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JOURNAL OF THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

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VOL. LXXXIII

1951

JOURNAL OF  
THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
The Victoria Institute  
OR  
Philosophical Society of Great Britain

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VOL. LXXXIII

1951



LONDON:

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**\*\* The object of the Institute being to investigate, it must not be held to endorse the various views expressed either in the papers or in the discussions.**

# VICTORIA INSTITUTE

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## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 1950.

READ AT THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MAY 21st, 1951.

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### 1. *Progress of the Institute.*

In presenting the Eighty-fourth Annual Report, the Council gives thanks to God for the continuation of the work of the Institute. The Council is grateful to those who contributed papers, to the gentlemen who took the chair, and to all who contributed to the discussions.

In addition to the Presidential Address, eight papers were read at ordinary meetings.

Besides the ordinary meetings two public lectures were arranged. The first, on "The Bible and Recent Archæological Discoveries," was delivered by Donald J. Wiseman, Esq., O.B.E., B.A., A.K.C., on October 11th, and on November 29th, R. J. C. Harris, Esq., A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D., gave a paper entitled "Life—Creation or Chance?" Both these lectures were delivered in the York Room, Caxton Hall, and drew audiences of about one hundred or more on each occasion.

Owing to the great increase in printing costs and other expenses, the Council decided to increase the annual subscription from two to three guineas per annum for Fellows, and from one to two guineas for Members, as from January 1st, 1950. This led to the resignation of about fifty Fellows and Members. There has also been a revision of the list of Fellows and Members by removing the names of those who had not contributed for some time. This has, however, led to no decrease in membership, and the numbers now shown are much nearer accuracy than before the revision was made. New accessions of Members are now occurring at a greater rate than withdrawals.

The Council has also decided to make subscriptions payable on January 1st, instead of twelve months after the date of election to membership. This has considerably simplified the book-keeping and clerical work.

Mr. T. I. Wilson, the assistant secretary, was taken ill before Christmas, and underwent a serious operation. In the mercy of God he made a rapid and complete recovery.

The Council desires to express its gratitude and indebtedness to the Honorary Secretary, Mr. E. J. G. Titterington, for the valuable services he continues to render.

2. *Meetings.*

The practice which had prevailed during the war of circulating the earlier papers of the Session to subscribers for discussion by written communication was discontinued. Eight Ordinary Meetings were held, in addition to the Annual General Meeting and Presidential Address.

“Some Recent Trends in Biblical Archæology,” by DONALD J. WISEMAN, Esq., O.B.E., B.A., A.K.C.

J. McIntyre, Esq., B.A., in the Chair.

“Platonism and the New Testament,” by the Rev. P. E. HUGHES, M.A., B.D.

Rev. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, M.D., M.R.C.P., in the Chair.

“The Early History of the Victoria Institute,” by E. J. G. TITTERINGTON, Esq., M.B.E., M.A.

Ernest White, Esq., M.B., B.S., in the Chair.

“The Modern Conception of the Universe in Relation to the Conception of God,” by FRANCIS I. ANDERSEN, Esq., B.Sc. (LANGHORNE ORCHARD PRIZE ESSAY).

Principal J. E. Richardson, Ph.D., B.Eng., M.I.E.E., A.M.I.Mech.E., in the Chair.

“The Psychological Conception of Personality,” by E. WELLISCH, Esq., M.D., D.P.M.

The Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A., in the Chair.

“Recent Discoveries in Biblical Manuscripts,” by F. F. BRUCE, Esq., M.A.

Jacob Leveen, Esq., B.A., in the Chair.

“Genetics and Evolution,” by DOUGLAS DEWAR, Esq., B.A., F.Z.S.

Harvey M. Carey, Esq., M.B., B.S., M.Sc., D.G.O., M.R.C.O.G., in the Chair.

“The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr,” by Prof. H. D. LEWIS, M.A., B.Litt.

The Very Rev. W. R. Matthews, K.C.V.O., D.D., D.Litt., Dean of St. Paul’s, in the Chair.

Presidential Address—“The Institute and Biblical Criticism Today,” by Sir FREDERIC G. KENYON, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.Litt., LL.D., F.B.A.

Ernest White, Esq., M.B., B.S., in the Chair.



### 3. Council and Officers.

The following is a list of the Council and Officers for the year 1950 :—

#### President.

Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.Litt., LL.D., F.B.A.

#### Vice-Presidents.

Professor A. Rendle Short, M.D., B.S., B.Sc., F.R.C.S.  
The Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D.

#### Trustees.

Ernest White, Esq., M.B., B.S.  
F. F. Stunt, Esq., LL.B.  
E. J. G. Titterington, Esq., M.B.E., M.A.

#### Council.

(In Order of Original Election.)

Douglas Dewar, Esq., B.A., F.Z.S.	Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A.
Lieut.-Col. L. M. Davies, M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.G.S., F.R.S.E.	E. J. G. Titterington, Esq., M.B.E., M.A.
Wilson E. Leaffe, Esq.	Lieut.-Col. W. E. Shewell-Cooper, M.B.E., N.D.H., F.L.S., F.R.S.A.
Percy O. Ruoff, Esq.	R. E. Ford, Esq.
Robert E. D. Clark, Esq., M.A., Ph.D.	R. J. C. Harris, Esq., A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D.
Rev. C. T. Cook.	F. F. Stunt, Esq., LL.B.
Ernest White, Esq., M.B., B.S. (Chairman of Council).	W. E. Filmer, Esq., B.A., F.Z.S.
	D. J. Wiseman, Esq., O.B.E., B.A., A.K.C.

#### Honorary Officers.

F. F. Stunt, Esq., LL.B., *Treasurer*.  
F. F. Bruce, Esq., M.A., *Editor*.  
E. J. G. Titterington, Esq., M.B.E., M.A., *Secretary*.

#### Auditors.

Messrs. Luff, Smith & Co., *Incorporated Accountants*.

#### Assistant Secretary.

Theodore I. Wilson, Esq.

### 4. Election of Officers.

In accordance with the Rules the following Members of the Council retire by rotation : Ernest White, Esq., M.B., B.S. ; Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A. ; R. J. C. Harris, Esq., A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D. ; and Lt.-Col. W. E. Shewell-Cooper, M.B.E., N.D.H., F.L.S., F.R.S.A., of whom the first three offer (and are nominated by the Council) for re-election.

Metcalfe Collier, Esq., Incorporated Accountant, of the firm of Metcalfe Collier, Hayward and Co., offers, and is nominated by the Council, for election as Auditor for the ensuing year, at a fee of seven guineas.

5. *Obituary.*

The Council regrets to announce the following deaths :—

Rev. W. Davey, Rev. C. C. Ellis, Ph.D., D.D., Rev. E. E. Ingham, Lieut.-Col. P. W. O'Gorman, C.M.G., M.D., M.R.C.P., James F. Spink, Esq., Ph.D., Litt.D.

6. *New Fellows, Members and Associates.*

The following are the names of new Fellows, Members and Associates elected in 1950 :—

**FELLOWS:** R. E. Beckett, Esq., F.C.A., F.S.A.A., F.C.I.S., F.S.S., F.R.Econ.S.; J. J. Brunt, Esq., M.B., Ch.B.; Harvey M. Carey, Esq., M.B., B.S., M.Sc., D.G.O., M.R.C.O.G.; D. Lee Chesnut, Esq., B.S.; Rev. W. J. Feely, A.B., Th.B.; Rev. Vernon C. Grounds, A.B., B.D.; Rev. F. C. Haysmore, B.D., F.R.G.S.; Rev. W. C. G. Hopkins; Rev. A. Hughes, B.A., D.D.; E. Lewis, Esq.; Miss Myra Light; Rev. W. Millington; J. W. Purdue, Esq.; P. H. Nielsen, Esq.; H. W. Sansom, Esq., M.A., Ph.D.; Rev. F. H. Squire, F.R.S.A.; Mrs. Olga Stokes; G. M. Taggart, Esq.; Rev. L. G. Tudor, C.F.; J. Walton, Esq.; M. H. Watney, Esq., M.A., M.B., B.Ch., M.R.C.S.; Rev. H. C. Webber; D. Widdison, Esq., M.P.S.; Principal G. A. Williams.

**MEMBERS:** P. B. Bagnall, Esq., B.A.; E. Bawtree, Esq., B.Sc., M.I.E.E., A.M.I.Mech.E.; J. R. Campion, Esq., A.P.A.; J. P. Cohen, Esq.; Rev. Colin H. Duncan, M.A., Th.L.; Rev. A. J. Gerlach, A.S.T.C., Th.L.; J. M. Houston, Esq., B.Sc., M.A., Ph.D.; Rev. A. J. Hutchinson; H. G. H. Lillycrap, Esq.; John Mann, Esq., M.A.; C. P. Martin, Esq., M.A., M.B., Sc.D.; R. K. Merritt, Esq., A.B.; S. F. D. Orr, Esq., B.A.; H. W. Osmond, Esq., B.A.; W. S. Penfold, Esq.; W. L. Pierce, Esq., B.A.; M. Pittam, Esq.; R. H. Reed, Esq. (on transfer from Associate); W. J. Reed, Esq.; R. H. Shallis, Esq.; Rev. J. J. Sidey, B.Th.; J. M. Vellacott, Esq.; Prof. Paul Woolley.

**ASSOCIATES:** D. C. Abbott, Esq.; A. O. Billingham, Esq.; A. R. Braybrooks, Esq.; D. Brookes, Esq.; B. M. N. Brown, Esq.; D. A. Burgess, Esq.; D. C. Burke, Esq., B.Sc.; W. G. Clarke, Esq.; N. L. Dunning, Esq.; Dudley T. Foord, Esq.; W. J. Freeman, Esq.; Miss G. Geary (on transfer from Member); C. W. Haigh, Esq., B.A.; Maurice Handford, Esq.; Peter J. Hart, Esq.; J. D. Harte, Esq., A.C.I.I.; J. H. Jackson, Esq.; Miss Ruth Olive Mist; D. J. Smith, Esq.; M. J. Turner, Esq.

**LIBRARY ASSOCIATE:** Dallas Theological Seminary; The Lucy Stites Barrett Memorial Library.

7. *Membership.*

Life Fellows ... ..	21
Annual Fellows ... ..	162
Life Members ... ..	32
Annual Members ... ..	253
Associates ... ..	75
Library Associates ... ..	56
 	<hr/>
Total Nominal Membership ... ..	599
	<hr/>

8. *Donations.*

Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, £1 11s. 6d. ; T. C. Denton, Esq., £1 1s. ; H. H. Goodwin, Esq., £1 4s. ; H. J. Hannah, Esq., 10s. 6d. ; J. W. Laing, Esq., £2 2s. ; W. E. Leslie, Esq., £2 2s. ; J. B. Nicholson, Esq., £1 17s. ; A. J. S. Preece, Esq., £1 1s. ; Professor A. Rendle Short, £5 5s. ; Mrs. Scott-Challice, 10s. ; B. P. Sutherland, Esq., £2 7s. 6d. ; E. H. Tait, Esq., £1 1s. ; Miscellaneous, 3s. 11d. Total, £20 16s. 5d.

ERNEST WHITE,

*Chairman.*

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 1950.

LIABILITIES.

1949		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1949	PREPAID SUBSCRIPTIONS :—									
	ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS :—									
	Fellows .....	31	16	6						
	Members .....	23	3	9						
	Associates .....		16	0						
10					55	16	3			
	LIFE SUBSCRIPTIONS :—									
	As at 1st January, 1950 .....	674	3	0						
	Add Elections during year....	64	18	0						
		739	1	0						
674	Deduct: Proportion written off	44	17	0	694	4	0			
								750	0	3
664										
	SUNDRY CREDITORS :—									
	EXPENSES :—									
	Rent, Lighting, Heating, etc.	40	16	6						
	Accountancy and Audit									
	Charges .....	7	7	0						
	Printing, Stationery and									
	Typing .....	113	14	9						
47					161	18	3			
	PUBLICATION "Transactions" :—									
	As at 1st January, 1950 .....	525	0	0						
	Deduct Cost of 1948 Volume									
	issued during year .....	224	0	0						
		301	0	0						
	Add Further Provision to									
	cover 1949 and 1950 vol-									
	umes .....	349	0	0	650	0	0			
525								811	18	3
572										

ASSETS.

1949		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1949	ACCUMULATED FUND :—						
503	Deficit as at 1st January, 1950....	600	3	3			
24	Add Amount written off Equipment .....						
73	" Excess of Expenditure over Income	482	3	6			
	for the year .....						
					1,082	6	9
600							
	LIBRARY, FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT,						
	not valued .....						
24	Typewriter purchased .....						
24	Deduct Amount written off .....						
	SUBSCRIPTIONS IN ARREARS :—						
85	Fellows .....	40	10	6			
100	Members .....	42	15	3			
15	Associates .....	6	6	0			
—	Life Member .....	12	18	0			
					102	9	9
200							
	SUNDRY DEBTORS :—						
—	Sales of Publications .....	32	15	2			
—	Accrued Interest from "Craig" Fund .....	6	11	8			
					39	6	10
	CASH :—						
496	Balance at Barclay's Bank, Limited .....	362	3	4			
3	Petty Cash in Hand .....	1	1	11			
499					363	5	3



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1950.

EXPENDITURE.				INCOME.										
1949	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.					
	To Rent, Lighting, Heating, Clean- ing, Telephone, and Hire of Rooms.... ..			206	2	6		By ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS :—						
105							400		Fellows .... ..	346	18	7		
183				200	0	0	373		Members .... ..	372	13	4		
100				100	0	0	67		Associates .... ..	37	12	0		
10				10	4	2	840							
							30		„ LIFE SUBSCRIPTIONS :— Proportion for the year ....			44	17	0
58							111		„ SALES OF PUBLICATIONS ....			179	11	1
7							24		„ DONATIONS .... ..			20	16	5
23							13		„ INTEREST FROM “ CRAIG ” MEMORIAL FUND .... ..			13	3	4
289				515	7	10	—		„ Accountancy and Audit Charges (1949) written back .... ..			2	2	0
316				349	0	0	1,018							
									73			482	3	6
									„ Excess of Expenditure over Income .... ..					

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE  
VICTORIA INSTITUTE

WAS HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 69, GREAT PETER STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MAY 21st, 1951.

ERNEST WHITE, Esq., M.B., B.S., CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL,  
IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on May 22nd, 1950, were read, confirmed and signed.

The Report of the Council and Statement of Accounts for 1950, having been circulated, were taken as read.

The Chairman then called on E. J. G. TITTERINGTON Esq., to move, and W. E. FILMER, Esq., to second, the *First Resolution*, as follows :—

“That the Report and Statement of Accounts for the year 1950, presented by the Council, be received and adopted.”

There being no comments or amendments, the Resolution was put to the Meeting and carried unanimously.

J. W. LAING, Esq., was then called upon to move, and Capt. A. L. PERRY to second, the *Second Resolution*, as follows :—

“That the President, Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.Litt., LL.D., F.B.A.; Vice-Presidents, Professor A. Rendle Short, M.B., B.S., B.Sc., F.R.C.S., and the Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D.; the Honorary Treasurer, F. F. Stunt, Esq., LL.B.; the Honorary Secretary, E. J. G. Titterington, Esq., M.B.E., M.A.; and the Honorary Editor, F. F. Bruce, Esq., M.A., be, and hereby are, re-elected to their offices.”

There were no comments or amendments, and the Resolution being put to the Meeting, was carried unanimously.

J. W. PURDUE, Esq., was then called upon to move, and Dr. G. B. MYERS to second, the *Third Resolution*, as follows :—

“That Ernest White, Esq., M.B., B.S., Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A., and R. J. C. Harris, Esq., A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D., retiring Members of the Council, be, and hereby are,

re-elected. Also that the election of F. F. Bruce, Esq., M.A., co-opted to fill a vacancy on the Council, be, and hereby is, confirmed.

There being no comments or amendments, the Resolution was put to the Meeting and carried unanimously.

Dr. R. J. C. HARRIS was then called upon to move, and Rev. C. T. COOK to second, the *Fourth Resolution*, as follows :—

“That George Metcalfe Collier, Esq., F.S.A.A., F.S.S., Incorporated Accountant, of the firm of Metcalfe Collier, Hayward and Co., be, and hereby is, elected Auditor at the fee of seven guineas ; and that the retiring Auditors, Messrs. Luff, Smith and Co., be thanked for their past services.”

There were no comments or amendments, and the Resolution was thereupon put to the Meeting and carried unanimously.

The Chairman then presented to A. H. Boulton, Esq., LL.B., the share of the Schofield Prize, which had been divided between him and Rev. J. Stafford Wright for an Essay on “The Place of Miracle in Modern Thought and Knowledge.”

He then made reference to the Gunning Prize for the ensuing year, the subject, already announced, being “The Limitations of Natural Theology.”

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated.



## 895TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 69, GREAT PETER STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 8TH JANUARY, 1951.

### REV. C. T. COOK IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous meeting, and of the two public meetings held on 11th October and 29th November, 1950, were read, confirmed and signed.

The following elections were announced:—Rev. Wilfrid Millington, Fellow; Rev. Llewellyn G. Tudor, C.F., Fellow; Mrs. Olga Stokes, Fellow; Rev. Frederick G. Haysmore, B.D., Fellow; Edwin Lewis, Esq., Fellow; Geoffrey M. Taggart, Esq., Fellow; Rowland E. Beckett, Esq., F.C.A., F.S.A.A., F.C.I.S., F.S.S., F.Econ.S., Fellow; Philip K. Nielsen, Esq., Fellow (on transfer from Member); John Walton, Esq., Fellow; D. Lee Chesnut, Esq., B.S., Fellow; Hugh Wilfred Sansom, Esq., M.A., Ph.D., Fellow; Rev. Herbert Collins Webber, Fellow; J. M. Vellacott, Esq., Fellow; Rev. W. C. G. Hopkins, Fellow; Michael Pittam, Esq., Member; Rev. J. J. Sidey, B.Th., Member; Rev. Colin M. Duncan, Esq., M.A., Th.L., Member; R. K. Merritt, Esq., A.B., Member; Cecil P. Martin, Esq., M.A., M.B., Sc.D., Member; Edward Bawtree, Esq., B.Sc., M.I.E.E., Member; Wm. S. Penfold, Esq., Member; Prof. Paul Woolley, Member; Rev. Alfred A. Gerlach, A.S.T.C., Th.L., Member (on transfer from Associate); James M. Houston, Esq., B.Sc., M.A., Ph.D., Member; Rev. A. J. Hutchinson, Member; John Mann, Esq., M.A., Member; C. W. Haigh, Esq., B.A., Associate; Peter J. Hart, Esq., Associate; Dudley T. Foord, Esq., Associate; Miss G. Geary, Associate (on transfer from Member); Derek C. Burke, Esq., B.Sc., Associate; William G. Clarke, Esq., Associate; Miss Ruth Olive Mist, Associate; Maurice Handford, Esq., Associate; The Lucy Stites Barret Memorial Library, Library Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then called upon Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A., in the absence of the author, to read the Paper by Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D., entitled "Progressive Revelation."

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### The Rev. S. Runsie Craig Memorial, 1951

In accordance with the terms of the Trust the Council have selected for the 1951 Memorial the Paper on "Progressive Revelation" read before the Institute on January 8th, 1951, by Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D., as being strongly confirmatory of the Christian Faith.

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### PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

By REV. PRINCIPAL H. S. CURR, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D.

#### SYNOPSIS.

Theologians are divided as to their interpretation of the meaning of Progressive Revelation, as illustrated in the Old Testament. The older theory is that progress consisted in a fuller understanding and appreciation of that ethical monotheism which is the very core of Judaism, and which has been its mainspring since its inception. The more modern view is that ethical monotheism represents the crown and consummation

of what has been described as the Divine discipline of Israel, in the eighth century B.C. The paper endeavours to defend the older theory, the case being based on a variety of arguments, Scriptural, theological, philosophical, and psychological. The difficulties entailed in the more conservative approach are not minimized, and an attempt has been made to do full justice to the modern critical conclusions.

**P**ROGRESSIVE Revelation is a phrase which lends itself to very different interpretations, although it may be safely said that, up to a point, there is substantial unanimity as to its meaning provided that the two words are accepted as conveying the same ideas. Taking revelation first, the expression is generally used to designate the self-manifestation of God. As for progressive, full account may be taken of those thinkers who deny the existence of progress, maintaining that universal history is but a play without a plot. The comings and goings of men are not comparable to the ascent of a spiral staircase, but to endless and meaningless meanderings in a circular maze. Progress is thus a mental mirage. For the purposes of this paper, it should be stated that progress must be understood in the sense in which it is used by the authors of Holy Scripture, incomparably the finest and sanest intellects that have yet appeared, quite apart from their claims to supernatural illumination. Their conception of progress is that of the Son of Man in Whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, expressed with symbolic adequacy in the familiar words: "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4: 28).

The task of definition and demarcation is not, however, exhausted by such general observations as these. There is difference of opinion as to what the self-manifestation of God signifies. It is decidedly doubtful whether a majority of modern theologians would accept the old distinction of general and special revelation, meaning by general revelation the Divine disclosure of which Paul speaks in the opening paragraphs of his Epistle to the Romans: "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1: 20). As for special revelation, nothing more succinct or satisfying can be found than the opening chords with which the heavenly music of the Epistle to the Hebrews commences:

“ God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds ” (Hebrews 1 : 1-2). This discussion proceeds upon the assumption that general and special revelation are still relevant and reliable expressions. Its range must, however, be limited strictly to special revelation whose repository, in the last analysis, is the Word of God.

More delimitation is still necessary before the precise scope of this paper will become apparent. The special revelation contemplated is equivalent to that of Old Testament religion. According to modern critical scholarship, progressive revelation is the key to the proper understanding and appreciation of the Old Testament and its distinctive contribution to the coming of that kingdom which is an everlasting kingdom. The Old Testament is thus the written record of a progressive revelation. It is, however, needful to define that phrase with a little more crispness. Nobody who accepts the principle of revelation as Divine self-manifestation, along both general and special lines, will dispute that there are ample evidences of progress in the narrative of Hebrew religion which is contained in the Old Testament. In passing, it may be remarked that it was long said of Scotland, the Judæa of the North as Heine, the Jewish poet, described it, that its history was equivalent to the history of its religion. If this be true in that connection, it is a thousand times more true to make a similar claim for ancient, and, perhaps, modern Israel, as well. In that case, it is not unjustifiable to regard the Old Testament as the historical record of the ancient Hebrew faith.

The story covers many centuries, in contrast to the New Testament whose chronology does not seriously exceed the lifetime of the venerable Apostle John. The space between the Exodus and the Exile, the two foci of Old Testament History, might have been a thousand years, although that estimate would now be regarded as exaggerated. In any case, it is quite clear that the national piety of Israel had undergone a sweeping change for the better during these centuries. Accepting provisionally, and only for the sake of illustration, modern dating of Old Testament literature, it must be admitted at once that there is a vast difference between the Song of Deborah, which is often pronounced to be the oldest surviving fragment of ancient Hebrew writings, and those psalms which Calvin considered to be possible

relics of the Maccabean Age about a century and a half before the Christian era. These exhibit eloquent evidence of national growth in grace and in the knowledge of the God of all grace. All schools of opinion would endorse these observations. The modern doctrine of progressive revelation, however, signifies a conception of Old Testament religion which is very different.

Its supporters, who are very numerous, take the view that the primitive form of Hebrew religion was something rather different from the famous definition as ethical monotheism, signifying that there can be no plurality of divinities—gods many and lords many as Paul describes the paganism of his day—but One only, and He the God of Israel, while His service is mercy and not sacrifice. Passing over the many theories which have been advanced as to the primitive religion of Israel, which is supposed to have been almost indistinguishable from that of the heathen on the same level of civilization and culture, a beginning might be made with the stage described in Professor Max Müller's famous expression as henotheism. That signifies a type of religion in which the allegiance of its adherents is pledged to one god, but which nevertheless tolerates the possibility of other divinities guiding the destinies of other tribes and nations. If Jehovah was the sole object of worship in Israel, Chemosh enjoyed a similar distinction in the land of Moab. Such a faith might be described as a territorial monotheism. It is illustrated by such a verse as this: "And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they" (1 Kings 20: 23). It need only be added that the service of such a god lay more in rites and ceremonies than in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with man's Maker. In process of time, a deeper and nobler theology took the field. Its sum and substance are stated in the words which are repeated by the devout Jew until this present hour: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6: 4-5). Henotheism is thus displaced by monotheism, and ritual righteousness by that which is moral and spiritual. That is as far as Old Testament religion goes. Of the Eternal King of Israel it may be said that He goes a little farther, thus illustrating in unsurpassable fashion Browning's couplet:

Oh, the little more, and how much it is!

