denunciation of people who put " stumbling blocks " in the receptive minds of children.

It might be said that these references were simply expressions of Our Lord's intuitive sympathy for the young and not derived opinion. This reliance upon intuition does not do the Master justice. It takes his teaching as isolated sayings, arising *ex vacuo* as it were, instead of the product of mature insight and reasoned observation. His mind must have functioned on the human plane and like ours have created a pattern of ideas and style of thought which indicate His personality.

We find that with His insistence on the importance of childhood He also understood the technical process which controls the birth and growth of ideas. He was deeply interested in the development of human personality.

In the parable of the " Sower " Jesus described this process as one existing between the sower—the seed—and the soil. This is in strict accord with the agreed opinion mentioned by Dr. Jung ;

the sower is someone significant in a person's childhood—the seed, some idea or impulse in morality, beauty, justice, art, science, etc.—and the soil is human personality. The process is described in the parable as “hearing the word,” “accepting it” and “bearing fruit,” or in psychological language the recognition of truth, decision-acceptance and creative-activity.

The important factor is the ability of the “seed” to “take root”; this is, in fact, a point of great significance in a person's development; many good impulses do not reach deep enough in personality and so tend to weaken or continue in a less vigorous form; their ability to grow depends upon their grip.

An investigation into the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels would carry us over a wide field in psychology which is beyond the scope of this short paper, but any competent psychologist who is interested in the matter will find a true description in picture language of the processes governing human development. Here, for instance, is a description of the unconscious development of ideas; Christ is not dealing with what Dr. Jung calls “the collective unconscious” but with the “silent” or “dark” elements which enable growth to take place. “And He said, so is the Kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed upon the earth and should sleep and rise night and day and the seed should spring up and grow he knoweth not how. The earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” (St. Mark iv, 26–29.)

Two parables which also show deep psychological insight are “The Precious Pearl” and “Hid Treasure.” They are supplementary and explain two aspects of the process of “the will to act.” You will notice that the parables are described as illustrating the Kingdom of God, and who would dispute the importance of the “will” or “decision-acceptance” in promoting the reign of God in human life? (This point, by-the-by, indicates the source of strength of the Oxford Group Movement.) These are short parables and every word is both significant and indispensable and they show a Master's hand in their composition.

The parable of the Precious Pearl describes the experience of a merchant who in the ordinary course of business buys and sells articles of special value—in this case “goodly pearls”; but they only pass through his hands for purposes of profit until the beauty or value of one unusually perfect pearl captures his appreciation to such an extent that he decides not to barter it but to possess the pearl himself; his decision to make it his own

is so complete that he is content to sell all his goods in order to make up the purchase price. The will to purchase was a process from a point of appreciation of value to the point of possession by overcoming the factor of disinterest. This is a correct description of the process of willing to act.

The parable of the Hid Treasure has the same theme, but the thing of value was found outside the ordinary course of business. It was a new and unexpected find; there was no question of beauty involved but rather financial gain. In the joyful state of mind which is usually inspired by unexpected good fortune the man sold out his goods and bought the field and the treasure with it. (You will notice that the element of joy is not mentioned in the parable of the Precious Pearl; its discovery came through an existing sense of appreciation and was not new, or may be not so unexpected.)

This parable of the Hid Treasure describes the decision-acceptance of the Kingdom of God from less worthy motives and is rather akin to the parable of the Unjust Steward.

We must insist, at the risk of over-emphasis, that exegesis of the Gospels from a subjective point of view should be discontinued and that commentators should equip themselves with psychological knowledge of human experience and so be qualified to approach objectively the thought system of Jesus. They will discover with deepening interest the impressive fact that Jesus has covered the ground before them; He was well aware, for instance, of the problem discussed in this paper—the fundamental need of permanence and security in the conditions of life and in the structure of personality. He roundly asserted in characteristic pictorial style, "Everyone therefore which heareth these words of mine and doeth them shall be likened unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock." (St. Luke vi, 47-49.)

His teaching, standard of conduct and personality form the sure foundation on which, by virtue of its truth, human character can find its noblest development.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN said: The importance of a purely objective approach to the Biblical writings has only recently been appreciated. It is far from easy to achieve.

Further, the subjective element can hardly be eliminated since the Scriptures require more than merely verbal and grammatical translation—they require transmutation into the thought forms of different ages and cultures. There is in them a saving energy which needs to be introduced into the minds and hearts of all manner of men in forms which they can assimilate.