And the little less, and what worlds away!

This transition from henotheism to monotheism, for which the great galaxy of prophets, who ministered in the eighth century B.C., is responsible, furnishes an excellent example of what progressive revelation signifies. Prior to the period just mentioned, the doctrine that there is but one God, and one only, was unknown in ancient Israel. It had not been revealed to men by the Holy Spirit of God.

That is a clear and convincing illustration, but it fails to convey any adequate notion of what progressive revelation in the religious history of Israel really means. It is something akin to the evolution of the human species in the natural world. Of Zacchæus and his ascent of a sycamore tree that he might get a glimpse of Jesus, it was once remarked in playful fashion by a distinguished divine, when preaching on the incident, that the little man was returning to the arboreal habits of his ancestors, in reference to the modern scientific explanation of human origins as being akin to that of the monkey. In the same way the Hebrew religion began on an incredibly low level which offered neither prospect nor promise of the faith which gave birth to the Old Testament. Thus certain significant references to the serpent in connection with Divine things (Genesis 3: 1-5, 14-15; Numbers 21: 9; 2 Kings 18: 4) are interpreted as relics of serpent worship. It must be understood that we are not concerned here with the lapses and failures of the chosen people but with the general practice in matters of religion in its rudimentary forms, such times and seasons of ignorance at which God winked. Anything approaching revelation is first associated with the work of Moses, and its contribution was of such a kind that a very considerable amount of progress was required. Various theories are advanced in connection with the part which Moses played. In some of these, it is not very easy to detect factors which would entitle the changes for which he was responsible to be regarded as savouring of a Divine Revelation. Thus it has been maintained that Moses induced the horde of nomads whose leader he was, to accept Yahweh, the storm-god of Sinai, as the object of their allegiance. That is an extreme view, but its promulgation is an evidence of the existence of a line of approach which is very different from that followed by the Old Testament scholars of a former age. It is hard to see how such a hypothesis can be reconciled to any doctrine of progressive revelation, worthy of the name. To be fair, it should be added that nothing which can fairly be so called is admitted by the adherents of this school

until the emergence of prophets like Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah in the century which preceded the Fall of Samaria in B.C. 721. That was the beginning of ethical monotheism as the national faith of the Hebrews, and the rise of progressive revelation.

Certain observations may now be interpolated that the explanation of changes so radical may be better appreciated. The first must be concerned with newer conclusions regarding the date of Old Testament literature. No composition earlier than the eighth century B.C. is admitted to be authoritative. Writings which may seem to claim a much earlier origin are declared to have reached posterity in a form which post-exilic influences have so largely affected that they cease to be trustworthy as sources of information for the more remote periods. In these circumstances, conditions, religious and otherwise, obtaining in those early times, can only be known by inferences from the existing documents, coupled with conjectures based on such principles of human history as evolution.

The wide diffusion of the latter doctrine as the key to the origin of all things has affected the approach to the religious history of the Hebrews. It is governed by the doctrine of development. Just as man is regarded as having an animal ancestry, the theology of the Old Testament took its rise in what was nothing more, and nothing less, and nothing else than Semitic paganism. In conjunction with reasoning and research, there can be no doubt about the familiar truth that things human must be estimated by their ends and not by their beginnings. The origins of Hebrew religion may be anything but promising, but its consummation earned the commendation of the Prophet of Nazareth: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" (Matt. 5: 17). As Mozley puts it dealing with the same subject, "The test is not the commencement, but the result." The only comment which can be made finds adequate expression in the familiar saying that water cannot rise higher than its own level. The history of all pagan faiths has been one of steady decline and degeneration. Judaism followed a very different course, so that its Bible which is constituted by the Old Testament enjoys the distinction of contributing about three-quarters of the Christian Scriptures. In these circumstances, it may be argued that if we work backward in place of forward from the present place of honour enjoyed by the Old Testament, the candlestick of the

New which giveth light to all that are in the world, we shall expect that another old saying, to the effect that well begun is half done, should be verified in its case. Our Lord claims to be Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, of redemption, as well as of creation. The roots of redemption must be struck deep in human history, deeper than anything else.

A very serious difficulty however remains. Even if we are satisfied that from its very inception Old Testament piety was ever of a lofty type, so simple that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need to have no hesitation or difficulty in apprehending it, and yet so profound that it passeth knowledge, we find ourselves confronted with a multitude of facts and factors which are utterly incompatible with it. These do not refer to man's failings and failures, but to the inspired provisions of the ethical code whose observance constituted the one and only passport to Divine favour. In the keeping of God's commandments there is great reward. When, however, we turn to investigate some of these ordinances, we are sorely puzzled. Modern critical scholarship appears to have a stronger case for its views on the true nature of progressive revelation than we are accustomed to think. In short, we are confronted with a curious contradiction between belief and behaviour, as the latter is Divinely prescribed. "Thus Abraham receives from God a command to sacrifice his son Isaac; Deborah, a prophetess, pronounces Jael blessed for her treacherous murder of Sisera; the Mosaic legislation provides for slavery, polygamy, and divorce; the command to exterminate the Canaanites is represented as coming directly from God, and the Israelites are even reproved for not executing it with sufficient thoroughness; David or whoever was the writer, invokes curses on his enemies, and prays for their destruction" (Orr, *The Problem of the Old Testament*, p. 466). The Bible student is tempted to think that such problems disappear when the modern doctrine of progressive revelation is accepted. Erroneous because imperfect theology harmonizes well with such chequered canons of conduct.

The first point to note must be that nobody denies the fact of progressive revelation. How much of Our Lord's work lay in the correction of erroneous ideas and practices which enjoyed a remarkable degree of prestige amongst the Palestinian Jews of His day! Here is a classic example. In the Sermon on the Mount we read these words: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto

you, that ye resist not evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5 : 38-39). Their point is often missed. If reference be made to the passages in the Pentateuch where such retaliation is sanctioned, it will be found that it is more judicial than vindictive. The penalty must correspond in gravity to the offence. It has, however, been stated with ample justification that the practices sanctioned by Moses, were designed to bridle the spirit of Oriental vindictiveness. No more than the equivalent may be exacted. An eye for an eye, one only and not two. Such qualifying conditions are worthy of admiration on such a low level of civilization. Nevertheless such a line of action falls far short of the glory of God. Our Lord accordingly proceeds to show to mankind a more excellent way. There surely we may say that we find progressive revelation *par excellence*, and the instance is by no means isolated.

The problem, however, does not assume its gravest form in that connection. It becomes much more acute when we learn of sanction being given to practices for which no adequate justification can be found. It is needful in that connection that the precise nature of the problem be stated afresh. The difficulty lies, as has already been asserted, in the combination of teaching on the nature of God which is unreservedly endorsed in the New Testament with precepts which it repudiates. Light hath no fellowship with darkness. Take the case of slavery. It is ever and everywhere wrong. It cannot be justified under any circumstances. Nevertheless its practice is sanctioned in the Law of Moses. It is true that the form is much more modified than that which prevailed in antiquity, but the root principle is the same.

Reverting again to the problem which may be said in some measure to dominate this paper, we find ourselves confronted with some such dilemma as this. We maintain that from the beginning revealed religion was of that exalted type which we find in the Old Testament. Even if centuries separate the contents of the Pentateuch from the incidents which it records, the fact remains that those who were responsible for its production believed that its representation of primitive life and practice in Israel's progenitors was true and worthy of all acceptance. Even if the Old Testament histories reflect the life and thought of a much later date than the circumstances with which they deal, the difficulty remains. Yoked side by side, we find supreme



theology and inferior ethics. It looks like gathering grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. The sweet singer of Israel was also a polygamist. The modern interpretation of progressive revelation seems to offer a reasonable and satisfactory solution of the problem. Religion and morality alike moved on a comparatively low level.

Various contentions may be urged in reply to these objections. Thus it is always legitimate to argue that progress is never unconscious, or accidental in the sense in which we might speak in jocular fashion of falling upstairs. Suppose that it be conceded that the human species is derived in the last analysis from the monkey family. The fact remains that the immeasurable changes which have made man what he is have been denied to all other branches of the genus to which he is regarded as belonging. Between the animal kingdom and the human race there is a great and growing gulf fixed. In the same fashion, it may be indubitable that Israel did not differ very much from the Canaanites in its earliest stages, but there must be some explanation of the incredible changes which have followed. May not that be found in the presence and power of factors as sublime and as holy as others were vile and vicious? The abolition of the slave trade in the Anglo-Saxon world was not complete until the middle of last century, but we must not draw the inference that the light did not shine in the darkness. On the contrary we discover yet another commentary on the words: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness overcame it not" (John 1: 4-5). If the light does not so shine in darkness of any kind, the latter will grow deeper and deeper, as national and personal history abundantly prove. It was because that the light of God burned and shone in ancient Israel, and in the modern world, that the darkness has been dispelled in such measure as it has been. The Pentateuch includes this injunction amongst others of a very different order: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord" (Lev. 19: 18).

Another line of reasoning might centre round the fact that the historic theory of progressive revelation is more sound from a psychological standpoint than the more modern version. Thus mental progress can be made much more rapidly than moral progress, as Paul reminds us in these words: "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law

of sin" (Rom. 7 : 25). In the same way, we may be justified in the statement that the theology of early piety in Israel was full of truth and grace within certain limits, but its morality was lamentably defective at a number of points. There is nothing impossible in the theory that such a condition of affairs was always in evidence. It is repeated in every age, if not in such arresting ways. Mind and heart do not always make one music. The difficulty, of course, remains that certain abuses, as we should now describe them, were tolerated. The explanation may well be that their proscription would make things worse in place of better. The attitude of the New Testament to the slave trade is an excellent example. Paul does not reprimand Philemon because he kept a slave. He puts the situation in an entirely new light of which his friend may never have dreamed, and by so doing he struck a mortal blow at an abuse which was destined to disfigure the earth for many centuries after he had left it. The time was not ripe. To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven : a time to break down, and a time to build up (Eccles. 3 : 1-3). If these times and seasons be not observed alike by God and man, the last state will be a thousand times worse than the first. That principle, when applied to the drawbacks, besetting such an interpretation of progressive revelation as has been championed in this paper, will be found to modify them very appreciably.

Yet another consideration, based on the philosophy of religion, is too valuable to be omitted. I am indebted for it to my old teacher, Professor W. P. Paterson of Edinburgh University, to whose lectures I owe a debt which seems to accumulate with the passing years. He once observed in his characteristic way that religion ever operates with a small group of ideas. These may be invested with ever-growing meaning as they are subjected to investigation of deepening intensity, but the number is not increased. Unlike scientific progress, such advance is not extensive. The cords are not lengthened, but the stakes are made more and more secure. Dr. Paterson added that these dominating principles are usually promulgated in the beginning of a new faith, a truth which is illustrated by many of the world's great religions. It certainly applies to Christianity with indubitable force.

When we turn to Judaism, we find that this theory harmonizes well with the historic definition of progressive revelation. Its distinctive doctrines were first propounded on the threshold of its

existence. Paul finds the embryo of the great evangelical truth of justification by faith in Genesis (Romans 4). Is it then a thing incredible that the doctrine of ethical monotheism which represents the heart and soul of Judaism should be sought and found in the very inception of Old Testament religion? The objection may at once be raised that such teaching would be incomprehensible at the level of character and culture which prevailed amongst the primitive Israelites. To them such a gospel would be unintelligible. In reply, resort may be had to a variety of considerations. On the one hand, can we be so sure of the hopeless ignorance and degradation of the first sons of Abraham? The Bible itself gives a different impression. Again, it must be kept in mind that the basic truths of Christianity are continually being imparted to the heathen on all their levels, and with wonderful success, when all things are taken into account. Thirdly, attention may be drawn to the wide and rapid diffusion of Islam, whose core is ethical monotheism of a decidedly inferior type, the converts being mostly drawn from pagans whose faith is of a very rude and simple type. In these circumstances, it may not seem to be so incredible that the earliest version of Judaism did not differ in essence from the latest. It must be repeated that there is no suggestion here that the elemental loftiness of such teaching led captive the Israelites from their origins. The Old Testament tells a very different story. But it can be advanced with a good deal of confidence that Judaism would never have accomplished its perfect work unless a great ideal was set before its adherents from the very outset.

The modern account of the Old Testament faith can still render good service to those who are reluctant to accept it. It is a reminder that there is nothing static about revelation, any more than in connection with anything that God has made. He has ever more light and truth to break forth from His Word. The Author and Finisher of true faith once said, on the eve of His Passion: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come" (John 16: 12-13).

#### DISCUSSION.

The Chairman (The Rev. CHAS. T. COOK) said: I would like in your name to thank Dr. Curr for a deeply instructive paper, in which

opposing views on the subject of Progressive Revelation have been stated with conspicuous fairness, and also to couple with that our thanks to Rev. J. Stafford Wright for reading the paper.

There are various points which invite comment, but I will confine my remarks to the main issue, namely, the claim that prior to the eighth century B.C. the doctrine that there is but one God, and one only, was unknown to ancient Israel. Those who hold that view define Progressive Revelation as an evolutionary development from animism, through polytheism, to ethical monotheism. That is the idea propounded by Drs. W. O. E. Oesterley and Theodore Robinson, joint authors of the book *Hebrew Religion*, which is a textbook at a number of our colleges and universities. Jehovah (or Yahweh), we are told, was originally the tribal god of the Midianites, and Moses gained knowledge of Him from Jethro, the Kenite priest. At Sinai, Israel chose Yahweh as their tribal deity. Centuries later, Yahweh was proclaimed by the prophets of Israel as Lord of the whole earth.

It is unfortunate that students all too readily accept this theory as proved beyond question, for the fact is that it is challenged, not only by Biblical scholars of established repute but by eminent anthropologists. Fifteen or sixteen years ago the evidence was set out at some length by Dr. S. M. Zwemer, in his most useful work, *The Origin of Religion*. He quotes, for instance, Dr. Israel Cohen, an orthodox Jewish scholar, as affirming that not only Moses, but the Patriarchs, were monotheists; that the God of Sinai was not a mere mountain-god or local Kenite deity, and that there was no bridge in Israel from polytheism to monotheism. In particular, Dr. Zwemer makes extensive reference to the monumental researches of Dr. P. Wilhelm Schmidt, of Vienna University, a distinguished scholar and anthropologist, and author of many books on the origin and growth of religion.\* Dr. Schmidt's work was reviewed by *The Times Literary Supplement* at considerable length, under the title, "Evolution or Eden." Here is Dr. Schmidt's conclusion, which is supported by a mass of detailed information. He rebuts the evolutionary view of religion by asserting "that there is a sufficient number of tribes among whom the really mono-

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\* See in particular his *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, Eng. tr. by H. J. Rose (Methuen, London, 1931).

theistic character of their Supreme Being is clear even to a cursory examination. That is true of the Supreme Being of most Pygmy tribes, so far as we know them; also of the Tierra del Fuegians, the primitive Bushmen, the Kurnai, Kulin, and Yuin of South-east Australia, the peoples of the Arctic culture, except the Koryaks, and well-nigh all the primitives of North America." When lecturing at Oxford University on "High Gods in North America," Dr. Schmidt showed that "the peoples ethnologically oldest know nothing of totemism or any similar phenomena, but emphasise in their religion the creative power of the Supreme Being." And he adds: "Not evolution, but degeneration or deterioration, is found in the history of religion among primitive tribes and the higher cultures that followed after their migration."

If, therefore, the religious beliefs of the majority of primitive peoples rest on a foundation of monotheism, why should it be thought incredible that monotheism was the faith of the progenitors of the nation of Israel? Thus, as Dr. Curr has shown so ably, the older view of Progressive Revelation accords far better both with the Biblical records and with other ancient sources than the newer view, however plausibly presented.

Mr. E. J. G. TITTERINGTON said: In the title of this paper we have two terms, "progressive," and "revelation." To take the term "revelation" first—the very word denotes something which comes direct from God unmediated, which owes nothing to the human mind. The "modern" view of which Dr. Curr speaks appears to be based on an idea of a development of human thought, and the use of the word "revelation" in this connection is a misnomer.

Then, "progressive." Revelation can develop or supplement that which has already been revealed, but it can never contradict it, or render the old obsolete.

As to why revelation should be progressive, there are at least two reasons—there may be more. The first is that to which Mr. Bruce has already called attention in his written communication (see p. 16): it is adjusted to the capacity of those who receive it. We have an instance of this when our Lord was questioned regarding the Mosaic law of divorce—He said that it was permitted "because of the hardness of your hearts." The time was not ripe, as Dr. Curr has remarked on page (3).

Then again, God chooses an appropriate time for a declaration of His purposes, and gives greater light as greater light is needed. Even before the Flood Enoch was given a revelation of our Lord's coming in glory; but such details as our Lord gave in the "Little Apocalypse" would have been both irrelevant and, in the very different world in which he was living, unintelligible.

On page (3) Dr. Curr says that the national piety of Israel had undergone a sweeping change for the better during the centuries. I wonder. Can we fairly take Isaiah as representing the level of religious thought of his day? Was he not in his knowledge of God as far above those to whom his words were addressed as was Moses in his day? Are there not indications that Isaiah's contemporaries were little, if anything, in advance of those of an earlier date? When David rejoiced, as he did, in the Law of the Lord, was it not the revelation of God contained in the Mosaic writings he had in mind?

With regard to the view that Judaism passed to monotheism from henotheism (page (4)), it would seem quite possible that Jewish thought tended at times to a henotheistic conception; but if so, it was a degeneration from original monotheism. There was that revelation given to Abraham through Melchizedek of God as "the Possessor of heaven and earth"—a title which Abraham took up when he was speaking to the king of Sodom.

I think we shall all agree with the remarks in the concluding paragraph of Dr. Curr's paper, that there is nothing static about revelation—that there may yet be more light to break through from the Word of God. But it is there, in the Word; to that extent the revelation is complete; we are not to expect any further revelation before the Lord comes. Only, if fresh light is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in the Word, we should be free to follow that light.

The Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT said: Principal Curr has shown how apt we are to assume that high religious ideas can only come at the end of a process of evolution. But, even apart from any theory of inspiration, it is obvious that a genius in the literary or aesthetic sphere commonly appears suddenly, and his works cannot be accounted for by laws of gradual progress. It is thus only reasonable to suppose that men like Moses and Abraham could

have been God's instruments to give lofty monotheistic teaching to the world, and the Bible indicates that they did.

Many of the moral difficulties of the O.T. can be solved by applying Paul's picture of Galatians 3 and 4. He speaks of the Jews under the Old Covenant as children in comparison with the full-grown sons of the New. A child needs to be taught by very obvious rewards and punishments. It has a right to look to its father to protect it in a way that it cannot do when it is an adult. Its powers are limited, since it does not have certain capacities that it will have later. The O.T., in looking forward to the days to come, says that the New Covenant will be marked by an inward work of God and a power that was not normally available under the Old Covenant (Jer. 31 : 31-34 ; Ezek. 36 : 25-27 ; Joel 2 : 28-32), and the N.T. confirms this (John 7 : 39). Less capacity means that certain things will be beyond one's scope. Thus the progressive revelation of God in Christ involves the outgrowing of certain applications of the moral law in the O.T. The essential principles remain, but the application may be different.

Mr. J. F. WALLACE said : Applying our Lord's test, "By their fruits ye shall know them," to the Wellhausen view of Scripture, one can say that it has helped to shake the Church's faith in the Bible. To-day many clergy scarcely know their Bibles at all, or, if they do, they do not wholly believe them, and this undermining of the authority of the Scriptures has resulted in the emptying of our churches in the last fifty years.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. F. F. BRUCE wrote : Principal Curr has put his finger on some of the most important features of the current debate about the nature of progressive revelation, and of these I reckon the point made by W. P. Paterson to be the most valuable. God's self-revelation, mediated by varying stages to the fathers through the prophets and consummated in His Son, is all of a piece throughout ; its New Testament expression differs in degree but not in kind from its Old Testament expression. Jesus claimed to fulfil, not to set aside, the law and the prophets.

What Dr. Curr describes as "newer conclusions" (p. (6)) are really those promulgated by Wellhausen and his school seventy or eighty

years ago. The more recent conclusions, represented in the writings of W. F. Albright and G. E. Wright in America and of H. H. Rowley and N. H. Snaith in England, do fuller justice to the true rôle of Moses as the first and greatest spokesman through whom God made Himself known to the Israelites in Old Testament days. Wellhausen's theory of the development of Israel's religion, based on the Hegelian interpretation of history, could flourish only at a time when little or nothing was known of the religious environment of Israel. With our present abundant knowledge of that environment, we are the better able to assess the nature and worth of the *distinctive* elements in Israel's faith, communicated through Moses and the prophets, and to appreciate the fact that it is just these distinctive elements which find their perfect expression in the New Testament. The eighth-century prophets of Israel never envisaged themselves as innovators in religion ; they recalled the nation rather to loyalty to the covenant which God had made with them in the wilderness period. They would not have thought of themselves as the bearers of a more "progressive revelation" than that given through Moses.

Throughout the Bible, man's response is the constant correlative of God's revelation, and the progress may more often be traced in the response to that revelation than in the revelation itself. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. 19 : 18) was not a commandment invented by our Lord ; it was an ancient revelation of God's will for human relations, but we can trace definite progress in the response to it, in the ever-widening area indicated by the answer to the question, "But who is my neighbour?"

Moses may certainly be regarded as enjoining aniconic worship upon the Israelites, in the terms of the Second Commandment, of which at least the first clause belongs to his legislation. But the response to that injunction was very fitful ; for centuries after his time Israelites were prone to worship their God by means of an image which was regarded at least as the visible pedestal of the invisible Deity, if not as His visible representation. But it is unwise to argue on this basis, as has so often been done, that the prohibition of graven images cannot be so early as Moses' time.

Again, Moses may certainly be regarded as an ethical monotheist for all practical purposes. We need not be prevented from holding



this by David's protest that his expulsion from the land of Israel was tantamount to a command "Go, serve other gods" (1 Sam. 26 : 19), or by Jephthah's advice to the Ammonite (or Moabite) king to be content with the territory that Chemosh had allotted him, as Israel would continue to occupy the land which Jehovah had enabled them to conquer (Judg. 11 : 24). David's protest is clearly an *argumentum ad hominem*, for in point of fact he did not serve other gods even in the land of the Philistines ; Jephthah's advice may be of the same order, as Albright maintains ; but even if Jephthah did think of Chemosh as having some sort of independent existence comparable to Jehovah's, there are other features of Jephthah's story which show that—half-Canaanite as he was—he was not an exponent of the purest form of Israelite religion. In fact, the answer to those who make Israel's earlier religion little more than a national variety of Canaanite religion is to point to the difference between Jehovah and such a nature-deity as Chemosh. The fortunes of Chemosh rose and fell with those of the Moabites ; when Moab disappeared, so did Chemosh. But from His earliest self-revelation Jehovah appears as the Living and Real God, the God of righteousness and mercy, the God whose relation to His people is no matter of racial necessity but is based upon His choice of them by His free grace. From the earliest beginnings of the record of this self-revelation we may trace its course until we see it fully manifested and underlined in Christ. It is the same God and (in essence) the same revelation. But the *response* is marked by progression and recession—and it is here that many of the problems raised by the subject find their solution. For the Bible contains the record of the response as well as of the revelation.

Mr. W. E. FILMER wrote: Dr. Curr rightly points out that the modern view of progressive revelation is largely based on the supposition that no composition earlier than the eighth century B.C. can be admitted as authoritative. This idea, again, is based on the further assumption, now proved incorrect, that writing was unknown at or before the time of Moses. But the early books of the Bible contain internal evidence that they have, at least in part, been copied from very ancient records. The statement in Joshua 6 : 25 that Rahab "dwelleth in Israel even unto this day" must either have been written in her lifetime, or it is a piece of faked evidence for the an-

tiquity of the record. The latter view is most unlikely considering its very unobtrusive character.

Again, the border of the Canaanites is described in Gen. 10 : 19 by referring to the position of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But these cities were so completely destroyed in the time of Abraham, that their exact location became lost. This description must, therefore, have been written before their destruction, otherwise it becomes nonsense.

Going even further back, the records contain some obvious inconsistencies, which even the most facile of fiction writers would have avoided. For example in Genesis 2 : 17 God is recorded as saying with regard to the forbidden fruit, "*in the day* that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This would appear to be a most unnecessary blunder when considered in connection with the later statement that Adam lived 930 years. The solution to the difficulty is hinted at in Gen. 3 : 21, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." This presupposes the death of certain animals for the purpose of covering the results of Adam's sin. The act strongly suggests the Christian doctrine of the substitutionary death which took place *on the same day* as the sin was committed.

Again, the story of Cain and Abel is told in such a way that God appears in a most unfavourable light in rejecting for no apparent reason Cain's sacrifice. But if we accept the theory that Adam had been instructed from the first in the doctrine that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins, then he doubtless instructed his sons accordingly. If then Cain brings a sacrifice of fruit, while Abel slays the firstlings of his flock, God's action is at once explained.

Now the solution to these superficial inconsistencies is contained in the records in so unobtrusive a fashion that it strongly suggests that the records are based on fact. And the significant fact is that from the very first man has known not only the one true God, but also the way of salvation.

MR. R. S. TIMBERLAKE wrote : I would like to be allowed to comment, if I may, upon some aspects of the subject of Principal Curr's paper. Firstly, regarding slavery. I think it is important to recognise that the acceptance without denunciation of the then current

practice of slavery is not derogatory to the standards of the ethical teachers who accepted it. Cruelty connected with slavery would have been condemned, but there were good masters as well as bad. Slavery, in its widest sense, exists in many forms today, for example, the bonds of the economic system, which can cause severe mental and physical suffering. There are other enemies which attack twentieth-century man in his social environment, compared with which the lower denizens of manorial England led a protected and simple life. It is conduct, not forms, that is important.

Then, on the question of the standard of early revelation, need we argue about literary origins? The historical truth of the Bible is, in these days, firmly enough established for it to form the basis of some argument. If the Pentateuch be historically trustworthy, then the history of Israel bears eloquent testimony to the unfolding purposes and revelation of God towards the chosen people. The purity and nobility of the Decalogue is, I think, significant in this connection.

MR. L. D. FORD wrote: We are indebted to Principal Curr for his interesting paper on Progressive Revelation, and in particular for his drawing our attention to the difference between henotheism and monotheism, the former being the worship of only one god among many, the latter being the worship of the Only One God. How anybody can think that the Bible showed Israel as being henotheist I cannot imagine. The first chapter of Genesis gives the glory of creation to God, Elohim, both as regards the heavens and the earth. Chapter 2 gives the glory of the creation of man to Jehovah Elohim (Yahweh if you will), and through the first pair to all the nations of the earth in chapter 10. Surely God who made heaven and earth and everything upon it, including every man, cannot be "one among many" and surely was not regarded so in any part of the Old Testament. Exod. 15: 11, "Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods?" is only an apparent instance of henotheism, for the "gods" referred to are not true gods but false, in other words "nonentities." They are "that which is not God" (Deut. 32: 21) and "new gods that came newly up" (v. 17), in fact "devils," not gods at all (v. 17). Another apparent instance of henotheism is in Jephthah's taunting speech to the Ammonites (Judges 11: 24), "Wilt thou not possess that which Chemosh

thy god giveth thee to possess ? ” This does not mean that Jephthah believed that Chemosh could give the Ammonites anything; it is rather his way of saying : “ Jehovah is our God and has given us this land. Chemosh is your God : look to him for your land : you cannot have ours.” Even if Jephthah personally thought that Chemosh was a real God and could do things for his worshippers, this does not mean that the Bible teaches it : it would be his own opinion in which he was out of step with the religion of Israel revealed through Moses and the Patriarchs. So also Deborah’s allusion to the stars in their courses fighting against Sisera (Judges 5 : 20) does not mean more than it was Deborah’s opinion, and even then possibly merely poetic fervour rather than sober faith.

The God who, at the prayer of a man, Joshua, could cause the sun and moon to stand still (Josh. 10 : 12) was surely Lord of all Creation, and if the modern mind rejects the miracle through shallow thinking, the point is that the writer of the Scripture thought of the God of Israel in these terms, which is sufficient to show that he was *not* a henotheist, but *was* a monotheist, in keeping with the writer of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers 27 : 16 (“ the God of the spirits of all flesh ”), and Deuteronomy. In fact the united testimony of the Pentateuch is that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel, is He who made “ heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them ” including man and woman, both as regards their bodies and spirits.

Now, Israel, as taught by their lawgiver, Moses, and as receiving their religion from the Patriarchs (a thing which our Lord allows as regards circumcision, John 7 : 22) were from the beginnings of their nation, worshippers of the one only True God, all other supposed deities being “ devils ” (*shēdhim*). With regard to the nations round about, things were different. As Principal Curr has reminded us, the Syrians were willing to allow that the God of Israel (Israel’s tutelary deity as they were willing to concede) was able to operate in a limited territorial field. This was the heathen view of other heathen gods, and they ranked Jehovah whom Israel worshipped alongside their own deities (in much the same way as certain moderns do). An outstanding instance of this is Sennacherib (Isaiah 36 : 19) : “ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad ? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim ? ” Sennacherib was a “ heno-

theist," and whilst looking to Asshur to further his cause, admitted that other cities would have other (and, of course, inferior) gods. But in strong contrast with this is King Hezekiah's word (2 Kings 19 : 18) : "for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone." So Hezekiah stands fast in the faith of Israel from the beginning, whilst the heathen world around knew of gods many and lords many. The ancient heathen were henotheists ; the Jews monotheists from the beginning.

LT.-COL. L. MERSON DAVIES wrote: I appreciate Principal Curr's wish to defend the belief that monotheism has been the mainspring of Judaism from its inception, and would like to mention some of my own reasons for regarding this as unquestionable. So many issues are referred to in Principal Curr's paper, that it is impossible to discuss, or even to mention, them all in a letter. What concerns me most is the idea that monotheism was "unknown in ancient Israel" prior to the eighth century B.C., and that practically nothing in the Pentateuch can be attributed to Moses.

Our Lord's testimony was clearly opposed to this (*cf.* Matt. 19 : 8 ; Mark 12 : 26 ; Luke 16 : 29, 31 ; John 5 : 45-46 ; 7 : 19 ; etc.) ; and He surely knew what He was talking about. Are we wiser than even the Risen Christ (Luke 24 : 27) ?

I, as a palaeontologist, regard the first three chapters of Genesis as literally inspired. They reveal (as I showed in my book, *The Bible and Modern Science*) a knowledge of physics and biology far beyond that of human science until quite recent times. And there, from the first, God is represented as the Creator of the whole universe. See, too, how Abraham is said to have called God the "Judge of all the earth" (Gen. 18 : 25).

Yet these passages, concerning events long before Moses' own day, may well have been taken by him from older inspired documents ; indeed, the very wordings of some verses in Genesis indicate a date at least as old as Abraham (*e.g.*, Gen. 10 : 19).

The more specially Mosaic books (Exodus to Deuteronomy) bear every imprint of truth and contemporaneity. Take, for instance, the desert topography of the 40 years' wanderings, the truth of which has deeply impressed modern geographers ; and the details of tabernacle structure, portorage, etc., which are essentially fitted to those 40 years, and to no later period.

I also fail to see anything more anomalous in the order to exterminate the Canaanites, than there was in the previous annihilation of the whole human race, excepting the family of Noah ; or even in the annihilation of Sodom and Gomorrah, except for Lot and his daughters. These exterminations concerned only this life ; and we are expressly told that our Lord Himself will execute far more terrible judgments in the future, than any which He effected in the past (Matt. 10 : 15 ; 11 : 24 ; etc., cf. Rev. 6 : 16-17).

As regards God's call on Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, this did not seem incredible to Paul, who had seen and communed with our Risen Lord, and whose writings instruct us in our Christian Faith, yet who regarded Abraham's response as a triumph of faith (Heb. 11 : 17). And *God did not let Isaac be killed*, after all. So the call on Abraham, thus countermanded, served—without actual loss either to him or to Isaac—to show the fitness of both to be the ancestors, after the flesh, of that Divine Son Whom the Father would give—and Who would give Himself—actually to die as our sacrificial Substitute and Ransom.

Incidentally, I showed in my booklet, *The Credentials of Jesus*, that some of Moses' prophecies were still unfulfilled in our Lord's day, yet were *fulfilled to the letter* 40 years after His rejection and Crucifixion. How could any B.C. forger have produced these ?

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I have read with much pleasure and profit the comments on a great subject which my paper elicited. Special reference may be made to the contribution made by Mr. F. F. Bruce. It serves as a complement to what I have written, so that any value which my paper may possess is enhanced by such penetrating observations.

My only regret is that so very few papers give evidence of the author's grasp of the basic difficulty that the Biblical literature, to which we are indebted for detailed information regarding Moses, by whom the law came, as John reminds us in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel (John 1 : 17), is widely regarded by modern critical scholarship as doing no more than preserving dim and distant echoes and miscellaneous relics of that early age. The books which now bear the name of Moses are regarded as the work of a generation which flourished many centuries afterwards. Mosaic material is

incorporated, but the net result is not Mosaic, but a mosaic, to repeat the familiar witticism on the subject. Even Wellhausen conceded the presence of Mosaic elements in the Pentateuch, or Hexateuch as he would have preferred to designate the opening books of the Old Testament. Conservative scholarship has always regarded these as products of the Mosaic age (to put the question of authorship vaguely but accurately, so far as that is possible over such a tract of time) and, therefore, reliable sources of information regarding the earliest forms of Hebrew religion. To the modern school these early books reflect the piety of a much later age, although defined and described in the setting and wording of a remote antiquity, while containing material which reveals the different conditions which prevailed in Israel's beginnings. A simple analogy is furnished by the names of the pagan deities which are used in designating the days of the week. Wednesday is Woden's day, Woden or Odin being the chief Teutonic deity. In the same fashion, it is argued that there are trails and tracks of debased religion in the Pentateuch. I am not sure that such theories have been renounced fully by modern O.T. scholarship. The purpose of my paper was to argue that, just as water cannot rise higher than its own level, the religion, which was the root of which Christianity is the fruit, must conform to that inexorable law of life. There is a saying of Plato that the beginning is the most important part of the work. That is illustrated by the inauguration of Christianity. This paper argues that it is equally applicable to Judaism.

## 896TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 69, GREAT PETER STREET, WESTMINSTER,  
S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY, 1951.

ERNEST WHITE, ESQ., M.B., B.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The following elections were announced:—A. W. Langford, Esq., M.A., B.Ch., M.D., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Member (on transfer from Fellow); A. G. E. East, Esq., Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then called on A. H. Boulton, Esq., LL.B., to read his Schofield Prize Essay, entitled "The Place of Miracle in Modern Thought and Knowledge."

### *THE PLACE OF MIRACLE IN MODERN THOUGHT AND KNOWLEDGE.*

By A. H. BOULTON, ESQ., LL.B.

*(being the Schofield Prize Essay, 1950).*

#### SYNOPSIS.

Miracle is not magic, but the invasion of the natural order as we know it by a power outside of itself. However, we cannot always draw a hard and fast line between miracle and non-miracle.

In one sense "Modern Thought" dates from about 300 years ago and produced the conflict between Religion and Science which tormented the nineteenth century. Since then a new "modern thought" has arisen because fundamental discoveries in all the natural sciences have dissolved the old certainties and called new concepts into being. Yet the ultimate answers still elude us. There are new and puzzling horizons. Materialism is discredited. We cannot set bounds to the possible, and that miracles sometimes happen has to be accepted as fact.

Religious thought too has moved. There is more tolerance and less dogmatism, and the conflict of Religion and Science begins to belong to the past. The time has come for a new and imaginative approach to the problem, and the nature of miracle provides a realistic ground for such an approach.

(No originality is claimed for factual information, and authorities are indicated. The line of argument is entirely the author's own, and so far as he is aware has not previously been presented in this or any similar form.)

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## I

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MIRACLE ?

THE fact that the question is not an easy one to answer is itself symptomatic of the modern mind and the group of problems we must face in this brief study. Other periods would have experienced no such difficulty. To them a miracle was an event which "broke the laws of nature," or the word was synonymous with magic. Circe with her wand turned the mariners into swine and might have done the same to Odysseus, had it not been for the protection afforded to him by Hermes' magic potion. This potion, Homer naïvely observes, was prepared from a herb which "was awkward to dig up, at any rate for a mere man. But after all, the gods can do anything."<sup>1</sup>

"*The gods can do anything.*" So, in the legends of witchcraft and the stories of fairies the tradition of magic has been handed down. But into this crazy world of magic, where man stands naked and exposed to the caprice of gods and demons, victim of a fate which presses so relentlessly upon him, Christianity posited the first limitations to the power of deity, in the profound declaration that God cannot deny Himself. God is therefore reliable, His universe one of order, free from inherent contradictions and nonsensities. This very concept of unchangingness rendered possible a reliable pattern of thought within which the human mind could go on the long quest by which, in the fulness of time, it has reached the science of the middle of this twentieth century.

The idea that miracle and magic are one and the same dies hard. From the *Odyssey* to *Literature and Dogma* is a long pilgrimage. We move from the world of Circe's swine to the lofty calm of the nineteenth-century philosopher. Yet, illustrating the popular assumption that miracle gives indefeasible validity to the testimony of the miracle worker, Matthew Arnold could write :

"In the judgment of the mass of mankind, could I visibly and demonstrably change the pen with which I write this into a pen wiper, not only would this which I write acquire a claim to be held perfectly true and convincing, but I should even be entitled to affirm . . . propositions the most palpably at war with common fact and experience."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Odyssey*, trans. E. V. Rieu

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Dogma* (1873).

Circe turns men into pigs, Arnold dreams of turning his pen into a penwiper. One of the ways in which the thought of today has moved since 1873, when Arnold wrote, is that the pressure of discovery has forced us to realise that there is a confusion of thought involved in lumping miracle and magic into a single category "at war with common experience" and therefore essentially incredible.

What then is miracle? The word tells us by the root *mirari* that it is something to be wondered at, but this is not all. We may well wonder at the skill of the acrobat on the high wire, but we do not therefore count his act a miracle. As C. S. Lewis has pointed out, the essential element in belief in miracle is the concept of a "supernature" which enters into and affects the working of the visible world.<sup>3</sup> It is the nature of the cause rather than the nature of the happening which gives to an event the quality of miracle.

The classical miracle is that of healing, and we may well use two examples of healing to illustrate this principle. Before the discovery of the sulphur drugs and their value in combating infection, pneumonia almost invariably proceeded through crisis to long and gradual convalescence—or to death. When the now famous "M & B 693" was first used it may have been journalistically described as a "miracle drug", but nobody, however thankful for its value in achieving speedy recovery without crisis, really regards such a recovery as a miracle. On the other hand, Agnes Sanford, an American woman who has had a successful ministry as a faith healer, tells how in one particular case a child's pneumonia was cured in a matter of hours after prayer and the laying on of hands.<sup>4</sup> Accepting her record, one has to place this happening into the same category as some at least of the things told of in the New Testament, and customarily called miracles. We call it a miracle to cure by the laying on of hands, but not by the administration of a drug. That is to say, it is not the fact of recovering from pneumonia without crisis that constituted the miracle, it is the fact that the recovery appeared to be the effect of a cause lying outside the natural order as scientifically observed and described.

It is therefore never possible for a hard line to be drawn between miracle and non-miracle, for the two sufficient reasons that we can only rarely know *all* the causes of an event, and

<sup>3</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Miracles*.

<sup>4</sup> Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light*.

that we do not yet know the precise bounds of "natural" phenomena. There are many happenings that may lie on either side of the border line. Thus a medical psychologist writes :

"I count among my friends one priest who is neither a physician nor a psychiatrist. . . . He describes himself very humbly as 'a young priest who is interested in mental difficulties'. Often I have sent patients to him who were either recovering from some mental illness or tormented by some mental difficulty and he has been wonderfully successful in many such cases. My medical colleagues criticise me severely because I am encouraging a layman to practise medicine. I am doing nothing of the kind. I am sending certain types of unhappy, anxious, or mentally ill people to a man who . . . loves souls, and who, as a priest has something to give distracted and tormented people that the most distinguished psychiatrist does not possess."<sup>5</sup>

Are such cases miracles? To the superficial observer they will not appear to be. Yet, if it be true that "the secret of the care of the patient is caring for the patient,"<sup>6</sup> and also that "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him,"<sup>7</sup> we come very near to bringing "supernature" into the common fact and experience of the ordinary care of the sick.

There is no hard line between miracle and non-miracle, but this must not lead us to think there is no difference. This would be the common logical fallacy of the "undistributed middle." We cannot tell at what moment we are entitled to describe as bald our friend whose hair is thinning, but we do know what we mean by being bald! In the same way there is a common level of fact and experience, and there are events—or shall we with deliberate caution say it is claimed that events have happened—which are most definitely not upon that common level. They may be the curing of disease at a touch, the raising of the dead, the stilling of a tempest, calling down fire from heaven. "Miracle" may not be easy to define with a clean, sharp line of demarcation, but it has a meaning. To remember this may save us from two evasions which can cloud the whole issue of the credibility of miracle.

The first is to premise that miracle does *not* happen and then

<sup>5</sup> John Rathbone Oliver, *Psychiatry and Mental Health*.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Thomas Ordway, quoted by J. R. Oliver, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> I John 4 : 16.

logically deduce that anything that *does* happen, however extraordinary, cannot, *ex hypothesi*, be a miracle.

“I would reject the evidence of my senses rather than accept literally a physical miracle. . . . I may some day conceivably be forced to believe, if the evidence is strong enough, that a man has walked through a stone wall, or been wafted up into the clouds, or that he has been changed into a fox, or even that he has belatedly risen from the dead after he began to rot, like Lazarus. But admitting the factual occurrence I will still deny that a miracle has occurred.”<sup>8</sup>

This is merely playing with words. So is the other evasion, as when one turns to the hedgerow in spring and devoutly declares “It is all a miracle!” It is not, for it is the way Nature works in common experience. It might be justly accounted a miracle if the sap were to rise in midwinter.

The Christian view of miracle, then, is that it is a happening in the world of common experience which surprises us, and is the effect of a cause lying outside the natural order in a “supernature.” It is not arbitrary or capricious or nonsensical, for God is none of these, and as Jesus Christ has declared in a phrase of wonderful poetic compression, miracle is “the finger of God.”<sup>9</sup>

## II

It can hardly be gainsaid that this deeper understanding of the nature of miracle to which the Christian thinker has been forced to feel his way has been worked out under the pressure of the doubts and questions placed in his path by “modern thought”. What then is this “modern thought” and when did it begin to perplex the Christian, who had formerly not doubted the validity of supernatural happenings, whether divine, demonic or magical, and had therefore found no cause to disentangle true miracle from the caprice of magic?

To answer these questions adequately would be to write a treatise on the nature and history of philosophy. For our present purpose perhaps two authors may be mentioned, contrast between whom throws into vivid relief the entry of modern thought.

<sup>8</sup> W. B. Seabrook, *Jungle Ways*. The author is speaking of a supremely baffling experience of African witchcraft.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 11: 20.

As I write there lies before me a book written in 1607 by Brother Francesco Maria Guazzo of the Order of St. Ambrose. Its title is *Compendium Maleficarum* and it bears the explanatory subtitle "Showing the Iniquitous and Execrable operations of Witches against the Human Race and the Divine Remedies by which they may be Frustrated."<sup>10</sup> It is a scholarly work, documented with stories drawn from all over Europe, and dedicated to a most illustrious and Right Reverend Lord Cardinal as patron. It contains stories of women who rode on broomsticks or changed themselves into wolves, of a cow that bore a human child, and of the power of holy relics to counter the black magic of witches. There is a marvel on every page, all told in perfect seriousness and illustrating a close-knit theological argument. Yet at the end of the same century a Dutch philosopher is preaching sheer materialism, writing "in true philosophy the causes of all natural phenomena are conceived in mechanical terms."<sup>11</sup>

Modern thought had entered. And in a very short time it swept the witches and sorcerers, the fairies, elves and banshees out of the minds of serious men, to linger only in the twilight of the Celtic fringe and the pages of children's stories. Through the eighteenth century, cynical and politely sceptical, and into the nineteenth, earnest and prosaic, the process continued until the flood began to wash at the very walls of faith's central stronghold.

Then, and then only, did the leaders of religious thought, at least in the reformed churches, perceive that the new thinking carried a supreme challenge for the faith itself. Everybody, everywhere, had been taught to dismiss as impossible every story of the supernatural. Such books as that of Guazzo were merely regarded as illustrations of the absurd credulity of the times from which the flowering intellect of mankind had so lately emerged. The philosophers evolved their systems of pure reason, while the scientists mentally constructed models of a universe ordered, systematic and logical, in which chemical atoms, "solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, moveable particles"<sup>12</sup> in a state of motion provided explanations for nearly everything. Only those two obstinate intruders, life and mind, continued to

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<sup>10</sup> Published in English 1929 (John Rodker), trans. E. A. Ashwin, edited by Montague Summers.

<sup>11</sup> Huyghens, 1698.

<sup>12</sup> John Dalton's famous description in formulating his Atomic theory.

defy description, analysis and prediction. Doubtless the time would come when they too would yield to reason and system. What room for miracle ?

The attitude to miracle common among educated men had been admirably expressed by Edward Gibbon in his monumental history when he discussed the coming of Christianity to the Roman Empire. Through his rolling periods, meticulous in their lip-service to the traditional faith, the underlying scepticism is clear. Educated people could not really believe in miracles, but if one wished to maintain an outward and respectable orthodoxy one could hold that they happened in the pristine days of the faith but ceased at some later time, for any reason one might appropriately invoke. The matter is summed up in his words: "Since every friend to revelation is persuaded of the reality and every reasonable man is convinced of the cessation of miraculous powers, it is evident that there must have been *some period* in which they were either suddenly or gradually withdrawn from the Christian Church."

Meanwhile the illogicality of any such belief caused the miracles of the Bible to come under continuous attack. From the *Decline and Fall* a century passed, a century which witnessed vast social changes and triumphant expansion of scientific knowledge. The Christian had been forced to the position of upholding the miracles of the Bible, and, as the Catholic would add, the miracles of the Church, whilst denying miracle and the supernatural everywhere else. Could such a position be held ? It was small wonder that Matthew Arnold in his earlier days of unrest could make his cry from the heart :

" The sea of faith  
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd :  
 But now I only hear  
 Its melancholy long withdrawing roar,  
 Retreating to the breath  
 Of the night wind down the vast edges drear  
 And naked shingles of the world."<sup>13</sup>

In the years following the publication of *Literature and Dogma* and other books in which Arnold tried to expound a non-miraculous Christianity, he was reproached by some as an infidel and his book as an attack upon the Christian religion.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Dover Beach*.

The conflict between science and religion had emerged fully into the open, and it seemed indeed that his writings betrayed much of the Christian case. Yet now, in the perspective of three-quarters of a century, we can discern in him a penetrating and sensitive intellect, perplexed by the tragic dilemma which the whole current of thought from Descartes onward had placed before the world; a man who would fain have held to his faith but had felt it ebbing within him with the inexorable recession of the retreating tide.

Arnold sought to construct a Christianity without miracle out of the "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness" and the "method and secret and sweet reasonableness of Jesus." He was outwardly optimistic. The world, he argued, was manifestly getting better and better. It had already become in large measure the Kingdom of the Lord "by its chief nations professing the religion of righteousness." It is easy for us to be tragically wiser in the shattering disillusion of the first half of our century. His superficial thinking was, we perceive, the product of his age, its assurances and false optimisms. He looked to science to reveal ultimate truth, "some day, perhaps, the nature of God may be as well known as the nature of a cone or a pyramid." But he was less happy within. In himself he knew the ebb of faith and the desolation of the world's naked shingles. We in our time have likewise realised that the "sweet reasonableness" of Jesus was itself a Victorian myth. The quest of the historical Jesus has led away from the gentle dreamer of Renan.

The value of *Literature and Dogma* is that besides showing the fundamental weakness of the nineteenth-century Christian viewpoint, it represents the end product of a process of religious thinking. To the question, "Have miracles happened and do they happen?" the author of the *Compendium Maleficarum* would have answered a confident "Yes", and the scientists and philosophers of the nineteenth century an equally confident "No." Arnold pointed out that the Christian apologist of his day tried to answer, "They have but they don't," without any logical explanation of the implicit inconsistency. Christianity, he argued, must therefore be refashioned in a form consistent with the new thought and knowledge.

But what was "today" in 1873 is very much "yesterday" now. By contrast with ancient or mediaeval thought, 1873 is "modern", for in one accepted sense "modern thought" begins

with Descartes. Yet when in 1950 we read the polemics and the confident assurances of the 1870's the world that lives in them seems as distant as that of the Reformation. What if we carry this problem of the miraculous into the world that is "modern" to us in 1950, the world of sub-atomic physics, Picasso, psychoanalysis, genetics, the electron microscope, psychic research and the poetry of T. S. Eliot!