Delitsch introduced his psychological concepts into his *System of Biblical Psychology*. Mr. Lang interprets in terms of his psychological ideas, which are very different from those of Delitsch. While some of his interpretations may appear forced, as for instance his treatment of the vulture and carcass saying, there is much in the paper that is suggestive, of which the acute observation on the element of joy in the parable of the Hidden Treasure is a good example.

Rev. A. W. PAYNE, in thanking the writer of the paper and referring to remarks of the Chairman, said both were most informative and suggestive. With regard to the opening sentence and the question of doubt, it seems three kinds of faith are needed:—

1. That which *decides* to be saved.
2. That which *depends* to be kept.
3. That which *delights* to be used.

So many in the Church were rather relying on a bottle life instead of being fit for the battle for the truth. Of course, it was not an easy matter to stand out for the full inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, but what Dr. Adolf Saphir, a noted Hebrew Christian, once said, is very true—that Jesus and the Bible are both Jewish and universal.

In congratulating Mr. Lang on the sentence, “But the historic Jesus and the Germanic spirit cannot be brought together except by an act of historic violence, which in the end injures both religion and history”, he said, the Nazi hatred of the Jews led to the rejection of the Bible, as the authority for both the Old and New Testaments came through Jewish channels, as our Lord Himself said, “Salvation is of the Jews”.

With regard to Mr. Leslie’s difficulty of the understanding of the objective view-point of the writers of the Gospels, it was possible only if there was a real study of the Bible, whose history and

geography is absolutely accurate, though, of course, there was the need of the Holy Spirit's help to secure its real value.

In referring to "the eagles gathering to the carcass" it was a question of a religious system with the life gone.

The Bible was opposed by other false writings such as the Jewish Talmud, the Koran, *Das Capital* of Marx, *Mein Kampf* of Hitler, and the Chinese revolutionary literature. Jerusalem was likely to become a centre of corruption with false Christendom, apostate Jewry, the collapse of modern religion, all combining in a psychology fit only to be the prey of vultures devouring a corrupt corpse.

Dr. J. BARCROFT ANDERSON said: To my understanding every portion of this paper is condemned by the words: "The soulish man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of the God, because to him they are senseless; and he is unable to get to know them, because they are discerned spiritually". (1 Cor. ii, 14.)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Col. A. H. VAN STRAUBENZEE wrote: The lecturer intimates that the attitude of uncertainty and doubt in present-day religion is due to lost confidence in the Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture, and in its Divine inspiration.

In the opening books of the Old Testament, God gave us four views of the death of Christ in the four offerings; in the New Testament the four gospels give us four views of the life of Christ; there must of necessity be differences in words and expressions used, which really become proofs of accuracy and perfection. We have given to us four inspired accounts of the life on earth of the "Christ of God", and we are further told of this life in Romans xv, 8, that Christ has become a minister of circumcision for the truth of God to *confirm* the promises of the fathers.

Christ's teaching in all four gospels concerns four subjects:—

1. The Kingdom proclaimed: Matt. iv, 12 to vii, 29; Matt. viii, 1 to xvi, 20; Matt. xvi, 21 to xx, 34; Matt. xxi, 1 to xxvi, 35.

2. The King proclaimed: Mark i, 14 to 20; Mark i, 21 to viii, 30; Mark viii, 31 to x, 52; Mark xi, 1 to xiv, 25.

3. King rejected : Luke iv, 14 to v, 11 ; Luke v, 12 to ix, 21 ; Luke ix, 22 to xviii, 43 ; Luke xix, 1 to xxii, 38.

4. Kingdom rejected : John i, 35 to iv, 54 ; John v, 1 to vi, 71 ; John vii, 1 to xi, 54 ; John xi, 55 to xviii, 1.

Out of 89 chapters, 69 are devoted to the above four subjects. The common practice of taking the Kingdom as meaning the Church has been the source of much error and misunderstanding. Each gospel has its special teaching ; this is why certain words and works are peculiar to one gospel and omitted from another.

The leading thought in Matthew is the Lord as Jehovah's King.

The leading thought in Mark is the Lord as Jehovah's Servant.

The leading thought in Luke is the Lord as Jehovah's Man.

The leading thought in John is the Lord as Jehovah Himself.

It was clearly never in God's purpose to give us one gospel or Life of Christ ; the parts are distributed according as they are appropriate to the special design and character of each gospel ; there were certain great events which were never repeated, such as " The Mission of the Twelve " and " The Transfiguration ".