Every basic assumption of the later nineteenth century is now outdated. For a moment, therefore, we may well lay down the question of miracle to call to mind the changes which have transformed our thinking about the nature of the universe.

### III

To seek in a few hundred words to describe the growth of scientific knowledge during the last three-quarters of a century is to attempt what is manifestly impossible, even if the author were competent to speak with the slightest pretence to authority upon the subject. Yet some outline must be attempted, and it is inevitable that it begin with physics, *enfant prodigue* of this century.<sup>14</sup>

This vast science in its new concepts reaches from the interior of the atom to the farthest nebulae. Absorbing the whole of chemistry and touching the sciences of life, it is all new since Matthew Arnold faced the dilemma of his day. The atoms of John Dalton have disappeared. At first it seemed that the new theories exchanged the "massy, hard impenetrable" bits of stuff that were Dalton's atoms for miniature solar systems consisting of even smaller bits of stuff. The picture is still so preserved in popular armchair expositions of science, but it is an illusion. The explanation of the structure of matter has passed beyond the possibility of constructing models or pictures.

When knowledge is advancing with such giant strides, it is rash to speak of anything as the latest concept, but reference may be made to the wave physics of Heisenberg in which the contradictions otherwise inherent in the attempts to describe matter in terms of particles, and radiation in terms of waves, have been resolved, but only at the cost of abandoning all attempts at constructing any picture of the structure of matter or energy intelligible to the imagination. The whole concept

<sup>14</sup> For much of the information contained in the next few paragraphs I am indebted to *Physics and Philosophy* by Sir James Jeans, and to other books of the same author.



has retreated into mathematics, a relationship between measurements expressed in symbols and in which there is no ultimate distinction between matter and energy.

Further, in the world within the atom, even the mathematical principles of the world of common experience do not apply. Nor does it seem that every event has a cause. In it either causeless events occur or there is a deeper substratum which has completely evaded our analysis in which the springs of those events are concealed. One of the most revolutionary concepts in modern physics is the belief that the laws of physics are themselves statistical in nature, their apparent immutability deriving from the immensity of the statistical magnitudes in which they are observed. Thus, in the modern concept, in each gramme of radioactive substance so many million electrons will pass from matter into radiation each second, but each one of these events is isolated, uncaused within the system in which it occurs, and the regularity is due only to the same kind of statistical law which enables us to forecast within a narrow margin the number of births or deaths in England each year.

Studying the nature of the universe in the light of the new physics is as though, seeking to see more clearly the detail of the picture in our newspaper, we have studied it through a lens, only to find it dissolve into meaningless dots geometrically arranged. The ultimate questions, Why? Whence? and Whither? are as far from answer as ever.

Turning from physics to the science of living things there is a strange similarity in the progress of discovery in this period. Just as physics has embraced and absorbed chemistry, so biology has found the once separate sciences of botany and zoology to be intimately involved and ultimately one.

At the turn of the century the biologists were still cherishing the idea of a primal living stuff which through long aeons had grown into the myriad forms of nature. They gave it a name, "protoplasm," and felt that by this subjective act they assured its objective existence. As to the nature of life itself there was little but conjecture. The unit was the cell, imagined as a tiny bag of undifferentiated jelly, and all living things larger than the single cell consisted of organised collections of such cells.

The penetration of the secrets of the cell has led to the realisation that this biologic atom is itself a complete structure, a living thing with differentiated organs of whose individual functions our knowledge is as yet scanty. Out of the observations

of certain of these organs, the chromosomes, has newly flowered the science of genetics, a science which notwithstanding the patient researches of the Abbé Mendel had previously been something of a Cinderella.

Probing deeper, the unit of our analytic method ceases to be the cell, and becomes first the chromosome and then the gene. The little *drosophila*, conveniently living its life span in a few days, has provided opportunity for the progress of characteristics to be followed through successive generations. Meanwhile the infinitesimal in biology begins to approach the magnitudes of molecular physics. According to most recent conjecture the chromosome consists of a single chain of large and complex protein molecules, each one of which in its interlocked atomic systems of electrons and protons contains, as in a code, the plan upon which the individuality of the separate organism is built.<sup>15</sup>

The science of genetics promises to raise profound questions when the full impact of modern discoveries is felt. How is the code of the genes interpreted? What is the essential difference between living and non-living? Life itself constitutes a reversal of the otherwise universal law of entropy<sup>16</sup>; by what means is that reversal begun and maintained? The answers are not found in the atoms and molecules of which the living tissue is composed, and the analytic process, reaching downward from the cell to the gene, has almost reached the field of the physicist. The analytic method has failed to answer the ultimate questions. Life itself has evaded analysis. As in physics, so in biology, there seems to be a substratum in which the springs of events are hidden, but of that substratum we have no direct apprehension. Like physics, biology has not revealed the reality behind phenomena.

One great branch of knowledge and research remains to be mentioned to complete our sketch of modern knowledge, the science of psychology. The layman approaches with trepidation, knowing that more uninformed nonsense has been and is being written about it by those unqualified to speak than about any other field of study.

To the science of the nineteenth century, mind was beginning to appear something of an intruder into the cosmos. The universe worked like a well-oiled machine, and biological evolu-

<sup>15</sup> Schrödinger, *What is Life?*

<sup>16</sup> Schrödinger, *op. cit.*

tion, so it appeared, could work without conscious will or desire. The tendency was to determinism.

“Our mental conditions are simply the consciousness of the changes that take place automatically in the organism . . . . the feeling we call volition is not the cause of the voluntary act, but the symbol of that state of the brain which is the immediate cause of that act.”<sup>17</sup>

With this outlook it was natural that the mind as such was not studied. Even in relation to disorders of the mind research was concentrated on the study of such matters as the response to heat and cold or to electrical stimuli.

The early study of hypnotism by Charcot and others, following its chance rediscovery by Mesmer, fell into disrepute, but it was one of the factors which led to the recognition of the mind as something more than a by-product of the body. The discovery that under hypnosis forgotten memories are accessible led to the momentous realisation that mind and consciousness are not synonymous. The full significance of this fact, first expounded and demonstrated by Freud, is as yet not fully realised, but it is already recognised that the mental life of the human being is deeper, richer and infinitely more complex than the scientist of the nineteenth century ever dreamed. In fact, to find any realisation of the complexity of the human being comparable with that revealed by modern psychology, it is necessary to go back into mythology. The ancient Egyptians, who possessed in their priestly cults a considerable knowledge of medicine, and who certainly practised hypnosis as a therapeutic agent, taught a doctrine of multiple selves which constituted a very definite anticipation of the modern doctrine of the subconscious mind.<sup>18</sup>

Between the sciences of psychology and biology lies the mystery of the mind-body relationship, perhaps the most obstinate question mark of philosophy. Whatever that relationship may be, two things stand out with utter clarity. The first is that physical health and disease are largely controlled by mental states, and the second that there is hardly any limit to the power of suggestion. As between mind and body it is being realised that mind is the dominant partner, or the truer and more ultimately real aspect of a single whole.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Huxley.

<sup>18</sup> Gregory, *Psychotherapy, Scientific and Religious*.

## IV

Attempting to sum up and express in a few generalisations this brief sketch of scientific progress, we may say that the old certainties and finalities have gone. The atom, the cell, the individual are all more complex than had been dreamed, and the analytic method leads only to the margin of mystery which surrounds us on every side. To our grandfathers it seemed that only a few pages were left unread of the book of knowledge. We have turned those pages, but instead of finding the subscription "The End," we have found "End of Volume One," and we are not sure where to look for the second volume. And even Volume One has ended, not with a period, but with a note of interrogation. The underlying substratum, the spring of being, has not discovered itself to our search. We have sifted the physical universe to its constituent electrons, but life and mind, meaning and purpose have slipped through our fingers, probably because we have looked in the wrong place and in the wrong way.

During the last century a new field of research and conjecture has come to the fore, so relevant to our study that to ignore it would be a grave omission, and yet so difficult of approach as to provide many pitfalls for the unwary. Yet we must perforce rush in though angels fear to tread. I refer to "psychic research."

The early spiritualists of the mid-nineteenth century started a cult which for a short time became fashionable, then fell into derision as a happy hunting ground for charlatans and a snare for the unstable. Orthodox Christianity, recognising some of its techniques as sorceries ancient as En-dor,<sup>19</sup> roundly condemned it as demonic. Science, engrossed with things it could cut and weigh and measure, passed it by on the other side. Even the conversion of so eminent a thinker as Sir Oliver Lodge did little to ruffle the complacency of the Orthodox, whether of Church or Science. Indeed, nothing in the history of modern thought has demonstrated more clearly the bias of the scientific world than its blank refusal to investigate the phenomena of the séance room, whatever they may be.

Of recent years, however, psychic research has moved away from the séance room and the moated grange, to the cool asepsis of the University laboratory. Such researches as those of Rhine

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<sup>19</sup> I Samuel 28.

and Soal<sup>20</sup>, though their tentative conclusions be expressed cautiously and prosaically, are likely to be revolutionary when properly evaluated. It is becoming clear that in its relationship with space and time the mind is not bound by the laws which prevail in the world of matter and energy, and that we have no precise definition of the reach of the mind in the world of matter itself.

Psychic research has made a small but decisive breach in the prison wall of materialism within which the Victorian scientist thought to enclose the human spirit. The Christian may well hesitate before the ancient techniques of those who have converse with familiar spirits, but it is well to remember that to believe in demons is just as destructive to materialism as to believe in God.

Yes, much has happened in the last three-quarters of a century, and the place of miracle in modern thought and knowledge is certainly not what it was before. We dare not be so dogmatic about the miracles of the past or the present. As a twentieth-century psychologist has remarked, "We cannot too strongly insist that the bounds of the possible do not coincide with and are not set by the limits of our present powers of comprehension."<sup>21</sup>

Looking back at the miracles of the past the largest group have now ceased to be in any way incredible. Knowing even as little as we now do about the power of the mind and its part in health and disease, it is in the highest degree believable that the presence of so unique a personality as Jesus of Nazareth should effect cures of the kind He performed. Commenting upon our new vision, Dr. Alexis Carrel has written: "After the great impetus of science during the nineteenth century . . . it was generally admitted not only that miracles did not exist but that they could not exist. . . . However, in view of the facts observed during the last fifty years this attitude cannot be maintained."<sup>22</sup> He had been recounting the records of cures experienced at the shrine of Lourdes. Equally impressive healings have been recorded against Protestant backgrounds.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, *New Frontiers of the Mind* and *The Reach of the Mind* by J. B. Rhine.

<sup>21</sup> McDougall, quoted by Gregory, *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> Alexis Carrel, *Man, the Unknown* (written 1935).

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, *By Stretching forth Thy Hand to Heal* (Spread), *The Healing Light* (Sanford), *Recovery* (Starr Daily), *Accept a Miracle* (May Culley), and other records.

Commenting upon the healings he has generalised thus: "The only condition indispensable to the occurrence of the phenomenon is prayer. But there is no need for the patient himself to pray or even to have any religious faith. It is sufficient that someone around him is in a state of prayer. Such facts . . . show the reality of certain relations of a still unknown nature between psychological and organic processes. They prove the objective importance of the spiritual activities which hygienists, physicians, educators and sociologists have almost always neglected to study. They open to man a new world."<sup>24</sup>

Neither the Catholic Church nor the Protestant communions, nor indeed Christianity itself can claim a monopoly of such happenings. They happen in Buddhist shrines and beneath the hands of the psychic healer. They happen sometimes outside of any religious environment.<sup>25</sup> Wherever they occur they are exceptional and rare, but they do happen, and it is a tragedy that orthodox medicine and orthodox theology neglect them or flatly disbelieve without investigation. Too readily the medical profession takes refuge in a dubious distinction between "organic" and "functional" disease, a distinction which often breaks down before the facts.

It may be true that sometimes the fervour of the "faith healing" mission can do harm, especially when it approaches the matter of healing through mass hysteria or an over-sentimentalised evangelism. But because a thing is done wrongly is no valid reason to refuse to do it well, and the conviction is deepening that the Church has erred in forgetting its healing mission and abandoning it to secular science. It still sings

"Thy touch has still its ancient power ;"

but in the mouths of the ninety and nine the words are thoughtlessly untrue. If it was true that among his own fellow townsmen even Jesus Christ could do no mighty work because of their unbelief;<sup>26</sup> is it surprising that in an age when even the believers have ceased to believe, miracles should become only a far-off tale of other days, half disbelieved and wholly ignored? We have found it difficult to believe in the miracles of the past

<sup>24</sup> Alexis Carrel, *op. cit.* This is not very happily phrased. What is meant is that the effective faith is not always that of the patient.

<sup>25</sup> Some interesting cases are collected in *Christianity and the Cure of Disease* by George S. Marr.

<sup>26</sup> Matt. 13 : 54 and Mark 6 : 5.

because we have ceased to believe in miracle in the present. Matthew Arnold was wrong in his conclusion but utterly right in his logic. Contrary to his conclusion, we may believe miracles happened in the past because they happen to-day and would happen more frequently if our minds were not closed. In the full triumph of the materialist victory, before the obstinate questions had been encountered and the more reverent agnosticism of to-day forced upon us, one of our most genuine mystics could cry out in anguish :

“ The angels keep their ancient places ;  
 Turn but a stone, and start a wing !  
 ’Tis ye—’tis your estranged faces,  
 That miss the many-splendoured thing.”<sup>27</sup>

We probably fashion to ourselves a wrong view of miracle in the New Testament setting. Jesus performed many cures. There are twenty-five specific recorded miracles of healing, beside several more general references to the healing of a number of persons at the same time. But He did not cure everybody. There were blind and palsied who remained uncured even in His presence. What was it that determined success or even the choice of subject ? We know this much, that the vital factor was called “ faith.” Lack of it in the patient could hamper or prevent healing. Lack of it in a would-be healer could have the same effect.<sup>28</sup>

What is this “ faith ? ” It is not credulity, nor is it intellectual belief, theological or otherwise. It is much nearer to imagination. Psychology feels toward it in the word “ suggestibility.” The relation between the faith that makes miracle possible and the suggestibility of psychiatric practice has yet to be properly explored. May we with caution venture the possibility that the healing miracle comes from a power of mind over body occasionally evoked and focussed in a supreme degree by the presence of a dynamic personality or the condition of prayer, and that the use of suggestion in psychological treatment is a tentative and slower use of this same power ? We have still much to learn. It is becoming clear that whatever powers dwell within us may be immensely reinforced by greater powers outside ourselves. Miracle is not a magic once present and now absent, but the release of powers never far away which we have well-nigh

<sup>27</sup> Francis Thompson, *The Kingdom of God.*

<sup>28</sup> Matt. 17 : 14-20.

ceased to call upon because we have forgotten that they are there. The angels keep their ancient places.

## V

Thus far we have spoken as though "modern thought and knowledge" was altogether a matter of science, but this is not so. The changes that have swept across the world have been wide and deep, and if religious thought had remained unchanged it would have been a sign of death rather than life. Though the ultimate truths with which religion is concerned lie in the eternal and are thus not subject to the flux of time, their expression and interpretation are temporal, and take their colour from the minds through which they are formulated. It is given to each generation to make its own, in its own idiom, the revelation that belongs to all. In the supposed conflict of Religion and Science, how has the religious approach and conviction become modified?

We have, I believe, lost some of our clear-cut assurances. Three-quarters of a century ago it seemed that the defender of the faith must hold every position at the peril of all. To regard "Jonah" as a parable would be to strike at the roots of the faith. To admit the validity of the literary criticism of the Bible would be to deny to it the inspiration on which everything depended. Was there an element of fear in this, an inner doubt of the things so confidently professed?

The unfolding of the years has neither vindicated our best hopes nor confirmed our worst fears. The tide of literary criticism has flowed past, its more valuable contributions accepted, its excesses rejected, and the Bible still remains the textbook of our faith. If in every jot and tittle its prosaic and factual accuracy has not remained unquestioned, any loss has been far more than outweighed by the greater appreciation of its poetic truth and the immediacy of its social and moral challenge. Those whose lives have been lived through these decades of conflict may feel that there has been a great shaking "that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." Inwardly they are gratified that so much has remained.

We are more tolerant of one another's opinions and difficulties. We know that even within the Church we shall never all believe alike, and that some may find belief easy where others do not. For the most part we have learned not to unchurch one another over doubts and intellectual problems. So, if one says "I would fain be a Christian but I cannot believe this or that, at which



my mind balks," we do not say, as our fathers might have said in the period of the "religion versus science" conflict, "You must believe or forfeit your claim to the fellowship of the Church." We know it is more in harmony with the spirit and leading of the Lord to say, "Do not pretend to believe where you cannot, but walk in the light of the faith you have, worship with us and we believe your faith will grow." So long has it taken the Church to realise the truth behind the saying concerning faith like a grain of mustard seed—that it matters not how small a grain of faith one has, if only it be living.

With this change, which has resulted in there being many prominent Christians who have publicly expressed doubt or disbelief of this or that, we have found to our surprise that a living active and fruitful faith can coexist with many such reservations. The centre of gravity of Christianity does not rest quite where we thought. If we have laboured through the pages of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, our amazement at the author's erudition passes into bewilderment because the familiar lineaments of the gospel story seem to dissolve away. Can faith survive such treatment, we wonder? Yet remembering the test, "By their fruits ye shall know them," we realise in humility that the name of Albert Schweitzer has become a legend in his work for God and for humanity.

It is not the writer's purpose to exalt doubt and unbelief, nor to praise the nebulous half-faith of so many who profess attachment to the Christian Church. His desires lean the other way; and he is assured that in the end of any reverent and informed study the traditional and accepted faith of the Church in her Lord will be found to have been substantially vindicated by the progress of thought and knowledge in the present century. His plea is for patience and sympathy with intellectual problems, and for a recognition of the changing emphasis in Christian thinking.

For these reasons the "problem of miracle" has changed its nature. To believe in miracle is not a burden a reluctant faith must carry, and if some particular miracle is especially difficult of acceptance to our brother whose mind is cast in critical mould, we do not threaten, "You must believe—or else. . . ." Yet, as we recognise, our whole faith as Christians is a faith in miracle, in the supreme miracle of the incarnation. We may rejoice that the whole trend of scientific thought has now pointed toward a concept of the universe which makes it seem right

and proper to posit a spirit, unseen and eternal behind the flux of visible things. Mechanical materialism is dead. As so often happens, it is a poet who expresses in a word the truth toward which the scientist gropes :

Behold ! he lent me as we went the vision of the seer ;  
Behold ! I saw the life of men, the life of God shine clear  
I saw *the hidden spirit's thrust*. . . .<sup>29</sup>

The vision is not given thus clearly to us all, but many of us catch a fleeting glimpse when for a space the shaken mists unsettle.

The whole concept of religion and science being in deadly opposition is out of harmony with the temper of our thought to-day. Truth is whole, and the mind pursues its quest through both. Religion and Science each probe the margin of mystery in their own way, and if for the moment some of the interpretations we place upon our religious and our scientific experiences appear to conflict, there is abundant reason for us to manifest sufficient humility of mind to make it our personal act of faith to believe that when more still is known, the reconciliation of fact with fact must be found in the singleness of all truth. The humility that is compelled in us awakens us to the realisation that now we "dimly sense what Time in mist confounds," or in more clumsy scientific language, the relation of our conscious minds to the time sequence imposes a limit upon our understanding of ultimate reality. However many facts we discover, the mystery will remain, because the limits of our understanding belong not so much to the extent of our knowledge as to the very texture of our thought. We see as in a glass, darkly.

Because of this the time has surely come for a new and imaginative approach to the apparently inescapable dilemmas of the nineteenth centuries. Upon each side of the Religion and Science controversies the old proud dogmatisms have passed, the old intransigence is passing away and the days are ripe for a new and more humble synthesis. To face clearly and reverently the fact and nature of miracle in the past and the present could be as promising an approach as any to the new reconciliation we so deeply need.

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Dr. WHITE) said : I am sure that I shall express the thoughts of all who have listened to Mr. Boulton's paper when

<sup>29</sup> Evelyn Underhill, *Uxbridge Road*.

I congratulate him on the ability and clearness of thought which he has shown in its composition, and not alone for the clarity of thought but also for the literary excellence displayed throughout the essay.

The author's introductory discussion of the definition of miracle is important, for, as he so well points out, the statement that the wonders of nature observed by us in our ordinary experience are miracles, produces confusion of thought. A miracle is something lying outside the natural order as observed by us.

It is interesting to note that the word often used in the New Testament, especially by St. John, to describe a miracle is the word "sign." "This beginning of His signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested His Glory." The miracles were signs of the presence of Divine power working in and through Jesus, and confirmed the belief of His disciples in Him.

I am particularly interested in what Mr. Boulton has to say about the miracles of healing. I should not quite agree with him that "orthodox medicine neglects or flatly disbelieves [in miracles] without investigation." I have lived long enough to observe a very great change in the attitude of the medical profession toward the relation of mental states to physical diseases, and even toward miracles. Many well-authenticated cases have occurred of the healing of organic diseases by spiritual methods. The distinction between organic and functional diseases is not so readily taken refuge in by the medical profession as Mr. Boulton appears to believe. For example, peptic ulcer, certainly an organic lesion, is believed by many medical men to be of psychogenic origin.

Dr. Somervell, in his book *After Everest*, describes a case of cancer and a case of advanced tuberculosis of the lungs, both healed completely within a few months as the result of faith and prayer. Dr. Somervell is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons with a very wide experience, and is hardly likely to publish such statements about cases he himself saw, unless he was very sure of his ground. Both these cases had refused medical treatment and were regarded as otherwise hopeless.

The materialistic conception of medicine almost universal in my student days has been very much undermined by recent discoveries in psychological medicine.

Nevertheless, in my opinion it is a mistake to jump to the con-

clusion, as some have done, that all the miracles of healing of our Lord can be explained on psychological lines alone. Some of the miracles of healing involved profound organic changes impossible to explain in the light of modern scientific knowledge. As two examples, I would cite the restoration of sight to the man born blind and the healing of the woman with the bent back—probably suffering from a form of arthritis of the spine. In the first case there must have been a creation of new tissues in the eyes or in the optic nerves and, in the second, extensive alteration in the structure of muscles and ligaments.

Toward the end of his paper Mr. Boulton says: "Our whole faith as Christians is a faith in miracles, in the supreme miracle of the Incarnation." To that I should like to add the miracle of the Resurrection. If those two miracles are established as fundamentals of the Christian faith there surely need be little difficulty in accepting the remaining miracles recorded in the New Testament.

Mr. Boulton has approached the subject of his paper in a new and original way, and we are indebted to him for the thought and painstaking effort expended by him in its preparation.

Mr. B. C. MARTIN said: I have studied Mr. Boulton's paper with much interest and profit. I notice, however, that the paper deals almost exclusively with one type of miracle, viz., the Miracle of Healing.

What would Mr. Boulton say of the other Bible miracles, particularly the "Nature" miracles of the Old Testament, such as the Crossing of the Red Sea, the Ten Plagues and the sun "standing still"?

Were these "invasions of the natural order" or, as some hold, natural events which God caused to synchronise with certain human situations, thus giving them the appearance of miracle to those concerned?

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. B. B. KNOPP wrote: Mr. Boulton is to be congratulated on this brilliant paper with its evidence of deep thought and its new approach to the ancient problem of Miracle. As one who has also thought much upon the subject, may I offer a few observations?

I was a little sorry not to find a more positive presentation of the abundance of evidence for miracles. All thought, whether modern

or of any other period, must take account of this. Mr. Boulton mentions the supreme miracle of the Incarnation. He might also have referred to its "twin," namely, the Resurrection. This, apart from still being the "best attested fact in history," is specifically stated by Paul to be indispensable to our faith. (See 1 Cor. 15: 17.)

It cannot surely be ultimately true that there are some events that have no cause. Mr. Boulton's alternative must be right. "There is a deeper substratum which has completely evaded our analysis in which the springs of those events are concealed." Mind has eluded the scrutiny of science. We cannot watch mind acting on matter. We see only the effects. If the cause lies here we cannot expect to measure, weigh or examine it. We are unable to determine its location, much less see it.

The allusion to "protoplasm" is appreciated. Too long have men imagined that when they have given a name to anything they have thereby understood and explained it. The truth is, of course, as Mr. Boulton points out, that we are still very much in the realm of conjecture both in biology and physics.

The reference to Jonah towards the end of the paper prompts the thought that gone also are the days when one could dismiss Jonah by affirming that a whale's throat is much too small to swallow a man. (This was, however, actually repeated recently on the Radio.) The Christian cannot surrender Jonah. The words of our Lord preclude that (see Matt. 12: 40). Nor can we surrender any jot or tittle of Scripture in the original. We may feel more sympathy than formerly with those who have difficulty in accepting some things recorded in the Bible, but we should, nevertheless, realise that the underlying cause is still the same, namely, the pride of the human heart. Did not Jesus say, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18: 3)?

In his penultimate paragraph Mr. Boulton has this trenchant sentence: "However many facts we discover, the mystery will remain, because the limits of our understanding belong not so much to the extent of our knowledge as to the very texture of our thought." This is undeniably true and it suggests the ultimate definition of a miracle. It is an event whose cause lies beyond the reach of human

thought. From this standpoint the working of God in nature (not of "Nature" itself) is a miracle. Though a common annual experience, the *ultimate* cause lies hidden from human investigation.

When we come to think of man's origin we are right up against the miracle question. Even the most modern thought can only produce two alternative hypotheses—creation or spontaneous generation. Both of these, being contrary to our experience and beyond our investigation, qualify as miracles. As Professor Bettex (*Modern Science and Christianity*, trans. E. K. Simpson), speaking of unbelieving scientists, has pointed out, "Men do not escape the miraculous, however far in space and time they may relegate it; even the materialist believes in it, sworn enemy to the supernatural though he be. Not, indeed, in those which occurred 1,900 years ago and were confirmed by the testimony of many credible witnesses, numbers of whom joyfully laid down their lives for the truth of that testimony; but, forsooth, in others which are alleged to have happened millions of years back, and were observed by no eye-witness who could accredit their genuineness. To avoid believing in creation he believes in an unattested spontaneous generation, or imports germs of life at great expense from unknown worlds. He cannot believe that Christ raised a man from the grave, in other words, requickenened an organism that had already been alive; but, then he does believe, to be sure, that organisms were once upon a time generated out of a concourse of atoms. [This was written in days before man had penetrated the atom.] That God should have, for a specific end, opened the mouth of an ass to speak a few words he will never credit; but that an ape, one fine day, began little by little to speak without knowing why and acquired a human larynx—that he can easily accept!"

No examination of miracles is complete without reference to the miracle of conversion. A drunkard, a blasphemer, the most profligate person in the world may, by the grace of God, become a new man in Christ Jesus. No power but God's can bring this about. He commonly uses His own Word for the purpose; witness the miraculous effect of the new impact of the Bible in heathen countries. The old term "a miracle of grace" was no idle tale, and I believe that every true Christian will ultimately acknowledge himself with joy to be just this, "a miracle of grace."

Lt.-Col. L. MERSON DAVIES wrote : This is a valuable paper, citing a large number of notable facts. I, too, have often insisted that the supernatural seems to invade the very heart of what we regard as natural—for how can we explain the fact that, as Bateson remarked long ago, William Shakespeare began as a “mere speck of protoplasm” and nothing was subsequently added which would not equally have served to “build up a baboon or a rat” (*Nature*, August 20th, 1914, p. 641) ? What chemical or other formula could ever explain how the entire human personality, and all the arrangements for building up the human body itself, with its numerous very different (yet intimately correlated) parts and organs, and the countless timing arrangements for producing each in due order, together with the fixation of the whole life cycle of adolescence, maturity and senescence (although no part of the living body is ever more than seven years old), can be present in a single initial cell ? I asked Joseph Needham this question, when reviewing (*Nineteenth Century*, Aug., 1943, Vol. CXXXIV, pp. 77–84) his large work on *Biochemistry and Morphogenesis*. He never attempted to answer it ; nor did any of his colleagues at Cambridge who, I was told by one of them, discussed this review with interest. Yet, although the utterly inexplicable marvel of reproduction occurs daily, in all parts of the world, we think nothing of it. In short, it is not the intrinsic mystery of a happening which usually impresses us, but only its abnormality. Thus, the story of Jonah and the whale is often cited as a peculiarly incredible miracle ; although (as I have elsewhere shown) it may not have involved more than God’s Providence, the whole being explicable on purely “natural” lines.

As regards spiritism, I would recall that Dr. Schofield himself affirmed the supernatural nature of many of its phenomena, while deprecating resort to it ; and the Bible testifies to its essentially evil supernatural character—both Old Testament and New Testament denouncing it as abhorrent to God and calling those who practice it an abomination to Him (Deut. 18 : 12).

Again : while Christians should let no denominational trifles—as, e.g., between Anglicans, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Baptists, etc.—mar their cordial relations with each other as fellow-believers in the Gospel, the Bible insists that they should never compromise with those who deny the Gospel essentials. A Unitarian, for

instance, is most definitely not a Christian—denying, as he does the Incarnation of the very Son of God—and should be countenanced by no genuine Christian (*cf.* 2 John 7-11).

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

May I, first of all, take this opportunity of saying that I have indeed felt it a great privilege to present this paper to the Institute, and I would thank the members for the kind way in which they have received it.

Turning to the points which have been raised by the members, I have little to add, but I would like to make my meaning clear upon one or two matters which have been referred to in the discussion.

I acknowledge Dr. White's comments upon the changing attitude of the medical profession, and I agree that my comment as to the neglect of modern "miracles" by that profession, and its refuge in what I called the "dubious distinction" between organic and functional disease would have been more accurate fifteen or twenty years ago than it is to-day. One still finds the distinction made, however, and in connection with our present subject it always seems to me that its weakness is that it is sometimes only in retrospect that it is invoked to explain some happening otherwise unaccountable by conventional scientific thought.

I do not believe, nor have I intended to convey, that the healing miracles of our Lord could be explained upon psychological lines alone and I should like to make it clear that my comment that psychology feels towards the meaning of faith in the word "suggestibility" does not mean that I would by any means equate faith with suggestibility. What I do believe is that there is some relation between the two. I think this can be discerned in a negative way. The unfaith which grieved the heart of Jesus was "hardness of heart," a closing of the mind against His message, a refusal of the imagination even to allow the possibility of its being true. In the same way, it is possible to close the mind against suggestion, and a patient can thus refuse co-operation in his own treatment. But the faith of which we, as Christians, speak must go far beyond mere suggestibility. It is imaginative trust in a living Lord.

It is a puzzling fact, however, that where a ministry of healing has been active, such as that described by Spread in his *Stretching*



*Forth Thy Hand to Heal*, the benefits obtained have been quite unpredictable. Sometimes the strongest faith seems unrewarded, whilst the half-sceptical have been healed. We have to reserve our judgment and wait with patience and humility for more information. Almost any generalisation we might make as to the nature of healing faith would be likely to be disproved by the facts.

The subject of "nature miracles" is a difficult one, on which I do not feel that I have anything to offer that would be either new or of assistance to members of the Institute, and for this reason I confined my remarks to healing miracles. There are some events in the Bible record which, as has been said, appear to be explicable as natural events providentially synchronised with human needs. I have never been very happy about these explanations, however, and I think the happenings in question must be left to individual interpretation and the measure of each man's faith.

In conclusion, I would again express my thanks to the Institute and to the members for receiving this paper.

## 897TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 69, GREAT PETER STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 1951.

REV. CANON A. ST. J. THORPE, M.A., L.Th., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Ernest White, Esq., M.B., B.S., to read his Paper, entitled "A Preface to Biblical Psychology."

### *A PREFACE TO BIBLICAL PSYCHOLOGY.*

By ERNEST WHITE, ESQ., M.B., B.S.

#### SYNOPSIS.

The Bible, in its numerous statements about the nature of man, and in its biographical records, contains rich material for psychological study.

This paper is limited to the discussion of three words used frequently in describing the personality of man, namely soul, heart and spirit. An attempt is made to discover the meanings of these words as used in the Bible, and to compare their significance with modern psychological theories of the structure of human personality. The particular school of psychology chosen is the psycho-analytical school.

In the Bible, the Soul is the principle of life, and corresponds in some respects to certain features of the Id described by Freud.

The Heart appears to include all the functions of the conscious mind as described by modern psychology, and probably includes the conative elements of the Unconscious.

The Spirit lies in the depths of personality. It is related to God and to eternity. A comparison is made with Jung's theory of the spirit as a separate consciousness containing an awareness of the total living processes of body and mind.

It is emphasised that man must not be thought of as being made up of separate parts which can be clearly distinguished. He is a unity of which Spirit, Soul, Heart and Body are different aspects.

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**T**HE Bible is essentially a book of life. It deals with men and women who lived and played their part in history, and it contains a progressive unfolding of the character of God and of His dealings with individuals and with nations. It treats of the relationship of men and women to one another in family, social, national and international affairs. Above all it reveals God's relationship to man, and man's status before God.

We may search the Bible in vain to find therein a systematic exposition of science, metaphysics, psychology, or even of ethics or theology. It deals with all these subjects in so far as they concern Divine and human nature, but although it is concerned with profound problems of theology and morals, it contains no clear-cut system of morals and theology in a logical form. It presents the raw, uncodified materials from which men have built up various systems of theology and moral philosophy from sub-apostolic times to the present day.

It would be an error to suppose that we should be able to find the Bible to be in agreement with all modern scientific theories. Scientific hypotheses are constantly undergoing modifications in the light of new discoveries. They are but the scaffolding employed in the process of building the Temple of Truth, and as the building grows, much of the scaffolding may have to be scrapped. If the Bible agreed with the science of to-day it is highly improbable that it would tally with the science of to-morrow. It speaks in general terms which are true for all time.

These considerations are often lost sight of, and people are at great pains to try to make the Bible fit in with modern scientific ideas, or *vice versa*. No sooner is the task accomplished to their satisfaction, than another new scientific discovery is made, or a new hypothesis put forward, and the work of reconciliation has to start all over again. The literature of the last hundred years provides ample illustrations of this. This should not deter us from the constant search for truth, or from continual efforts to reconcile the various aspects of truth as they unfold. The mistake lies in attempting to make a final synthesis. The limitations of human knowledge exclude the possibility of such a synthesis. It is often both necessary and wise to suspend judgment, and not to allow ourselves to be disturbed by apparent contradictions, which may be resolved as we achieve further knowledge. Nor should we mistake the scaffolding for the Temple of Truth itself, so falling into the error of accepting hypotheses as final statements of truth rather than regarding them as tentative steps leading to further investigation and discovery.

Bearing the foregoing consideration in mind, we may now go on to discuss certain points in the psychology of the Bible and attempt to compare them with modern psychological theories. Any book dealing with human nature must, to some extent, touch on psychology, because psychology is essentially the study

of human nature and an attempt to interpret it. Psychology studies the personality of man and his various reactions to the society in which he lives and to the events which befall him in his journey through life. The Bible also deals with these themes, and its contents afford abundant material for exploration on psychological lines. At the very outset of our study we are faced with several difficulties. The first difficulty lies in the mass of material available. We find in the Bible a very large number of statements about the nature of man, and rich and varied material for psychological study in the sayings and doings of the men and women portrayed in its pages. On the psychological side, hundreds of books and thousands of articles have been published dealing with psychological research and the various theories founded on them.

A second, and more serious difficulty becomes apparent when we come to study the nature of the material which presents itself.

First of all we find that the same Hebrew or Greek word is translated by several different words in our English version, and conversely, the same English word is used in different places as a translation of several different words in the original. Again we discover that some of the Greek words used in the New Testament do not bear the same meaning as they did in classical Greek. We also find that in modern usage certain words, *e.g.*, soul, have come to represent theological conceptions not contained in the original meaning of these words as used in the Bible.

If we seek to surmount the language difficulty, we are then met by the considerable complexity in Biblical psychology. There are no cut and dried statements or theories on which to construct anything approaching an ordered pattern of psychology in the Bible. This need not occasion surprise in view of the immense complexity of human personality revealed by modern research.

When we turn to modern psychology we find confusion worse confounded. There are various schools of psychology, each with its particular theories often appearing in contradiction to one another.

We are almost led to despair of finding anything approaching to a scientific exposition, and we are tempted to conclude that psychology is neither an exact science nor a consistent art. On further reflection however, it is obvious that psychology is yet in its infancy, and that the different schools represent different lines of approach. Not enough has yet been discovered to

enable a larger synthesis to be made. This, we hope, will come later, but much further patient research will be necessary before general principles can be formulated, and unity achieved.

To avoid submersion in a sea of hypothesis, it is proposed to limit the present discussion to the theories of the psycho-analytical school founded by Freud, and to select only a very few Biblical terms and their meanings. Having discussed these Biblical terms, I shall then compare them with psycho-analytical conceptions.

It has now doubtless become apparent that in order to make a study of the subject of this paper certain qualifications are desirable. These should include a thorough knowledge of the Bible, a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, an ability to distinguish the meaning of the Greek of the New Testament from the meaning of classical Greek, an acquaintance with Greek philosophy, and lastly, wide reading in modern psychological literature. Unfortunately I can lay claim to none of these qualifications save the last, and even to that, only partially. My only apology for presuming to venture on this immense subject is that I do it in the hope that some person of deep scholarship may be stimulated to engage in a line of research which would surely prove to be both interesting and profitable.

In adopting the theories of the psycho-analytical school of thought rather than other psychological systems, there is a preliminary difficulty to be faced before proceeding with the discussion. Freud and his followers, with the exception of Jung, hold the theory of determinism. Freud taught that an individual's mental state and behaviour at any particular moment are the result of all that has gone before in the heredity and environment of the person concerned. There is no possibility of free choice. At any period of a man's life, his emotions, thoughts, feelings, and actions are predetermined by all that has gone before. Hence we find no reference to the will in modern psycho-analytical literature. It is assumed that all mental processes obey certain laws. It would take us too far afield to discuss the philosophical questions here raised. Free-will *versus* determinism has been the battle ground of philosophers for many centuries. It must suffice to point out that this deterministic view is in direct conflict with much of the teaching to be found in the Bible. It is there repeatedly implied that man has the power to choose, and that he is morally responsible to God for the choices he makes. This is implicit in both the Old and the

New Testaments. For instance, in Deuteronomy 30 : 19, Moses says to the people of Israel, " I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing ; therefore choose life." Our Lord said to the Jews, " Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life " (John 5 : 40). The last appeal made to men in the Apocalypse is to their will : " Whosoever *will*, let him take of the water of life freely " (Rev. 22 : 17).

This, however, is not the only line of Bible teaching about the will. There are other passages in Scripture which imply that man is not quite so free in his choice as we are apt to assume. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and Cyrus, King of Persia, are both referred to in the book of Isaiah in a way which leaves no doubt that they will carry out God's purposes toward Israel and other nations, not in conscious obedience to God, or by their own choice to serve Him, but because He used them as the instruments of His will. A study of the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans raises doubts as to whether the will of man is quite so free as some would like to believe.

The Bible seems to make it clear that man has some power of choice, but whether his will is free in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term, is very much open to question. The will of man can operate only within the limitations of the purposes of God, and ultimately God's will must prevail in spite of the rebellion and disobedience of man.

When we begin to study the statements of Scripture about the personality of man, and attempt to reduce them to some sort of order, and when, having done that, we try to relate them to psycho-analytic findings and theories, we soon discover that we are up against very complicated problems. The terms used in the Bible are different from the terms used in modern psychology. It is not easy to form a clear conception of the meaning of certain terms used, and we discover further that the psychology of man as unfolded in the Bible is very complex, and difficult to arrange in a clear pattern. Another problem is that Greek thought has so penetrated into Christian theology, and has become so intermingled with Christian thought, that it is often a matter of some difficulty to disentangle the New Testament teaching about certain subjects from classical Greek conceptions. This is particularly true of the word *psyche*, usually translated " soul." We shall discover that the word as used in the New Testament has a meaning very different from its connotation either in ancient Greek thought or in the popular theology of to-day.

In reading through the Bible it soon becomes evident that there are a few words used so frequently concerning the being of man, that other words describing his personality seem to occupy a subordinate position. These frequently recurring words are "soul," "heart" and "spirit." The words "soul" and "heart" are of very frequent occurrence. The word "spirit" occurs very often in connection with God, less often as applied to man. The Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of God, are of very frequent occurrence in the Old Testament. Similarly in the New Testament we find the terms Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, and often simply the Spirit. Consideration of these terms lies outside the scope of this paper, and the word "spirit" will be discussed only when it applies to the spirit of man.

We will now go on to take the words "soul," "heart" and "spirit" in turn, exploring their meaning as used in the Bible, and comparing them with modern psychological conceptions.

The word "soul" in our Authorised Version of the Old Testament occurs usually as a translation of a Hebrew word meaning breath (*nephesh*).

The same Hebrew word is also translated sometimes by other words: "heart," "As he thinketh in his heart (soul) so is he" (Proverbs 23: 9); "mind," seven times in the book of Ezekiel; "breath," "His breath kindleth the coals and a flame goeth out of his mouth" (Job 41: 21).

The Hebrew word is very frequently translated by the word "life" throughout the Old Testament.

In the New Testament the Greek word *psyche* is variously translated as "soul," "life," "heart" and "mind."

It would take too long to make out a list of all the different texts in which the word "soul" occurs in the Bible, and to specify each of the various attributes assigned to it. All that is attempted here is to give a summary of the conclusions arrived at after a study of all the references. The same applies to the discussion of the two other words chosen, "heart" and "spirit."

The word "soul" is sometimes used to denote the whole person just as we use the word "body" when we say somebody or everybody: "All the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls" (Exodus 1: 5); "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. 18: 20).

Certain mental processes are attributed to the soul, such as **thinking, choosing, purposing and a variety of emotional reactions.**

On studying the use of the Hebrew words *leb*, *lebab*, and *libbah*, translated "heart" in the Authorised Version, and the word *ruach*, translated "spirit," we find that the various functions of thinking, willing and feeling are also attributed to them. The same applies to the corresponding Greek words in the New Testament. All the various functions of the mind as described in modern psychology are attributed indifferently to heart, soul and spirit. At first sight this seems to be very confusing, but as we shall see later, it has an important significance.

In addition to the attributes affixed in common to "soul," "heart" and "spirit," each of these words is used with a specific and technical meaning of its own.

The distinctive meaning of the word *nephešh* ("soul") is life, animal life whether in man or in animals. In this respect there is no difference between man and the lower animals; animals have souls as well as man, *e.g.*, Genesis 1: 20: "The living creature that hath life" (*nephešh*, soul). In several places the blood is said to be the seat of the life, or soul of animals. When people die the soul leaves the body, that is, the life or breath leaves the body. It is important to note that the word soul, as used in the Old Testament has nothing in it of the metaphysical content attached to it by theologians. It is simply the life principle, the life of the man or animal. It includes psychical life, for the mind is a living thing.

When we turn to the New Testament we find that the Greek word *psyche* is similarly, in its more technical meaning, merely the animal life principle. With only two exceptions, both occurring in the Apocalypse, the soul is not the immortal part of man which survives the death of the body. It is, as in the Old Testament, the life principle of his existence here on earth. When the Apostle writes that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," he uses a word derived from *psyche*. The "psychical" or animal man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. Similarly, where we read concerning the resurrection of the body, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body," the same word, "psychical," is used, and placed in direct contrast with the enduring spiritual body of the new resurrection existence.

Plato's teaching about the *psyche* has bitten so deeply into Christian thought that soul has become almost equivalent in meaning to spirit. As the word psychology tells us, it has also come to mean the mind. These meanings, however, are not to



be found in Scripture. In the Bible the soul is the animal life of earthly existence, and death is the separation of the animal life or breath from the material body. It is not the immortal personality or part of that personality which survives death. Whether that life does or does not survive after the death of the body is a separate question nowhere referred to in Scripture. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is founded on Greek philosophy, but it was very early introduced into Christian thought.

In the Pentateuch the blood is said to be the seat of the soul or life in man and in animals. This belief was associated with the taboo which forbade the drinking of blood. This belief has far-reaching roots in primitive beliefs, but it would take us away from the subject to follow this out.

When we turn to the very numerous statements about the heart in Scripture, we find a considerable amount of support for the commonly held view that the heart is the centre of emotional life. In modern English we describe a man as hard-hearted, or tender-hearted or lion-hearted, thereby describing emotional attitudes otherwise described as stubborn, sympathetic and courageous respectively. We distinguish between knowing a thing with the head and knowing it with the heart, thus comparing intellectual knowledge with emotional or intuitive knowledge. We may know on a cold intellectual level, or we may feel on a deep emotional plane, that a statement is true.

Another way in which we can use the word heart is in describing the inner meaning or essence of a matter, as the heart of the matter. Hence the word "core," derived from the Greek word for heart, *kardia*, via the Latin *cor*.

These various usages all occur in the Bible. We find, in addition, that the heart is the centre of will and purpose, and it is the fountain from which thoughts, words, and actions proceed. As well as being the seat of all kinds of emotions, it is the source from which motives and conduct, both good and evil, arise.

The general trend of Bible teaching is to regard the heart of man as evil, although it is occasionally good. Our Lord speaks of the "good treasure," and of the "evil treasure," of the heart (Luke 6: 43) and of "an honest and good heart" (Luke 8: 15).

Furthermore, the heart is the seat of understanding, of discrimination and the forming of judgments, and of thoughts and knowledge.

Perhaps enough has been said to show that in the Bible the

heart is the seat of all the various mental functions which modern psychology classifies under the headings of conation (urge), feeling (or affect) and intellect or knowing (cognition). The heart described in the Bible is equivalent to the conscious mind or Ego of modern psychology. I must qualify this by adding that the Ego is not entirely conscious. It has roots going down into the Unconscious (the Id) and is in communication with it. Even here there are hints that the analogy holds good. When our Lord said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" etc., there is a hint of the depths of the mind from whence deeper impulses rise into the Ego from the Unconscious.

The third word used frequently in relation to man's being is the Hebrew word *ruach* in the Old Testament and the corresponding Greek word *pneuma* in the New Testament. Both these words mean literally "wind," and are usually translated "spirit." We may see how wind (spirit) is contrasted with breath (life or soul). Breath is an obvious phenomenon connected with the living body of man and beast.

It is the breath of life which leaves a man's body when he dies.

Wind is a mysterious, invisible, power whose effects are manifest, but whose origin and destination are unknown. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth" (John 3 : 8).

So wind came to symbolise that mysterious force in man which sometimes takes possession of him and appears to drive him hither and thither apart from his conscious will and intelligence. It becomes associated in thought with that other self which arises when a man is swayed by uncontrollable emotions, good or evil, and which takes possession of him in states of ecstasy or in trance-like conditions. This is expressed in colloquial speech in such expressions as "He is beside himself" or "He is not himself," suggesting another self besides the one with which we are familiar.

In the Old Testament the references to the spirit of man are not numerous. The word is more frequently used of God, or of evil spirits.

It sometimes has the meaning of a disposition of character (e.g., the spirit of Elijah which rested on Elisha), but it is more often used in relation to the emotions, e.g., "I will speak in the anguish of my spirit" (Job 7 : 11); "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry" (Eccl. 12 : 9). At death "the spirit returns to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12 : 7).

On the whole, there is very little development of teaching about the spirit of man until we reach the New Testament. There the theme is amply expounded. The spirit of man there becomes that part of man's personality in direct relationship with God. It is the seat of the operation of God's Spirit in the New Birth (John 3: 6, 8). It is the centre of worship (John 4: 23) and of service (Romans 1: 9; 7: 6).

In the apostolic writings, it is not always easy to distinguish the Holy Spirit of God from the spirit of the believer where the word *pneuma* is used alone. This is understandable because the Spirit of God regenerates the spirit of man and indwells the believer, so that the body of the believer becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6: 19).

The new spiritual life in man becomes the discerner of spiritual things relating to God, things which are outside the knowledge of the natural or psychical man (1 Cor. 2: 11-15).

Besides the technical use of the word *pneuma* in the New Testament, it is sometimes represented as the seat of the emotions, as we have already found in the Old Testament.

Although at first sight it appears to be somewhat confusing to find various mental processes such as emotions and understanding attributed indifferently to heart, soul and spirit, this is not without significance. It emphasises a truth which is apt to retreat into the background, the truth that man is a unity. He is not made up of several separate and distinct parts, he is a complete whole. The same error of thinking of the different parts of the mind as things in themselves is apt to creep into modern psychological conceptions. The Super Ego, the Ego, the Unconscious are apt to be thought of as though they were separate things in themselves with separate existences. Such terms are merely abstractions, useful for descriptive purposes, but actually only different aspects of one unity.