There is a dangerous sentiment abroad that because Christ said a thing when on earth that it must be binding now. The fact is overlooked that Christ lived under the law of Moses and came to found His earthly Kingdom, taught the principles of that (yet) future Kingdom, and at the end of His ministry, and in relation to His cross, He anticipated the teaching of grace. Paul, speaking by the Spirit, warned us not now to know Christ after the flesh (meaning whilst He was on earth) but *now* always as our exalted Lord in the heavens. There are three distinct methods of living revealed in the Scriptures :—

1. Under law from Moses to Calvary. Past.

2. Under Grace, from the Ascension to the removal of the Church Body. Present.

3. Under the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Future.

The mixing up of these three is largely responsible for the present distress. We are now under grace, we see " not yet " all things put under Him ; the Kingdom is in abeyance and will, after Satan and his demons are dealt with on the earth, be set up in Palestine, greatly enlarged, with its headquarters in Jerusalem.

It therefore appears to me the Lecturer is out for the impossible, to approach Christ's teaching from the study of fallen human nature, which we are told in Romans is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

In Luke xvii, our Lord said the Kingdom of God cometh not by hostile watching—said to the Pharisees who were watching Him with hostile intent, and in verse 21, the Kingdom of God is within, means in the midst of or among, *i.e.*, already there in the Person of the King.

In verse 37, the reference to eagles is taken from Job xxxix, 30—“Her young ones also suck up blood; and where the slain are there is she (the eagle)”. Christ, as Son of Man, is speaking of His dominion in the earth and of the judgment which will then be under Him; those slain will be consumed by vultures and eagles.

Frail man in this dispensation of grace can only be saved on “faith-principle”, his security consists in believing God.

MR. GEO. BREWER wrote: In seeking a psychological approach to Christ's teaching, it seems to me that we should ask ourselves: What was His object in coming into this world? I think we shall see that the object was threefold: the first and main object being to glorify God as a man by a life of simple dependence upon Him, and to carry out the will of His Father in every detail of His earthly life. The first man, Adam, had failed by an act of disobedience, but our Lord could say “I always do the things that please my Father”, and in John xii, 49 “I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak”; and at the close of His earthly career could say in His prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, “I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do”.

The second object following, and being dependent upon the first, was to redeem man from the consequences of the Fall by the sacrifice of a perfect life upon the Cross of Calvary. The third object following, and dependent upon the first and second, being to counteract and destroy the works of the devil. “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had

the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage". (Heb. ii, 14, 15.)

During the three years of our Lord's public ministry He was constantly in contact with fallen man, and having perfect knowledge of what was in the mind of man, His teaching was directed less to outward acts than to the heart from which sprang the motive ; and if He used some of the methods which we use in order to obtain knowledge, it was to bring out confession of what was within, as in the case of our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus and with the woman of Samaria. He always dealt with the source of the evil rather than with the evil itself—a perfect psychological treatment by one who was eminently fitted to provide an effectual remedy.

The Rev. Principal H. S. CURR wrote : It is impossible to withhold cordial assent from Mr. Wyatt Lang's contention that the paramount need of much modern Christianity is a renewed sense of security. As he reminds us, confidence is the basis of living on every level : physical, economical and intellectual. The difficulty of the modern man is to discover a sure ground for faith that life and labour are not in vain. As the paper shows, that has been due to the undermining of the authority of Holy Scripture. It is no longer regarded as the infallible source of Divine truth. Men's opinions regarding the Bible do not affect its real character. It remains, to borrow Mr. Gladstone's classic phrase, the Impregnable Rock, whether men are prepared to accept that view or otherwise, the reason being that its claims for itself are so stupendous that they must be true. The alternative is that men who put on paper such words, must have taken leave of their senses. Such a hypothesis is so utterly out of accord with the spiritual and intellectual heights and depths, so characteristic of the Bible, that it cannot be considered for a moment. To illustrate the point from the field of research to which Mr. Lang's paper is devoted. The psychology of the Old and New Testaments passeth knowledge in its acuteness and abundance. It is true that it is not stated in scientific language. It is presented in concrete and pictorial form, but that does not affect its value, if indeed it does not enhance it, since the Bible is thus independent of fashionable scientific terminology and jargon which varies from age to age.