When the body is taken into account, the temptation to divide man into parts becomes even more apparent. Endless arguments have arisen about theories of dualism, psycho-physical parallelism, and so on. In his book, *Man the Unknown*, Dr. Carrel has pointed out the fallacy of dividing the personality of man into separate parts, and of thinking of those parts as entities in themselves.

It is only in death that man's being undergoes disruption, and the Bible teaches that this dissolution is temporary and not final. Whatever views may be held about the resurrection,

the doctrine implies that the human personality will be eventually re-integrated in a body given by the power of God. Man is not to remain permanently as a disembodied spirit. As individual human beings we are not minds or spirits, souls, or hearts, or even bodies. We are individual entities containing all these conceptions in one unity. Nevertheless we are obliged, by the limitation of our knowledge, to describe the different aspects of human personality as though they were different things.

In psycho-analytical theory, the Id, as its name suggests, is the impersonal, unconscious basis of mental life. By its contact with the outer world by means of the sense organs, part of the Id becomes organised or differentiated to form the Ego. The Ego contains all the conscious mental processes, and it is in continual relationship with the outer world by means of the organ of sense. The Ego is also in constant communication with the unconscious Id. Modern investigation shows that the Id, in addition to supplying the instinctive drives which rise to consciousness as desires and emotions, also activates physical energies, and is closely connected with processes of healing. It is intimately associated with the animal life of both mind and body. This animal function of the Id as the source of bodily health and life may be equated with the soul of Scripture. It is largely unconscious and impersonal, and is the principle of life without which the body would be a mass of inert matter.

Analysis shows that in certain mental disorders the normal free intercommunication between Ego and Id becomes partly blocked by the process known as repression, so that some dissociation of personality occurs. This state of affairs often shows itself in lowered physical vitality, and in various physical symptoms. It is as though the individual has cut himself off partially from the sources of life within himself. He is only half alive. This has been described as an unconscious compromise with suicide. It is often discovered, on deep analysis, that the patient has unconsciously sentenced himself to death, often as the result of an overwhelming feeling of guilt. Consciously he desires to live. The wish to die is repressed, but by withdrawal of some of the Id energy from the Ego, the healthy functioning of the body is impaired, sometimes to a serious degree. Patients sometimes express this state of affairs by saying that their souls are dead, or that they have lost their souls.

The healthy normal free communication between the Id on the one hand, and the Ego and the body on the other, is interfered

with, and illness ensues. The tempo of mental and physical processes is slowed down.

The soul may therefore be thought of as the life principle behind both bodily and mental processes, and corresponds to one aspect of the Id of modern psychology.

Before giving further consideration to the spirit, we might summarise what has so far been said about personality as described in the Bible by a diagrammatic representation. If we draw three intersecting circles representing heart, soul, and spirit, respectively, we might think of the area of intersection as the properties, mostly emotional, which they have in common in Biblical psychology. The remaining free area of each circle would then represent the specific properties of each. Furthermore, each of those areas is connected with the body, and the central nervous system forms the link of mediation between the body and the rest of the personality. This last statement is not, of course, Biblical, although St. Paul comes very near to modern psychology when he uses the analogy of the head and the body applied to Christ and the Church.

When we come to the relationship between the Bible teaching about the spirit, and the views of modern psychology, we enter upon very difficult territory, territory which lies very largely in the region of the unknown. Even its outer fringes have been scarcely mapped out. Generally speaking, the psycho-analytical school does not recognise spirit. In his later years, Freud's eyes began to be opened to the existence of spiritual values, but his vision was dim and distorted. His great pupil, Jung, struck out an independent line of thought, and his researches and thinking led him to take a far wider spiritual view of human nature than the orthodox psycho-analysts have ever seen or expressed. He probed deeply into the spiritual realm, and he put forward a very interesting hypothesis in an Essay on "Life and Spirit" in his book *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*.

A brief summary of his hypothesis is as follows. He likens consciousness to the beam of a searchlight which brings only a small area of the mind into view at a time. Outside the rays of the beam lies the larger part of the mind, hidden in the darkness of unconsciousness. As the beam alters its direction from time to time, various areas of the mind become conscious, but never the whole of it. Much of it remains outside consciousness altogether, and its existence can only be inferred by its effects. Investigation of the Unconscious by deep psychological analysis

points to the conclusion that it is the source of instincts and emotions, but that it exercises other functions as well. It contains activities usually only associated with conscious mental activity, such as memory and power of reasoning. Furthermore, this unconscious area controls the automatic bodily processes via the autonomic nervous system. These bodily processes include such activities as respiration, digestion, the beating of the heart, the secretion of the internal glands, etc. Many of these bodily processes, normally outside our consciousness, appear as though they acted under intelligent guidance. Many processes which take place within the body both in health and in disease are very difficult or impossible to explain on physio-chemical grounds alone.

Jung goes on to suggest the possibility of a larger consciousness which lies outside our personal conscious, and which has an unsleeping awareness of the whole processes of the living organism.

This larger consciousness includes within its sphere both mind and body, and has a guiding or directive function over all vital processes. We know that during both waking and sleeping hours there is ceaseless activity, certainly of bodily organs, probably of mental life, of which we have no direct awareness. Jung suggests that the direction of these ceaseless activities is centred in this super or extra consciousness which lies completely outside our ordinary conscious mental life. He equates this super consciousness with spirit.

Freud pointed out that there are good reasons for believing that certain phenomena in the Unconscious appear to bear no relation to time. For instance, unconscious memories and emotions do not fade or lessen with the passage of time. Conscious memories of events gradually fade as time goes on, and their emotional content is often faint or altogether lost. On the other hand, emotions and images long forgotten may reappear in all their original intensity under certain conditions. Sometimes in dreams, often during hypnosis, the events of early childhood are recalled with the greatest vividness and with intense emotion.

Again, as Professor James pointed out in his well-known book on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, many of the experiences recorded by mystics point to a subliminal sphere outside the range of ordinary conscious processes. The spirit seems to transcend time and space. The work of Professor Myers along the lines of psychical research led him to a similar conclusion.

This very brief and rather bald summary is perhaps sufficient to lend support to a conception of spirit as the other self in the depths of our being. This self is not limited by time and space in the same way as the rest of the personality. It is largely unrecognised by consciousness, and extends far beyond the limits of mind and body as usually conceived.

All this agrees with the striking words of the Apostle already referred to when he says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. . . . The natural (psychical) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things" (1 Cor. 2: 9-15).

There is here a statement about a spiritual intuition which is different in quality from normal cognition. The spirit acquires, or is given an ability to perceive spiritual things related to God and the things which He has prepared—not in a distant future but here and now—for those who love Him.

It is this spiritual nature of man which marks the fundamental difference between man and animals. The higher animals possess animal life in common with man. They possess a certain degree of intellectual and emotional life, perhaps the same in kind as that possessed by man, although in man these mental qualities show a vastly greater development.

In the possession of spirit able to communicate with God and to worship Him, man stands alone amid all living species on the earth. It is here that we discover the true meaning of the words "God created man in His own image." God is spirit, and in man He has created spiritual life. The spirit of man is an echo, often faint and blurred, of the Spirit of God. It is within man's spirit that the work of redemption begins, transforming him not from without by changing his environment, but from within by the inflow of new life. The New Birth takes place in the innermost depths of Man's being, from whence it works outwards, gradually transforming the whole of his personality.

By this time it will have become evident that the old theological conception of man as body, soul and spirit is not adequate. It omits the heart, and the heart plays a large part in the psychology of man as set forth in the Bible. The early Fathers of the Church were no doubt influenced in their thinking by the doctrine of the Trinity, and they based their description of man on an analogy between the being of man and the being of God. The words in Genesis about man being created in the image of God were interpreted as meaning that the body, soul and spirit of man formed a trinity analogous to Father, Son and Holy Spirit of the Holy Trinity. It seems to me that this is a mistaken assumption and a false analogy. God is Spirit, and the image of God is to be found in the spiritual nature of man which distinguishes him from the lower creatures. On the earthly side man shares with the animals the possession of body and soul (life), on the heavenly side he is akin to God in the possession of Spirit.

In the Incarnation the Word was made flesh at a definite point in the time-sequence of history. We cannot suppose that the Eternal God is in any sense a material being like a man.

From whatever angle the Holy Trinity is considered, any attempted comparison between the nature of God and the nature of man breaks down, except on the spiritual plane.

In conclusion, I should like to make it clear that the views put forward in this paper are purely tentative. They are intended only as a preliminary and very imperfect survey of an immense field of thought and research. The Bible is a book containing vast treasures of truth about man and profound depths of revelation concerning God. The personality of man as revealed by modern psychology is similarly profound. As we contemplate the immensity of these theories, we realise our ignorance. We are reminded of the words of Sir Isaac Newton who likened himself to a child playing with a few pebbles on the shore of a vast ocean of truth.

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (REV. CANON A. ST. J. THORPE) said: You would like me to thank Dr. White for that most interesting and stimulating paper, and now I have to take my part—a part I did not realise I had to take until I came here this evening. Fortunately, I had a copy of his paper beforehand and read it carefully more than once, and I have been making notes while the doctor has been speaking.



I was interested in his reference to Freud's views on Determinism which, I think, appeal to the human mind in a time of mental stress. Under mental stress and inexplicable sorrow some are led to think "What is the good of it all? What must be, will be"—and such a view leads to despair. But Dr. White went on to show that there is quite definitely in the Bible an opposite point of view, and it is therein that the Bible can give us hope and security.

With regard to Determinism and Choice, St. Paul is careful never to write of the two together. He certainly deals with Determinism and the Will of God, as he does with man's power of Choice, but never together.

Another interesting point was his mention of the "Id" and the "Ego" with the latter having its roots in the former. I have sometimes found, when preparing a sermon in the evening, I have been unable to clarify my thoughts and so have given up trying and gone to bed. In the morning the outline of a sermon has quickly taken shape in my mind. This, I feel, bears out the point that the unconscious "Id" during sleep is preparing what the conscious "Ego" will express.

Lastly, I was interested in the paragraph that reads: "Whatever views may be held about the resurrection, the doctrine implies that the human personality will be eventually re-integrated in a body given by the power of God. Man is not to remain permanently as a disembodied spirit." It is for this reason the word "body" is used in the Apostles' Creed, in the article which reads "the resurrection of the body," rather than the resurrection of the dead.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

MR. F. F. BRUCE wrote: Although Dr. White disclaims qualification for this subject outside the field of modern psychology, he is to be congratulated upon his accurate and lucid presentation of the Biblical terminology. It is to be hoped that, after this Preface, either he or someone equally competent will make a careful study along these lines of such Biblical phenomena as glossolalia and demon-possession, or even such basic Christian doctrines as Biblical inspiration and the relation of the Two Natures in our Lord's Person (especially the link between His human consciousness and His eternal deity). I do not suggest that such a restatement would

possess any final authority, but I believe it might have considerable apologetic value for our generation.

What Dr. White calls "the old theological conception of man as body, soul and spirit" is based, of course, on 1 Thessalonians 5 : 23 but it is not certain that Paul is propounding a formal trichotomy in these words. It would be equally valid to deduce a formal tetrachotomy of heart, soul, mind and strength from Mark 12 : 30. What the Bible appears to present is rather a general dichotomy of the material and non-material elements in our being, the non-material element being further distinguished as heart, soul and spirit (as Dr. White has shown). Sometimes other organs are named metaphorically in Scripture in much the same way as "heart," e.g., the kidneys and the liver, though the latter term is obscured in our ordinary versions through confusion with another word having the same root-letters in Hebrew. For example, it is likely that Ps. 16 : 9a literally means : "Therefore my heart is glad and my *liver* rejoices"—a good example of synonymous parallelism. For the rest, Dr. White's paper seems to indicate that Biblical psychology presents much more striking analogies to modern psychological doctrine than to the outmoded faculty psychology of Greek origin. And we may be sure that further advances in this science will do more to show how aptly the Bible mirrors the true nature of man.

Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT wrote : I am sure that Dr. White is right in not trying to tie down the Biblical usages to hard and fast definitions. In dealing with "things" like Soul, Spirit, Life, Mind, etc., we are bound to attempt the impossibility of expressing unsubstantial realities in material terms. Both the Biblical writers and modern psychologists are forced to do this, and those who insist on cut-and-dried and consistent schemes are bound to be disappointed when they cannot find the formal diagrammatic consistency that they desire.

It is, however, possible to see how certain words come to be employed as vehicles of psychological thought, even though they may express different aspects on different occasions. I think that Dr. White has found an unreal antithesis between *nephesh* as "breath" and *ruach* as "wind" on page 59. While it is true that *nephesh* in origin may mean "breath", this usage is so rare as to

be negligible, whereas *ruach* is translated "breath" 28 times, and this is a normal meaning in addition to its meaning of "wind." In the Vision of the Dry Bones in Ezekiel 37, *ruach* has to be translated within the compass of a few verses as "wind," "breath," and "spirit." One can see how a word like *ruach* or *pneuma* is well fitted to give the picture of the Spirit of God or the spirit of man. If a baby needs breath to live, so the "born-again" can only live if the Spirit-breath comes in. This is the significance of John 3.

There is a further interesting point that the other prime necessity for life is blood, and, as this paper points out, the blood is associated with *nephesh*. Yet, curiously enough, *nephesh* is not used of the new life, though the giving of the *nephesh* through the pouring out of the blood in sacrifice is the one pillar of our regeneration—the new *ruach* being the other.

These small points of interpretation do not affect Dr. White's argument in the least, since he has wisely based his argument on usage rather than derivation. I am sure that his attempt to link up Biblical truth with the discoveries of psychology is good. We cannot keep our thinking in watertight compartments. I very much like Dr. White's connection of one Biblical aspect of the *psyche* with the Id, and of the Heart with the Ego.

Dr. BASIL F. C. ATKINSON wrote: I have read with great interest Dr. Ernest White's valuable paper. While disavowing any competence to comment on its substance, I should like to bring forward three points of Biblical terminology which appear to me to arise from it. (1) Is not the term "heart" used in Scripture to connote the *will* more generally than the writer implies? For instance have we not in Mark 12: 30 four terms denoting respectively the will, the emotions, the intellect and the physical strength? (2) Are we not justified in gathering from Gen. 2: 7 that the combination of *spirit* with *body*, and its action upon it, constitute *soul*? The same seems to be the case with animals, the difference lying, as the writer of the paper has pointed out, in the nature of the human spirit. The spirit is thus both a life principle and a disposition, and these two meanings are strikingly combined in the references to spirit in John 3. (3) On page 57 of his paper the writer excepts two instances in the Apocalypse from the otherwise general meaning of the word "soul." I assume the two instances to be Rev. 6: 9

and 20 : 4. May I suggest that the two passages are no exceptions ? In 20 : 4 may we not see the regular meaning "personality" and understand the passage to refer to personalities reconstituted in resurrection ? In 6 : 9, in view of the statement in the Pentateuch, quoted by the writer, that the blood is the seat of the soul, may we not see an equivalence with Gen. 4 : 10 ?

Mr. TITTERINGTON wrote : I am glad that Dr. White has given us this most interesting paper, and hope that now that a start has been made, the way may be open for a fuller and yet more comprehensive study of the psychology of the Bible.

Dr. White suggests that in order to perform this task adequately, a formidable array of qualifications is desirable—a thorough knowledge, not only of current psychological thought and knowledge, but of Greek and Hebrew, not to speak of ancient philosophy. If we are to proceed on these lines, there will be the added difficulty in the New Testament of determining whether a Greek word is used in the classical sense, or in the sense of the Koine ; as the equivalent of a Hebrew or Aramaic original, or as expressing some concept of Greek philosophy. But I think it is easy to exaggerate these difficulties—indeed, to pay too much attention to matters like these may be misleading rather than helpful. After all, in his present paper Dr. White has recognised that the meaning to be attached to the various terms is to be determined by the usage. Scripture does not simply borrow words and conceptions from other sources, but in doing so gives them a new content of its own. We only have to think of words like *ἀγάπη* and *λόγος* in order to see this. It is this Scriptural usage we have to understand and interpret. Surely we can learn more of what is meant by the "heart" from a passage like Matt. 15 : 19 than from all the lexicons that were ever written. So I hope that Dr. White will not be deterred from following up his present study by any misgivings on this score.

With regard to the word "heart," I should like to draw attention to the curious use of the word in Eph. 1 : 18, where the A.V. translates it "understanding"—the R.V. gives "heart," in accordance with the Greek.

As the present paper is limited mainly to the consideration of the terms "heart," "soul," and "spirit," one does not wish to wander too far afield ; nevertheless, I should be glad if Dr. White could

throw any light upon the meaning of St. Paul's expressions, "the old man" and "the new man," in Rom. 6, Eph. 4 and Col. 3. They must have some relation to the conscious part of our being, for they are, at least in part, subject to our own volition and control.

MR. DOUGLAS DEWAR wrote : To me one of the most interesting parts of Dr. White's most interesting paper are his remarks about the heart. My impression is that heart is the noun which occurs most frequently in the Bible. There are passages which indicate that this wonderful organ contains the seat of emotion and memory and that thoughts originate in it.

For years past scientific men have conducted their investigations on the assumption that the seat of thoughts and memory lies in the brain. But we have to admit that we are still completely ignorant of how or where thoughts originate. This being so, and in view of the many references to the heart in the Bible, I am surprised that more attention has not been paid to this organ.

Two years ago Mr. C. W. Deans wrote to me from Vancouver suggesting that, as the brain appears to be a transformer of nervous energy, more attention should be paid to the heart, and that it may be that the nerve bundle of Hiss or the auriculo-ventricular node has something to do with emotions and thought. I replied that I was not competent to give a useful opinion on this, but that, in my view, it would be very rash to brush aside his suggestion, because the heart is very richly supplied with nerves, and seems to be quite as wonderful an organ as the brain, and, in a sense even more important, because the heart can function to some extent when severed from the brain, but the brain ceases to function very soon after the heart ceases to beat.

Might not this aspect of the matter be considered with advantage by physiologists and neurologists ?

Lt.-Col. L. MERSON DAVIES wrote : I agree with much in this interesting paper but would point out that the conception of man as consisting of "body, soul and spirit" is not just an "old theological" one but is Scriptural. See 1 Thess. 5:23. And as Paul did not mention the heart as a fourth constituent part I have always regarded Bible references to the heart as being to man's inner emotional self. "If thou shalt . . . believe in thine heart"

(Rom. 10 : 9) would mean believe sincerely, not just conventionally. So the heart would, if I am right, refer to the inner, or deeper, part of the soul and not to something separate from the soul.

On the other hand, the soul is definitely represented, in Scripture, as distinct from the spirit, although intimately correlated with it. The Word of God is keen enough to divide the one from the other (Heb. 4 : 12). And a man's spirit is the God-conscious part of him. Note the change of tense in Mary's words : " My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour " (Luke 1 46-47). Obviously her spirit acted first, comprehending and rejoicing ; and then moved her soul—or physical mind—to praise accordingly.

As regards the subject of " Man in the Image of God," I showed in my paper under that title (*Journ. Trans. Vict. Inst.*, 71 (1939), p. 170 ff.) that both the Bible and science distinguish man from beast by his intelligent *creative* powers, his powers of articulate *speech*, and his capacity for *spiritual* cognition and worship.

Mr. JOHN BYRT wrote : I class our Chairman's paper as one of the most interesting and most important I have read. He has treated a very complex subject with a simplicity which is greatly to be commended.

From his treatment of the Hebrew and Greek words that have been rendered " soul " and " spirit " it would appear that *nephesh* is used primarily to denote the whole person or entity ; and, secondarily, in respect of particular attributes, of which his life—" animal life "—is the most important. This understanding of the word is of interest in connection with two much-debated passages. First, Psa. 16 : 10, " Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (*sheol*) " becomes delightfully simple and straightforward if rendered " Thou wilt not leave me in the grave " (*cf.* the translation of Judges 16 : 30). Secondly, Gen. 2 : 7, " man became a living soul "—a live person.

As Dr. White further observes, " when people die the soul leaves the body, that is, the life or breath leaves the body," so that the person then becomes a dead soul. Rev. G. Waller, in listing the occurrences of " soul " in Scripture, states that " in the 754 places the Hebrew word *nephesh* (soul) occurs in the Old Testament Scripture, it is said in 326 places to be *subject to death*," and " in the 106 places where the Greek word *psyche* (soul) occurs in the New Testament

Scripture, it is said in 45 places to be *subject to death*" (*A Biblical Concordance on the Soul, the Intermediate State and the Resurrection*, 1906).

Dr. White quotes the words of the Preacher that at death "the spirit returns to God who gave it," and he states that "man is not to remain permanently as a disembodied spirit." If the spirit of man "lies in the depths of personality," it would seem that at death the personality reverts to the universal consciousness of the Deity. Mr. R. T. Lovelock, in a masterly paper on Personality, given in 1949, stated that in death "a hiatus in consciousness occurs" but that "for the Christian there is true continuity since he exists in the mind of God." Some objections were raised to certain details in Mr. Lovelock's paper, and it will be interesting to see the comments on this paper of Dr. White's. Yet the Platonic idea of the immortality of the soul has been questioned by such men as Rev. Edward White (*Life in Christ*, 1875); W. E. Gladstone (*Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler*), Dr. F. S. M. Bennett (*The Resurrection of the Dead*, 1929), and Dr. J. Agar Beet (*The Immortality of the Soul; A Protest*, 1902). The doctrine was rejected by Tyndale, by Luther, and even—according to Prof Saurat—by Milton (*Milton; Man and Thinker*, 1944).

The unfortunate feature of the idea of inherent immortality is that it often results in a loss of emphasis on the Christian hope of resurrection and immortality *through Christ*. That there has been a swing in emphasis since apostolic times is, of course, frequently recognised; as witness the Report of a Commission on Evangelism appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York: "The idea of the inherent indestructibility of the human soul owes its origin to Greek, not to Bible sources. The central theme of the New Testament is eternal life, not for anybody and everybody, but for believers in Christ as risen from the dead" (*Towards the Conversion of England*, 1945).

Because this aspect is so often allowed to fade into the background, it is most refreshing to encounter a paper such as Dr. White's, which forces us back to the fundamental issues that underlie our hope of future life.

Mr. H. K. AIRY SHAW wrote: This most interesting and valuable paper will put much of the Bible in an entirely new light, and many

of its implications will probably only become evident after the opportunity of an extended study of the Word in the light of it.

The importance, for the individual walk and warfare of the believer, of distinguishing clearly between "spiritual" and "soul" activity, cannot be over-emphasized. Much of the breakdown, confusion and frustration in Christian lives might be avoided if this vital distinction were recognized, and if Dr. White's paper did no more than bring this issue to the notice of some of God's people it would have been well worth while.

There are one or two points of detail that suggest comment.

Page 52, line 7: "The Bible . . . presents the raw, uncodified materials from which men have built up various systems," etc. I feel that the expression "raw, uncodified materials" is an inappropriate, and indeed irrelevant, one, to apply to the Word of God. It is, of course, tragically true that men have *treated* the Bible as so much "raw, uncodified material" from which to construct their own systems—but that is man's misuse, not God's intention. To the people of God the Book does not come within the category of "materials": it is, as Dr. White says, "a book of life"—indeed, one of the most precious sources of life itself.

Page 54, line 36. Free will. Can this not be more easily grasped by reference to the transcendent power and sovereignty of God? As Dr. White well expresses it (middle of page 55), "The will of man can operate only within the limitations of the purposes of God." God's infinite sovereignty is well able so to arrange, or manoeuvre, or, as it were "outflank" the circumstances of any given life, that, while the person himself exercises a perfectly free choice within the framework of those circumstances in which he finds himself, yet, because of those very circumstances (foreknown and allowed for by God from the beginning), his free choice is in fact caused to subserve the ultimate purposes of God. The supreme example of this was, of course, the Crucifixion: see Acts 2: 23. Compare also Genesis 50: 20, in the story of Joseph and his brothers.

Page 57, line 31. "Natural" and "psychical". I would like to ask whether Dr. White would agree that the term "carnal," as used by Paul, has usually much the same connotation as "psychical". The expressions "carnal" and "after the flesh" in the New Testament would seem to be almost as important as



those associated with the *psyche*. The whole of the first section of Romans 8, for instance (verses 1-14), is taken up with a very strong insistence on the antithesis between the flesh and the spirit, and the same distinction is brought out in 1 Cor. 3: 1-3. It seems clear that for Paul the vital distinction was between "spirit," on the one hand, and "heart," "soul," "flesh," etc., on the other; he was not greatly concerned to draw fine distinctions between the last three.

Page 58, line 12. Blood. I would deprecate the use of the term "taboo" here, in view of the supremely important place which the blood occupies in the teaching of the Bible. It might give the impression that this divinely given prohibition was on a level with the many superstitious "taboos" found among unenlightened peoples. And surely the next sentence is put the wrong way round, Is it not these so-called "primitive" beliefs which have *their* ultimate roots in an original, truly primitive revelation from God regarding the significance of blood?

Page 58, line 38. May these references of our Lord to a "good heart," apparently conflicting with the general trend of Bible teaching, perhaps be explained as referring to *regenerate* hearts? In Luke 8: 15, for example, those referred to are they who, "having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit."

Page 65. "Man shares with the animals the possession of body and soul." Would Dr. White say that animals also have a "heart"?

Throughout the paper I feel that it would be good if Dr. White could make a little clearer the part that the New Birth plays in altering the whole "set-up" of the human personality. Most current psychology, I take it, deals with unregenerate mankind, whereas the New Testament is concerned almost entirely with those who have been born again and become "new creations" in Christ. I am not overlooking the illuminating references on pages 60 and 65 of this paper, but, for instance, on page 64, line 21, the "spiritual intuition" mentioned must be clearly understood as belonging to *regenerate* man only; and in the next paragraph I would like to modify the third and fourth sentences somewhat as follows: "God is spirit, and to man He has also given a spirit, but apart from the New Birth man has no experience of spiritual life. At New Birth, however, the spirit becomes 'joined to the Lord,

one spirit,' and by the indwelling power of the Spirit of God the believer has thenceforth the possibility of being 'changed into the same image from glory to glory,' though, alas, the image as reflected in man is often faint and blurred."

The New Birth is surely the most stupendous factor in the psychology of the New Testament. It is a factor that literally alters *everything* and I feel that the present paper perhaps fails to take account of it quite extensively enough or to insist sufficiently strongly upon its utterly revolutionary effect upon the entire human psychological set-up.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I am very grateful to Canon Thorpe for taking the chair, and for the kind remarks he has made. Also I am very grateful to those who have offered so many valuable criticisms and suggestions.

In reply to Mr. Airy Shaw, I did not mean to underrate the Bible in any way in the comment that the Bible contains raw uncodified material. What I mean to suggest is that the Bible is not a systematic treatise on theology or psychology, but that it does provide material in abundance for further thought and reflection about these great themes.

Concerning the words "natural" (psychical) and "flesh" as used by the Apostle Paul, these words raise several important questions. It seems to me that, broadly speaking, the flesh refers to all that in human nature which is opposed to God. It is the evil nature in man in contrast with the New Life imparted by the Holy Spirit when a man is born again into the Kingdom of God. To discuss this problem fully would take me beyond the scope of my paper into the realm of theology.

Mr. Airy Shaw does not like the use of the word "taboo" in connection with blood. This word is defined as "act of setting apart a person or thing as accursed or sacred, ban, prohibition" (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*), so that I do not see why he should object to the word being used for the Mosaic prohibition of eating blood.

"Would Dr. White say that the animals also have a heart?" If I am correct in believing that the heart in Scripture is equivalent to the mind as described by modern psychology, it is difficult to determine whether animals have a mind or not. They certainly

show signs of emotion and even of reasoning to a limited extent, so it seems probable that they possess at least a rudimentary mind.

Mr. Airy Shaw wishes that I had written more about the New Birth. As I pointed out in my paper, I limited myself to certain terms. The subject of New Birth was outside the scope of my paper. It is a very interesting subject from a psychological point of view and would demand a paper to itself. It was not possible within the limits of my paper to deal either with this subject or with many others. The psychology of the Bible presents a very extensive field, and I found it necessary to limit myself strictly to one small portion of that field.

I am grateful to Mr. F. F. Bruce for his suggestions for further studies. To study some of the subjects he mentions, *e.g.*, Biblical Inspiration, and the relation of our Lord's consciousness to His eternal Deity, would be a very large and serious undertaking. His reference to the metaphorical use of other organs of the body besides the heart also suggests another interesting line of study.

Rev. J. Stafford Wright makes useful suggestions about the use of the words *nephesh* and *ruach*, which demand further consideration. He points out that *nephesh* is not used of the new life. Would this not rather support the theory that *nephesh* refers to the animal life of the body and mind, neither good nor bad in itself, whilst the new life belongs to a different realm, the realm of spirit?

The new life is eternal life, the life which we share with God Himself, in contrast with *nephesh*, which is closely associated with our inherited material nature.

Dr. Basil Atkinson asks whether the heart connotes the will more generally than I imply. Without going through the whole of the references and checking up on them, I agree that the heart is referred to as the seat of the will. It is also repeatedly referred to as the seat of emotion and of intellectual processes, and I still hold the opinion that it corresponds to the Ego of modern psychology, with its three aspects—will, emotion and intellect.

The statement that soul is the result of the action of spirit upon body seems to be an obscure hypothesis which would be equally difficult to prove or disprove. I do not think that we have sufficient evidence to form an opinion one way or the other. I am obliged

to Dr. Atkinson for pointing out that the word "soul" as used in Rev. 6:9 and 20:4 refers to human personality rather than to soul in its more limited sense.

Lt.-Col. Merson Davies states that the conception of man as consisting of body, soul and spirit is Scriptural. As far as I know the text he quotes is the only one in the Bible in which these three words occur together. As Mr. Bruce has pointed out, the Bible also speaks of "heart, soul, mind, strength" (Mark. 12:30).

It is not, perhaps, good theology to found a doctrine on a single text or phrase. Thereby many errors arise. It is surely better and safer to found our doctrines upon the general teaching of Scripture about a given subject.

I am very grateful to Mr. Titterington for his kind suggestion that I should follow up my present study. I hope to do so as far as my limited time and abilities permit.

In asking for light on the expression "the old man" and the "new man" he raises a large, and perhaps controversial, subject. Briefly, I would assume that the "old man" refers to the tendency to do wrong, the evil principle within, while the "new man" refers to the good motives and desires implanted by the Holy Spirit, the "new creation" taking place in those who are "in Christ."

In reply to Mr. Dewar's question about the heart, there is no evidence of any kind that the physical heart has anything at all to do with mental processes. The heart is a hollow muscle and its function is to pump blood through the circulatory system of the body. Its rich innervation governs the rhythmic working of its four chambers to ensure the propulsion of blood continuously in the right direction. The heart, in common with other organs of the body, undergoes changes in its action in association with emotional disturbances, but there is no evidence that it is the seat of emotions. It has been demonstrated that certain parts of the nervous system are directly associated with emotion, and that they form the organic seat of emotional changes and expression.

Again, I should like to thank all who have contributed to the discussion. Many of the questions raised and the suggestions made should prove very useful to anyone undertaking the study of Biblical Psychology.

## 898TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 69, GREAT PETER STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 5TH MARCH, 1951.

REV. CANON MARCUS KNIGHT, B.D., B.A., F.K.C., S.T.M.,  
IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The following elections were announced :—Ian George Mackay, Esq., B.Sc., Member; James D. Bales, Esq., B.A., M.A., Ph.D., Member; Rev. A. L. Blomerley, Member; John Brown, Esq., Associate; John A. Mikaelson, Esq., Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A., to read his Paper entitled "The Supposed Evidence for Reincarnation."

### *THE SUPPOSED EVIDENCE FOR REINCARNATION.*

By REV. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT, M.A.

#### SYNOPSIS.

Reincarnation is taken seriously by a high proportion of the human race. Actual evidence for it, as opposed to philosophical apologetics, could come from—

(1) Revelation. Most believers in it do not regard it as a revealed truth. The Christian Bible is opposed to the theory. Alleged revelations from discarnate spirits can be quoted freely on both sides, and so are inconclusive.

(2) Memory of previous lives. Alleged examples capable of proof are rare, but several can be quoted. Hypnotism has been used to induce memory.

If the facts are established, they are capable of other explanations in the light of modern knowledge about suggestion, the unconscious, telepathy, clairvoyance, and so-called psychometry.

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**M**OST of the books and articles that have been written on reincarnation have faced the question from a philosophical, or semi-philosophical, point of view. From this standpoint the recent book by Canon Marcus Knight, *Spiritualism, Reincarnation, and Immortality*, has dealt very well with the subject. But, so far as I can discover, no Christian writer has attempted to examine the alleged evidence for reincarnation, and to offer some alternative explanation of the facts. To do this is the purpose of this paper; and although it is necessary to touch upon some of the more general arguments,

they will not be amplified here. For if, after all our arguments that are based upon such things as the lack of memory of previous lives, we are confronted with people who say that they can remember and can give proof of their memory of previous lives, we shall be at a loss what to say. I am not claiming that this way of approach in this paper is more effective than the other way, but I believe that this is a necessary handmaid to the other.

A belief in reincarnation is part of the faith of some 230 million Hindus and 150 million Buddhists. It is held in a simpler form by many animistic peoples. In this country it is held by Theosophists, Anthroposophists, many Spiritualists, and others who are interested in the occult. Rudolf Steiner may be regarded as one of the most notable apostles of the belief in modern times. The survey, *Puzzled People*, a year or two ago said that 10 per cent. of believers in life after death held some theory of reincarnation. Eva Martin, in *The Ring of Return*, has collected the writings of some 500 people of all ages who have been either believers in reincarnation or have made serious reference to it. Pythagoras, Schopenhauer, Hegel, and Goethe, are amongst those who have held this belief, while amongst modern philosophers McTaggart and Macneile Dixon have been attracted to it. It is not therefore a childish belief that can lightly be set aside. There is much about it that is noble and extremely attractive to those who look for justice and order in the universe.

Let us see first of all what believers in reincarnation hold. Here one finds certain differences between them. Hinduism believes in the rebirth of individual souls. Hinayana Buddhism, and perhaps Gautama Buddha himself, denies the separate existence of the soul or self, but holds that a new bundle of qualities is created by the sum of the actions of the previous life. Both of these religions accept the doctrine of Karma, which means *Deed, Act, or Work*. Karma is the underlying law of the universe, which no god or man can set aside. It is the law that whatever a man sows he must reap exactly. Thus our allotment of good or evil in this present life is precisely what we have merited in previous lives, no more and no less. Most of those in this country who accept reincarnation, accept the doctrine of Karma also.

A constructive presentation of the doctrine is to be found in a recent book by Robert N. Kotzé, *The Scheme of Things*, which combines the belief with a belief in evolution. He postulates a

group-soul as "a psychic entity which ensouls a whole group of animals" (p. 42). In the earliest forms of life there would be one common psychic entity, but gradually different groups of creatures, partaking of this one group-soul, had different experiences, with the result that portions of their psychic existence could not merge into the main group-soul at death, but came together to form a new group-soul. The process continued, till one day "the portion of the group-soul incarnated in a single individual has experiences of such a nature that its temporary and incomplete division from the main body becomes permanent, and it can never again automatically reunite with it" (45). This individual has now reached the Egoic stage, and has become a human being; henceforward it incarnates in one human body at a time. At first it develops by reincarnating quickly, but it comes to spend longer and longer in the psychic world. "Finally we reach the situation as we have it to-day, where it seems that the period of discarnate existence may stretch over hundreds of years" (45). The ultimate end is "the merging of all perfected mankind into a single Divine Being" (187). "The souls of all mankind, when perfected, instead of being reabsorbed into the bosom of Nirvana, may be fused together and merged into the transcendent consciousness of a new God. The consciousness of all of us might be used as the cells, so to say, for the body of a great new Divinity, who would be the final product of our evolution" (159).

This is a magnificent theory, and the idea of group-souls may well be needed to account for such things as the guiding life-principle in colonies of bees, ants, and termites. Marais has argued for this most convincingly in *The Soul of the White Ant*. But the evolution of this group-soul from animal to God is no more than pure speculation unless some tangible evidence can be produced to support it.

We turn then to look for evidence. It would seem that if there is evidence, it will be found in one or more of the following places:

1. It may be revealed by God, or by some discarnate spirits, as a fact. The reliability of such evidence will depend upon how far we are convinced of the authenticity of the alleged revelation.

2. Certain individuals may remember previous existences, and be able to furnish satisfactory proofs of what they say that they remember. There would not appear to be any other source of evidence than these two.

## REVELATION.

It is doubtful whether Hindus and Buddhists would regard their belief in reincarnation as dependent upon divine revelation. Their belief is rather part of their whole philosophy, which, they claim, can be proved by those who by means of the discipline of Yoga tune themselves to the inner reality of the universe.

Christians naturally turn to the Bible to see whether reincarnation forms part of the revelation there. In particular they turn to the teachings of Jesus Christ. If reincarnation is a fact, it is obviously a fact of the most tremendous importance; it concerns man's eternal destiny. We are not therefore demanding that Jesus Christ should make a pronouncement on some interesting trifle. But we are saying that if the doctrine is true, Jesus Christ could not have ignored it, but must have made it part of His whole teaching.

Yet nothing is more remarkable than the silence of Jesus Christ on this subject. This is admitted by reincarnationists, yet, since they hold that Jesus Christ was perhaps the greatest Teacher that the world has known, they feel bound to account for His apparent silence.

They do so in various ways. Ralph Shirley, in chapter xix of *The Problem of Rebirth*, cuts the knot by saying that there are so many discrepancies between the Gospel accounts that one cannot be certain what Christ did or did not teach. Yet even if one were to grant the existence of minor discrepancies, or to allow that the picture of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel contradicts that of the Synoptists, we still cannot find anywhere the slightest suggestion that reincarnation formed a part of the teaching of Jesus, as it must have done if He believed it to be a fact. The actual Epistles of members of the first Church bear this out.

Shaw Desmond, in *Reincarnation for Everyman*, suggests on pages 63, 64, three reasons for the silence of the New Testament, but in effect these cancel each other out. First, he says that the idea of reincarnation was so widespread that it was taken for granted. Secondly, that theologians excised passages about reincarnation in the Scriptures because they disagreed with their pet theories. Thirdly, that reincarnation, as an esoteric doctrine, had a veil of secrecy thrown over it for fear of its being misunderstood. Obviously all three of these arguments cannot be held simultaneously, and in actual fact there is no evidence at all to support a single one of them.



A more straightforward approach is that of Eugen Kolisko in *Reincarnation and other Essays*, where he says on page 21, "All who oppose the idea of reincarnation have their strongest weapon in the silence of the Gospels concerning it. In Christianity, rebirth can be achieved in one life through following the example of Christ." And again, on the same page, "For the Christian, the single life of the Redeemer assumes an incomparable value. The imitation of Christ's life becomes the ideal of every Christian. And hence the *single life* of the individual becomes the only reality; and the Resurrection gives a new significance to death."

In these words Dr. Kolisko does not reject the doctrine of reincarnation, in which he himself firmly believes. But he apparently means that to have preached it at that time would have been to distract attention from the main call of the Christian Gospel. None the less it is difficult to see how such an important truth could have failed to find any part at all in the preaching of Jesus Christ and His first disciples. On the single occasion when the disciples suggested that sin in a previous existence might be the solution to the problem of a man born blind, Jesus Christ categorically rejected the idea (John 9 : 2, 3). Shaw Desmond dismisses this answer as "one of those interpolations and twistings from the original meaning with which the New Testament abounds" (p. 61). He himself thinks that Jesus here told the disciples that it *was* because of sins done in a previous existence that the man had been born blind. By these methods one can make Christ teach anything one wishes.

It is however commonly stated that on one occasion Christ did teach reincarnation, when He referred to John the Baptist as "Elijah which was to come." The relevant passages are Matthew 11 : 14 ; 17 : 10-12 ; Mark 9 : 11-13. We may, however, interpret Christ's words perfectly naturally in the light of Luke 1 : 17, where the angel said that John would serve God "in the spirit and power of Elijah," not that he was actually Elijah in person. It is, in fact, impossible to hold that Christ meant that John was Elijah reincarnated, when the context of Matthew 17 is borne in mind. On the Mount of Transfiguration the disciples had just seen and heard Moses and Elijah, not Moses and John the Baptist; that is, Elijah in the other world still existed as Elijah. But even if John the Baptist was actually Elijah in person, we are dealing with something abnormal, since Elijah did not die like ordinary men. We should thus have an

argument against reincarnation rather than in its favour; for the only example of reincarnation in Scripture would be that of a man who did not pass through the ordinary channel of death.

Other arguments from the Scriptures are based on superficial understanding. Thus there is no reference to reincarnation in any statement about the Incarnation of Jesus Christ (Shaw Desmond, p. 58), nor in Christ's words about His previous life with the Father (John 17 : 5), as a Theosophist leaflet asserts. Shaw Desmond's statement that "this great Master of Life and Death, like all created things, had had to pass through reincarnation after reincarnation" (p. 58) has no warrant in the words of Jesus Himself or in the New Testament as a whole. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ is the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity, who emptied Himself of the glory which He had before the world was (Phil. 2 : 6-11 ; John 17 : 5).

Nor can arguments stand that are based on popular reports quoted in Mark 6 : 14 (Shaw Desmond, p. 62), when Herod thought that Jesus was "John the Baptist risen from the dead." Since Jesus and John were contemporaries, the one cannot have been regarded as the reincarnation of the other. The key phrase here is "risen from the dead," which explains the further popular report that Jesus was one of the old prophets. To believe in a resurrection is wholly different from believing in reincarnation.

To sum up : Scripture lends no support to the doctrine of reincarnation. It speaks of this life now as the time of decision. It goes so far as to say that "it is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. 9 : 27). In view of this it is difficult to hold even that the doctrine was an esoteric belief in the early Church. To anyone who believes that Jesus Christ was the incarnate Son of God, it is a striking point that He was not sent into the world as a Buddhist or a Hindu, in the stream of reincarnationist teaching, but He was born as a Jew, as the climax of a non-reincarnationist religion.

A discussion of how far a belief in reincarnation existed amongst Jews in the time of Christ, and amongst Christian and semi-Christian sects later, would demand more space than can be spared here. In his article in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* Dr. Gaster does not think that there is sufficient evidence to decide when reincarnationist ideas came to be held by some of the Jews. Gnostic sects soon after the time of Christ certainly held them.

One problem is the need to distinguish between belief in

reincarnation and belief in the pre-existence of the soul. Even the remark of the disciples in John 9 : 2 might express no more than the suggestion that the man born blind had sinned in a previous existence as a soul, before he had been born into the world at all. A number of early Christian Fathers accepted the pre-existence—though not the pre-incarnation—of the soul, and reincarnationists, who quote them, do not always observe this distinction. Origen was a notable exponent of this view, and in a somewhat similar form the view has been stated in recent times by such theologians as Dr. N. P. Williams in *The Doctrine of the Fall and of Original Sin*, and Canon Peter Green in *The Pre-Mundane Fall*, where they state a doctrine of a pre-creation fall of a world soul, of which our souls are incarnated fragments.

We suggested, however, that, if there was no revelation from God, there might be some revelation from discarnate spirits. Some have claimed that this is so, and that mediums have been the recipients of messages asserting that reincarnation is a fact.

The testimony of these messages is, however, considerably weakened by similar messages which assert that reincarnation is not a fact. Those who have studied the literature of spiritualism know that this is so. Until recently it was generally true to say that spirit messages on the Continent supported reincarnation, while messages in this country denied it. Those of us who are critical of the spirit messages might suggest that the reason for this was the influence of the tradition of Allan Kardec, who was one of the leading French spiritualists in the last century. In his book, *Le Livre des Esprits*, he quotes messages which teach a doctrine of reincarnation not unlike that of Kotzé.

Spiritualists and reincarnationists have explained these differences by saying that those who have passed over tend to retain their habits of thought and outlook. Thus a reincarnationist in this life would still hold reincarnationist views in the life to come. The reverse would also be true. Shaw Desmond puts this forward in chapter xxviii. Dr. Alexander Cannon, in *Powers That Be* (pp. 186 f.), is particularly concerned because someone had obtained information from a high spirit that "under no circumstances whatever does the soul come again to earth." Dr. Cannon suggests that the sitter had been misled. He holds that some people "get into touch with entities that have nothing valid to impart, or they find themselves catching their own reflected thoughts."

Obviously if any of these three explanations is true, it robs

the testimony of these communicators of all their value. On Shaw Desmond's explanation, the opinion of the discarnate communicator has precisely the same value as the opinion that he held while on earth. On Dr. Cannon's explanation, why should not Dr. Cannon himself be the one who is in touch with entities that have nothing valid to impart? Or why should not he be catching his own reflected thoughts?

Clearly the supposed evidence from the spirit world is worthless for discovering the truth about reincarnation, and most Theosophists and Anthroposophists pay little attention to the communications of spiritualism.

#### THE MEMORY OF PREVIOUS LIVES.

It is admitted by everyone that only the minutest percentage of people even profess to have a memory of a previous existence. This absence of memory is regarded as one of the strongest arguments against reincarnation. But the argument can be turned in two ways. First, it can be urged that memory is almost entirely a faculty of the physical brain, and is connected primarily with bodily experiences. Each body will then build up its own train of memories, and will not inherit the memories that belonged to the brains of former existences. This is the line taken by Dr. Kolisko, though he believes that under certain conditions memories of past lives can be brought up from the subconscious.

The other way of turning the argument is to point out the necessity of forgetfulness if the reincarnated soul is ever to develop fresh experiences. This is Kotzé's explanation, and it appears reasonable. Whatever new set of circumstances may fall to my lot, I can never face them with an entirely fresh sheet. I must face them with the accumulated habits, outlook, and personality, that have become an inevitable part of myself during the years. Thus, if I were to be launched into a fresh incarnation with all the memories of this life, my growth in experience would be considerably hampered.

Yet it is claimed that by some freak of nature, or by deliberate training, some people have been able to remember incidents from their past lives. It is not easy, however, to find well-documented cases. Mostly writers refer to certain instances, often giving names, and perhaps assuring us that they have investigated them. But anyone who has followed cases of alleged apparitions and communications in the records of the Society for Psychical

Research, knows how easy it is to have a convincing hearsay story that dwindles to very small proportions once it is thoroughly investigated.

One of the weaknesses of Shaw Desmond's *Reincarnation for Everyman* is that one is confronted with a "take it or leave it" attitude. For popular propaganda this method is successful, but it is not of much value for the serious investigator. Thus Shaw Desmond gives stories of some of his own previous incarnations, some of which he can remember, and upon which he has drawn in one of his novels of ancient Roman life. About other of his incarnations, he has been "informed by those competent to judge" (p. 112). Also he names friends of his who have memories of their past lives.

But there are a few cases that are given in greater detail. Ralph Shirley, in *The Problem of Rebirth*, quotes one that appears to be well authenticated, and I cannot find any trace of anyone who has challenged the facts. It is the case of Alexandrina Samona, and is vouched for by Alexandrina's father, who was a well-known doctor in Sicily, by Count Ferdinand Monroy de Ranchibile of Palermo, by a Protestant Pastor at Palermo, and by others whose names and titles are given.

The case is briefly as follows: On March 15, 1910, Dr. Samona lost his little daughter, Alexandrina, aged about 5, through meningitis. Three days later the mother dreamed that Alexandrina appeared and said that she would come back "little." The dream was repeated, but the mother ignored it, since, owing to an operation, it seemed impossible that she could ever have another child. A little later the family, while discussing the dreams, heard three loud knocks on the door, though no one was there. They determined to hold a séance, in the course of which Alexandrina purported to communicate, and assured her parents that she would be born again before Christmas. At further séances the message came that a baby sister would be born at the same time. After about three months the communications ceased, since the alleged Alexandrina said that she would now have to pass into a state of sleep.

On November 22 twin daughters were born, and one of them, as she grew older, proved to be very like Alexandrina, both physically and mentally. Her twin, on the other hand, was completely different.

At 8 years old Alexandrina II described a visit to a certain Church that she had never seen, whereas Alexandrina I had

been there shortly before her death. Amongst other things she said, "We went there with a lady who had horns, and met with some little red priests in the town." In fact they had gone with a lady who had certain disfiguring excrescences on her forehead, and had met a group of young Greek priests with blue robes decorated with red ornamentation.

Ralph Shirley gives several similar stories in this chapter V of his book. Shaw Desmond in chapter XI has a case of a different nature from India, for which he says that he has some corroborative details from the headmaster and two other masters of the Government school. In this instance Vishwa Nath, born on February 7, 1921, in Bareilly, began at the age of 1½ to give minute details of his previous life in Pilibhit. On being taken a little later to Pilibhit, he pointed out "himself" in a group photo, and thus established his identity as Laxmi Narain, who had died on December 15, 1918. His descriptions of his house, neighbours and manner of life, proved to be correct. Shirley quotes a similar case of a girl, Shanti Devi, which was reported in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* of December 15, 1935 (p. 72).