If I understand the paper aright, the author does not dispute that the Bible is the supreme and sufficient source of security for living and dying. It would appear, however, that he desires an improved system of interpretation with special reference to the teaching of our Lord in the Synoptic Gospels since he does not seem to have included the Fourth Gospel in his survey. With his contentions that that body of teaching is a unity there cannot but be hearty agreement. I should not, however, be surprised if there is considerable diversity of opinion as to the nature of this unity. Mr. Lang finds the key in the perfect adaptation of our Lord's precepts and parables to the structure of the human mind and heart. The key fits the lock and the door is opened. It is the remedy for all the ills that the flesh is heir to.

It cannot be denied that the psychological insight which characterises the Synoptic Gospels is marvellous. Again and again it reminds the reader of that verse in St. John's Gospel where the evangelist observes, regarding the multitude who believed on our Lord's name because of His mighty miracles, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man". (John ii, 24-25.) Such behaviour in a time of wonderful popularity is itself a psychological problem. Mr. Lang's arguments on the soundness of New Testament psychology are absolutely valid.

I hesitate to accept the inferences which he appears to draw from them. Is the factor which imparts unity and system to the teaching of our Lord in Matthew, Mark and Luke, not the Person of Christ and His redemptive work? After all has been said and done, Christianity in the last analysis is Christ and Him Crucified. It is not merely a corpus of Divine wisdom. Our religion begins and ends in a Person, being differentiated in that way from all other faiths. Christ is the chief corner-stone of Christianity and His person weaves into wondrous union and unity its diverse elements just as an elaborate symphony is dominated by its keynote, although its variety of sweet sounds be almost infinite in range. As for the psychological approach to our Lord's teaching in the gospels, the teacher Himself is the sum and substance of the teaching, and He is the Eternal Rock of Ages, the refuge of the human spirit in all generations.

Mr. PERCY O. RUOFF wrote: There can be no question that Mr. Lang is right in stating that the trouble with the Church is the "existence of doubt where no doubt should be". But is he not profoundly wrong in saying that "the old sense of permanent security in religion upheld by faith in the verbal inspiration of the Bible . . . is no longer reliable"? It is just this failure to declare the Bible to be the Word of God that has produced insecurity, undermined the foundations, and paralysed the witness and authority of the Church. There is a certain amount of interest in showing that Christ's teaching is psychologically true, but this is of quite small and subsidiary importance.

The mission of the Church, of every Christian preacher and missionary and individual Christian is to declare and proclaim the grace of God for human need on the authority of the Throne of God, some in a public capacity and others in a more private way, but all as witnesses to the power of the Gospel. The Church of God, if it is to fulfil its mission, cannot afford to be side-tracked by expending energy in pretty psychological discussions. Mr. Lang says we "cannot hope to recover a sense of security in the exigencies of the Gospels from a subjective point of view". But this is exactly what the Church ought to do. This, in substance, is the command of the Risen Christ, "Go . . . preach . . . teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you and lo, I am with you alway."

The lecturer says, "The day of the Lord" is the time of conversion and submission to God. Reference to the New Testament usage of the phrase shows that it is never once used in this sense, but always in defining a prophetic period.

The reference Mr. Lang makes to Christ and children bears little resemblance to what Christ said. Christ did not either bless them as belonging to His Kingdom or commend childhood as the best age in which to receive the kingdom. What Christ did say was this: "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. xviii, 3), which is a very different thing.

It is said in St John's gospel (ii, 24) that Jesus "knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man". It is also said "He that is of God heareth God's words".

From these two statements (1) we may assume (and it is borne out by the Gospel records) that all His words were psychologically true, and (2) that what He said is to be received as spoken by God, and, therefore, final in authority.

THE AUTHOR'S REPLY.

There must necessarily be, as Mr. Leslie points out, a subjective as well as an objective point of view ; to preserve a proper balance between these two aspects is a major problem of life and one about which Christ was constantly concerned. We see this in His use of parables such as the Good Samaritan and the Unmerciful Servant and also in such sayings as "He that hath ears to hear let him hear", "Whosoever shall lose his soul shall preserve it".

It should be remembered that a good subjective point of view depends upon a true understanding of the objective aspect of experience, they are both intimately related. Before we can draw valid personal or subjective ideas from Christ's teaching we must be as certain as possible that we understand the mind of Christ. Knowing the ideas of Jesus we can make whatever personal deductions we like, but we have no right to throw our ideas into His mind and claim them as His.

I accept the correctness of St. Paul's statement, quoted by Dr. Anderson, but I do not understand how it invalidates my paper. A sense of appreciation is built up by learning and insight, therefore a "soulish" or uninterested or natural man, not having the impulse to learn nor the knowledge from which insight is acquired, is unable to appreciate religious truth.

Principal Curr is, of course, right in stressing the point that Christianity is a personal religion. The mystical union between Christ and His disciple transcends any system of thought ; nevertheless an essential part of this union is an intellectual as well as an emotional nexus. The personality of Christ must be intellectually significant in the life we are living.

In regard to the distinction which Principal Curr mentions between the Synoptic Gospels and St. John's Gospel—psychologically considered the distinction does not seem to hold. The same psychological system runs through the four gospels ; this indicates that they originated from the same mind.

Mr. Ruoff has correctly pointed out a slip on my part in using the term "Day of the Lord". This phrase was never used by Christ. I should have said "the day that the Son of Man is revealed". This is not necessarily a prophetic period, Christ compared it to "the days of Noah".

Mr. Ruoff says that my reference to Christ and children bears little resemblance to what Christ said and then he quotes St. Matt. xviii, 3, which refers to adults cultivating the childlike spirit. He forgets, however, the incident which I had in mind from St. Mark's Gospel (x, 13 ff.) where Christ is indignant with the disciples for repelling the parents of "little children" who wished them to receive Christ's blessing. "Forbid them not," He said, "for of such is the Kingdom of God."

Mr. Ruoff's statements that psychological understanding of Christ's teaching is "of quite small and subsidiary importance" and that "the Church of God if it is to fulfil its mission cannot afford to be side-tracked by expending energy in pretty psychological discussions" represent, as it seems to me, the typical attitude of many English Christians. It is such opinions as these which have diverted Christian truth from the main stream of life to petty personal interpretation. To put aside research and careful thinking about human nature seems a foolish evasion of our duty. How can the Church "fulfil its mission" to win human lives for God without having studied with Christ "what was in man"?

It is doubtful whether the Western religious mind can appreciate properly the point of view of Jesus in His teaching in the four Gospels. Our Western civilised mind deals in "things"; we are urged by an impulse to understand and possess "things" and to get "things" done. So profound is this attitude to life that even in the sphere of education we accept almost without question the method of compulsion; we hope by an enforced attention and compelled curriculum to impress ideas as if they were "things" on to the child's mind. This semi-conscious materialistic attitude is also apparent in the administration of justice; actions are regarded in isolation as if they were self-contained "items"; nor does anyone seem to question the justice of fixing law to a written code which is decided upon from a political angle by a majority vote. Is not this the same problem which Jesus found so troublesome in

regard to morality and the written law ? Moreover, the dominance of material over spiritual considerations is again seen in that the administration of justice in civil life depends upon a person's financial ability ; a poor man often cannot afford to obtain justice.

Christ's teaching is given from a different point of view from this material-power-production ethic.

It seems to me no exaggeration to say that there is one fundamental problem running down the history of the Bible from the Garden of Eden to the Apocalypse ; this problem dominated the mind of Moses and the Prophets and came down to Jesus for solution ; it was how to win the allegiance of man to the will of God. This is a psychological problem and involves knowledge of the character of God and of the spirit of man. The crucial point is the impact of " truth " on the human spirit. The mind and teaching of Christ were dominated by the problems of " truth " in the divine and human aspects. Truth was significance in the realm of morality, beauty and knowledge.

The difference in these two attitudes to life may be seen in the way many people interpret such a statement of Christ as " For he that hath, to him shall be given : and he that hath not from him shall be taken even that which he hath ". (St. Mark iv, 25.) The person with a materialistic attitude would see in the " having " some possession of " things " and question the justice of adding to a man's wealth and depriving a poor man of the little that he hath. The spiritual interpretation is that " having " refers to the ability to appreciate knowledge, beauty and goodness for their own sakes ; people possessing such qualities of mind tend to acquire greater insight and happiness while, on the other hand, the person with an unappreciative and ungenerous disposition tends to lose the little insight and happiness he may have had.

I do not suggest that the study of human mental processes will necessarily solve difficulties in religious experience ; it is one matter to know the path of life and another to take to it.

Christ, with His profound knowledge of human nature, could not prevent the flight of the Apostles from the Garden of Gethsemane nor, in spite of warning, Peter's rejection of Him in the courtyard of the High Priest.