An example of a different type is quoted by Shaw Desmond and Ralph Shirley. This concerns the Glastonbury Scripts, made famous through Mr. Bligh Bond's two books, *The Gate of Remembrance* and *The Company of Avalon*. There is no reasonable doubt that by means of automatic writing Mr. Bligh Bond obtained information that led to the discovery of certain unknown buried chapels at Glastonbury. The main communicator claimed to be Ambrosius, a mediaeval monk-architect. The lady who acted as automatist for some of the investigations is said by Ambrosius to have been a Brother Symon in a previous incarnation, when he had been a great woman hater. Now he had been reborn as a woman to atone for his previous attitude.

Some interesting experiments have been made to induce memories of previous lives through hypnotism. The pioneer in this was, I believe, Colonel A. de Rochas, who gave an account of his experiments at the beginning of this century in his book, *Les Vies Successives*. His subject was Eugenie, a widow of 35. Under hypnotism he took her back earlier and earlier in her memories until she reached infancy. Then earlier still (according to Shirley, p. 140) "into a state in which she declared herself to be no longer on the physical plane, but floating in a semi-obscurity, without thought or physical needs, and apparently in an entirely subjective condition." Then earlier still she declared

herself to be living in a previous life on this earth, in which she was called Elise.

Similar experiments have been carried out by Dr. Alexander Cannon, and are mentioned by him in his book *Powers That Be*. His conclusions are: "It has been shown in these sittings that the average person may live seven times on Earth as a man and seven times as a woman. . . . There is an average interval of one thousand Earth-years between each Earth-life, during which intervals the entity achieves astral life on other planets, where it inhabits new 'planetary bodies'" (p. 194).

One must use such evidence with great caution. I had the opportunity of discussing this subject for a few moments with a hypnotist after a lecture. Although I think that he himself was inclined to a belief in reincarnation, he said that there might be a tendency for a subject to accept the hypnotist's suggestion to such an extent as to play up to what the hypnotist wanted. Shirley herself admits this, and quotes the experiments of Prof. Flournoy of Geneva, who found that his subject readily romanced about previous existences, though in one instance she claimed to have been a Hindu princess named Samindini, whose name and existence was unknown at the time, but who was afterwards discovered to have been a real person (Shirley, pp. 142 f.).

How then are we to assess these apparent memories of earlier lives, whether they come in some sense naturally, or whether they are induced by hypnosis? It might appear to be the simplest course to accept them as valid. Yet the Christian, with the example of the teaching of Jesus Christ before him, naturally hesitates before agreeing. To accept the doctrine of reincarnation would demand a complete readjustment of some of the basic truths of Christianity.

Moreover the statements of those who claim to know are far from being unanimous about the periods that must elapse between each incarnation. We have already quoted Dr. Alexander Cannon as stating, after careful research, that an average person reincarnates some 14 times, with an average interval of 1,000 years between each incarnation.

This is also the view of Dr. F. Rittelmeyer, a staunch disciple of Rudolf Steiner, in his book, *Reincarnation*.

Hindus and Buddhists, on the other hand, believe in hundreds of incarnations, generally with only a short time between each. Lewis Spence, in the article on Reincarnation in *The Encyclopedia of Occultism*, states that the period between each incarnation

grows longer as the soul progresses upwards on the path of evolution. Paul Brunton, in *The Wisdom of the Overself*, says that "the individual karma, modified by the evolutionary karma of the planet, decides its length in each case. Consequently a man might be reborn after one year or after a thousand years. But a new body cannot be taken until the flesh has totally turned to dust" (p. 110). This last sentence is something that I do not remember meeting elsewhere, though Lord Dowding in *Lychgate* says that normally a soul must suffer what he calls the second and third deaths of the astral and mental bodies before reincarnating. On the other hand, Margery Lawrence, in *Ferry over Jordan*, quotes two cases of people who are said to have found their own remains from a previous incarnation (pp. 121, 123).

One could wish that the cases that have been quoted had been subjected to a more critical examination. The Society for Psychical Research does not appear to have touched them at all. It is therefore open to the sceptic to reject them all out of hand. But if we accept them as in the main true, is it possible to suggest other explanations?

Where the alleged memory is fairly general, one may safely ascribe it to suggestion. Eric Cuddon, in *Hypnosis, its meaning and practice*, gives an experiment in which he suggested to a subject under hypnosis that she had been the favourite slave of the Emperor Nero, and had been taken by him on a trip to Egypt. Although she had no conscious recollection of the suggestion, on being asked a week later whether she had lived before, she replied that she was quite certain that she had been the favourite slave of the *Egyptian* Emperor Nero. Several people have called attention to the fact that quite a number of women "remember" having been Marie Antoinette. I myself can "remember" the sensation of taking off in an aeroplane, though I have never travelled by plane in my life, and certainly did not do so in a previous incarnation.

When we come to more definite and provable memories, there are one or two points to be taken into consideration. Previous papers before this Institute have discussed the now proved facts of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and retrocognition. In my paper in 1948 on *The Bearing of Psychical Research on the Interpretation of the Bible* (p. 41), I also mentioned psychometry (so-called), and referred particularly to Dr. Osty's experiments recorded in *The Supernormal Faculties of Man*. In psychometry



a person who has certain gifts can take an object, and by contact with it can frequently tell facts about the past and future of its owner, or others who have handled it. It is *as though* experiences have an objective existence, and continue in some form in which they can be picked up, and partially relived, by those who are tuned in to them. Many people, who have no such gift, are familiar with the experience of sensing the atmosphere of even an empty house, and are able to say that the house has had a happy or a gloomy history.

One might also raise the evidence of certain dreams. Ralph Shirley in chapter VI gives some examples of dreams in which the dreamer seemed to be transported back into a previous existence. His next chapter concerns dream travelling in the present and future, when the dreamer dreams repeatedly of some unknown house to which later he or she goes to live. In one or two cases the dreamer is seen as a ghost by the people living in the house at the time of the dream. I see no reason to doubt such dreams of the future, especially as I myself had personal experience of such a case, when the dreamer, who had had a vivid dream of a house that she had never seen, described it to me in detail before she went to look at a certain house in another part of the country in case it should prove to be the same. It was.

We thus have to face the whole question of the relation of the unconscious to time and space. If the dreamer can on occasions transcend the normal conditions of space, it is equally possible that he can on occasions transcend the normal conditions of time also. The quiet of sleep might release on these occasions something like psychometric powers, so that the dreamer becomes tuned in to some occasion of the past. But if this can happen in sleep, it might also happen to people of a particular type even when they were awake, giving them the conviction that they had actually lived in the past themselves.

The most striking modern example of such a thing is the story by Miss Moberly and Miss Jourdain, simply entitled *An Adventure*. Because of its startling character the book was first published anonymously, since the writers held important educational posts. The book has run through many editions, and in spite of several attempts to invalidate it (one being as recently as January-February, 1950, in the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research), the main facts would appear to be substantiated. In brief the facts are that these two ladies, walking in the Gardens of Versailles in 1901, found that they had walked back into the

period of 1789, and met people of that period, including one who appeared to be Marie Antoinette.

I have already mentioned the part that Marie Antoinette plays in "memories" of previous incarnations, and there may be a clue here to the explanation of these memories of the past. Many of them concern some strongly emotional situation. The same is true of hauntings of places. May it not be that a powerful emotional disturbance throws off some element which lingers in space and time, and which can be sensed by certain people under certain conditions? The tragic situation of Marie Antoinette is one such emotional condition. A battle for life and death in the Roman arena, such as Shaw Desmond remembers, is another.

Those who have read the late Mr. Whately Carington's book, *Telepathy*, will remember his arguments for the existence of what he calls *Psychon Systems*. It is impossible here to do justice to his carefully built-up case. The portion of it that concerns this paper is where he maintains that a thought-system, which is the product of someone's thinking, may exist in its own right; and, in the presence of some link that is common to the original thinker and the new percipient, it may pass into the consciousness of the new percipient.

Whately Carington himself incidentally connects his theory with the theory of reincarnation, and in particular with the fact of sudden genius, which is often urged as a strong argument for reincarnation. Briefly, he holds that the mental work done by previous researchers may often be the source of those sudden ideas that flash into the minds of people doing similar work today (pp. 141, 42). If this is true, it would account for such a fact as the Glastonbury scripts.

There is, I think, a more general feeling today that the individual mind is not an isolated unit, but that below the surface there is some kind of link-up. Jung's Collective Unconscious is an example of something of the kind. Jan Ehrenwald, in *Telepathy and Medical Psychology*, is convinced that there is telepathy between the psychiatrist and his patient. Alice E. Buck, in a small booklet, *Group Psychology and Therapy*, takes it for granted that there is "a degree of telepathic interaction" between members taking part in group therapy.

One cannot therefore rule out the possibility of unconscious telepathy in the case of Alexandrina Samona. The resemblance of the two Alexandrinas is no more than occurs in a fair propor-

tion of families when the children are under the age of 5. In this case the problem might appear to be increased by the fact that the coming of Alexandrina II was announced beforehand. But since it is almost impossible to deny that certain people, including mediums, have a genuine gift of seeing into the future (whatever the explanation may be), the preliminary announcement of Alexandrina's return does not in itself throw any light on whether the child who was born was in fact Alexandrina.

Other experiences, such as that of the Indian boy, are, even according to the reincarnationist hypothesis, so rare that they must be due to something abnormal in the make-up of the child. The abnormality might consist in an unconscious linking-up with another mind, in this special case with someone living at Pilibhit. The thoughts that this person had of the deceased Laxmi Narain then became a part of the thoughts of the child Vishwa Nath. This would not be anything essentially different from the employment of clairvoyant powers, though where an adult clairvoyant could distinguish between his actual life and the thoughts and experiences of others received clairvoyantly or telepathically, a child might not so distinguish.

#### CONCLUSION.

To the ordinary man in the street these explanations may appear so strange that it would seem far simpler to accept reincarnation as a fact. As a Christian I have given reasons why I feel bound to look for some other explanation than the superficial one. The general explanation that I have suggested is not strange to anyone who has made some study of the facts of telepathy and clairvoyance, and of the workings of the human mind at its deep levels. The explanation ought not to seem strange to believers in reincarnation also, since the majority of them speak of what they call the *Akashic World Record*. This term expresses the belief that all the events of the world are somehow impressed upon material objects that were present when the events happened. A person with the psychometric sense developed can perceive these events, as a soundbox picks up the sounds from the track of a gramophone record. I quote this belief, not as accepting it myself, but as an *argumentum ad hominem*. On the reincarnationist's own hypothesis, it seems to me to offer an alternative explanation for the apparent memory of previous lives; these memories need be no more than the picking up of fragments of the world memory.

In conclusion I would say again that in this paper I have deliberately refrained from the general philosophic and semi-philosophic arguments for and against reincarnation. There is very much that can be said on those lines, and that would have to be said if this were a complete discussion of the question. But the aim has been to make a preliminary investigation of the evidence, and in that evidence to include what must always be for the Christian the outstanding evidence for eternal and spiritual realities, namely the revelation made by God in the Bible. It is because reincarnation appears to be excluded by the teachings of Jesus Christ and the inspired writers of the Bible, that the Christian is bound to see whether there can be any other possible explanation of what, after all, are the comparatively few concrete instances that reincarnationists produce in support of their belief.

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (CANON MARCUS KNIGHT) said: Perhaps I can begin with a few comments on this interesting subject, which I think to be considerably important. I appreciate Mr. Stafford Wright's kindly reference to my own small book, which touches on some aspects of this problem.

People are already beginning to think on some lines of the kind suggested by our speaker. Such enquiries as I have been able to make for myself give one the feeling that one is trying to grope a way over a rather dark quagmire, but with no feeling of a hard and firm territory on which to travel.

One does not feel inclined to explore too deeply because you seem not only to be opening up possibilities of new knowledge which might be available, but also (as I have found in attending spiritualistic séances) you seem to be getting into certain territories where you seem to be far away from reasonable thought and clear investigation of the kind which lies behind such a paper as we heard read. What I think is so necessary is to try and give to these questions serious and reasonable thought, and what I like about this paper is that Mr. Stafford Wright does show that open mind and readiness to look into strange phenomena.

We decided that we must not discuss all the attractions of reincarnation as a theory appealing to the modern mind. If you can forget the Christian religion, I must say reincarnation has certain

attractions, and the reason why so many people believe in it is because it does have many of these attractions. One, for example, is the solution it offers of the problem of evil, and the doctrine of Karma has a certain attraction because it seems to be so scientific.

If we find the law of Cause and Effect running through human experiences and actions in a way which would seem to show that there must always be consequences borne by the individual, which, if they are not borne in this existence, should in justice be borne later on (or, alternatively, if there are compensations to be paid, they should be received now or later on); and if, instead of accepting the Biblical belief in eternal life, you simply hold people down to this world of space and time; then it is possible to see in reincarnation a solution of the problem. Our system of thought seems to be so scientific that this theory of successive reincarnation must have some attraction to many who ignore the Christian religion.

Then, on pages 80 f, Kotzé's doctrine seems to me to be extremely attractive to anyone who ignores the Christian religion. It obviously answers a great many problems and suggests something which is scientific and reliable, but immediately one feels in following this aspect of science that we are really *making* a deity. It seems almost as if, instead of a pre-existent Deity behind all this order God would be the goal of human endeavour, so that His existence is something which is created out of human endeavour. This is far removed from the Biblical doctrine of Creation.

The second point is the word "merging." Always with the reincarnationalist theory we get this difficulty about "mergence." On page 81 of the paper occurs these words: ". . . the souls of all mankind when perfected, instead of being re-absorbed into the bosom of Nirvana, may be fused together and *merged* into the transcendent consciousness of a new god." Think what that means. It is an oriental idea very different from anything we know in Christian doctrine. Perhaps this can be seen if we consider the two terms "merging" and "unifying"—merging suggests being swallowed up as a tributary in the ocean, while unifying suggests some element of unity and fellowship between unifying persons, and the Biblical doctrine seems to prefer that.

I should like to comment on the impossibility of evidence in the Bible for reincarnationist theories. The more you conceive from

the Scriptures the active, saving, loving, forgiving God of the Old and New Testaments, the more necessary it is to conceive of the co-operative personality with whom that kind of God goes to work. We hear of the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," *i.e.*, of *persons*.

One interesting scriptural passage is in John 9 : 2. And I suppose, if there were any point in the New Testament where you might begin to think that the assumption of reincarnation was present, it would be there ; but one must remember that the assumption always was that all suffering was related to sin. This was a common idea in the time of Christ, but, as we see, this man was perfectly innocent and yet suffered, which is a complete denial of this idea. I suppose the disciples were simply assuming that there was some sin behind the blindness, and that it must have been caused either by the man or by his parents. But Christ says that part of His mission of the Kingdom of God is to "open the eyes of the blind" and He proceeds to do it. Does not this rejection of the connection of sin and personal suffering tie up more with the remarks of Christ about the Tower of Siloam (Luke 13 : 4), which conclude, "Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem ?"

My last comment is on the hypothesis which Mr. Stafford Wright puts forward about discarnate spirits and communications from other worlds. I entirely agree with almost every word he has said on this. It has explained a great many things in the world of spiritualist phenomena. They are much more ready to say, "Here is some evidence, obviously these are discarnate spirits!" At this stage I would say that, in several experiments in which I took part, no kind of new knowledge was given ; all the knowledge that was obtained already existed in the minds of the mediums or in the minds of the people in the room. It seems to me you can perfectly argue that there is evidence of communication of mind with mind, but that would not necessarily justify the explanation which spiritualists all seem to think it does. I agree with Mr. Stafford Wright's explanation of the case of the Indian boy who began to give details of his previous life. I am also interested in the case of the Italian child on page 87. I do not know whether you noticed an odd difference there. The birth of the child occurred on November 22nd and its conception normally about February 22nd previously. The death of the first child took place on March 15th—

unless there was something extraordinary the conception of the later child had already taken place. It seems rather odd that the original child was still alive when the new one was conceived. There may be some minor point there for further enquiry.

I should like to say how much I have enjoyed listening to Mr. Stafford Wright's paper and I hope the Society will make further enquiries into this kind of subject. At the same time, it is difficult and strange territory, which requires exceptionally sane and balanced people to tread it, and I think Mr. Stafford Wright one of that kind.

Dr. WHITE said : This paper embodies a considerable amount of reading and research, and Mr. Stafford Wright is to be congratulated on the pains he has taken.

It seems to me that the positive evidence he produces is very weak and will hardly stand up to critical examination. Is it credible that a child of one-and-a-half years of age could give minute details of his previous life ? Without specific descriptions of what he actually said then and later, one would hardly accept this as evidence of reincarnation. Similarly, the lady who was alleged to be a reincarnation of Brother Symon, and the people who, under the influence of hypnotism, claimed to remember previous existences on earth, do not provide reliable evidence. Patients suffering from mental diseases often identify themselves with various historical personages. One gentleman told me that he was Julius Cæsar and had conquered Britain in 55 B.C. This was one of his many delusions. In dreams, in hypnotic states and in emotional disorders brought about by drugs, it is not uncommon for people to weave fantasies of previous existences having no relation to reality.

The phenomena of *déjà vue*, in which there is a feeling of "having been there before" when some new experience arises, was used by Plato as evidence of the soul's previous existence on earth. In his book, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud deals with this subject, and gives a clear and reasonable explanation which avoids the necessity of invoking the doctrine of reincarnation. Mr. Stafford Wright's remarks about psychometry are very suggestive and appear to be a more probable explanation of certain phenomena than a doctrine of reincarnation.

When we find that a belief in reincarnation is so widely held, and

has continued to be accepted over such a long period of time, we should not dismiss it as meaningless, but rather seek for an explanation. A possible explanation is to be found in the pressure exerted on men's minds by the universal emotion of guilt and the deeply inbred feeling that wrongdoing must be punished. Apart from the Christian religion, there is no solution to the problem of sin and guilt, and no conception of a loving and forgiving God. How can sin be atoned for? Evidently men do not always suffer in this life in proportion to their sin; men were therefore driven to postulate a series of reincarnations in which the sins of previous lives on earth would be gradually paid for in striving and suffering. Thus, the soul would strive on through a series of lives on earth, paying off the debt of sin incurred and slowly reaching the holiness he desired.

The Bible makes it plain that "it is given unto men once to die and after death the judgment," and there is no place in Christianity for any doctrine of reincarnation.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Dr. B. F. C. ATKINSON wrote: I received my copy of my friend, Mr. J. S. Wright's, paper only this morning and now find that I have been reading it during at least part of the time when he himself was due to be reading it aloud. I may say, however, that I have received no mental impression of the faces of the audience or the remarks of the Chairman!

This paper seems to me as fascinating and stimulating as his papers always are, but I would like to throw out the following suggestion. Is not suggestion to the human mind by personal and intelligent spiritual beings a simpler and more scriptural explanation of the phenomena than the explanations suggested by Mr. Wright? And would not such access to the human mind account for all the facts? (See, for instance, 1 Sam. 16:14; John 13:27.)

Mr. DOUGLAS DEWAR wrote: Mr. Stafford Wright's most interesting paper has stimulated me to suggest that the main reason why he has not been able to discover any Christian writer who has attempted to examine the alleged evidence for reincarnation is that many Christians regard the theory as fantastic, because it is inconsistent with the basic Christian doctrine as set forth by St. Paul



in I Cor. 15 : 51 f. and I Thess. 4 : 16 f., that at the last trump the dead shall be raised incorruptible.

According to the reincarnation theory, many of the dead bodies on resurrection day will have no soul because the souls which they once possessed will have entered other bodies.

Kotzé's theory of reincarnation, while it says much for his powers of imagination, is not likely to commend itself to biologists because, according to it, "a man is not altered in character at death. . . . When the period of mental and spiritual digestion is complete—a period which may be long or short—the soul again becomes imbued with a desire to return to the earth life. The soul is then attracted or guided to suitable parents for his new incarnation and is duly born again. His character and his faculties in the new life will be largely determined by the deeds and thoughts of his previous incarnation" (*The Scheme of Things*, p. 152). Thus, according to Kotzé, babies do not inherit the mental attributes of their mother and father, and if a child has cruel or wicked parents it has only itself to blame!

The incidents recorded in Mr. Wright's paper show that there are phenomena for which, in the present state of knowledge, we are not able satisfactorily to account, but is it not better to say *ignoramus* than to seek the aid of a theory which bristles with difficulties?

In view of the strange effects on the human brain produced by pressure or electrical stimuli, it may be that in some of the recorded cases the brains of those who have recorded their experience have been slightly abnormal, or were subjected to abnormal internal stimuli.

Dr. R. E. D. CLARK wrote: Mr. Wright's paper is one of interest and importance. He has shown convincingly that the supposed evidence for reincarnation must be viewed in the light of all the many queer metapsychical phenomena with which the occult abounds.

The reference to Carington's psychon systems is interesting. It may be that psychical research is leading us, not so much to a specialised belief in psychon systems, but to a vindication of what Christians have always believed—that truth is objective and eternal. The philosophic arguments for the view that truth is not something that happens in our brains, but that it has relation to something

outside of ourselves, could hardly be stronger than they in fact are. And the objectivity of truth is supported by the experience of the mathematician and the scientist who, so often, feel that the truths they discover are not truths of their own invention, but that they are merely discovering what was already there—"suddenly everything fell into place in my mind just as if I had been told" is the way that Bragg puts it.

Perhaps the position to which we are coming is that all ideas, facts, truths, or whatever we please to call them, have eternal objective reality. If so, the supposed evidence for reincarnation, like that for spiritualism, hauntings and the like, must be regarded simply as proving that on rare occasions man can "tap" the non-human sources of knowledge with which our universe abounds.

Mr. W. E. LESLIE wrote: The references to reported "supernormal" phenomena might be a little more critical in tone. May I refer to one case in particular—F. Bligh Bond's *Gate of Remembrance and Company of Avalon*. The atmosphere of Anglo-Catholicism, Mysticism, quasi-Theosophy, Astrology, and Gematria suggests caution. If a "script" states that an object will be found in a certain place, and it is so found, then, if script and discovery are duly attested, that is a good experiment which (if the operation of chance be excluded) would establish some form of ESP. But it seems that much of the digging was done in collaboration with archæologists who knew nothing of the scripts, and to whom apparently the work appeared to be directed by the kind of intelligent anticipation to be expected from an expert. Is it not possible that this was in fact the case, but Mr. Bond's anticipations passed from his unconscious to his conscious mind in the dramatic form usual in such cases? This may not cover all the cases. We then have to choose between some kind of retrocognition going back hundreds of years, or precognition a few days ahead. I think the latter is the easier theory. It is interesting to note that Mr. Bond does not admit "what is commonly called 'reincarnation'" (*Avalon*, p. 13).

I do not understand how Mr. Wright can say that the main facts of *An Adventure* appear to be established in view of the severe criticisms which he (very properly) mentions.

Space forbids reference to many excellent points in the paper.

Mr. H. V. GOULD wrote : I feel that this paper has been well thought out, and carefully worded. There is, however, one very important point with which I think the writer has dealt weakly ; it concerns the attitude of Jesus Christ towards reincarnation.

As a Christian, one who believes Jesus Christ to be the " Only " Son of God, just as Isaac was the " only " son of Abraham (Gen. 22 : 2)—the one son (though there was also Ishmael, and later many more (Gen. 25 : 1-6))—who was *wholly* like his father, I hold that in everything Jesus did and said He revealed to us *what God is like*. By this *one* test we judge of Christ's authenticity (John 5 : 37). Is all that He said and did identical in character with what we—if we have eyes to see and ears to hear—see and hear God doing and saying, all around us and within us, all our lives through ?

In view of this test, what then is Christ's attitude towards man's speculation regarding reincarnation ? We must expect to find His attitude *identical* with that which God has manifested towards man since ever the world began. And this is precisely what we do find : God has ever kept absolutely secret the conditions of the future state to which men attain after death. The Old Testament tells nothing about it. The New Testament tells nothing about it. Man's experience of earthly life tells nothing about it. And the Son of God, because He is wholly like His Father, and is wholly loyal to His Father's secrets, also tells absolutely nothing about it. Reincarnation is therefore not excluded from His teaching, but is completely concealed. To say, therefore (page 52, lines 12-14 of paper), that " if the doctrine is true Jesus Christ must have made it part of His whole teaching," is clearly incorrect.

May I further draw attention to the fundamental distinction between Christ's teaching and that of Theosophy. The latter teaches broadly that man returns again and again to earth, progressing spiritually by slow degrees, until finally he attains Godlike character, and so needs no further earthly discipline. Christ, on the other hand, teaches that man's business on earth is to acquire the basic principles of true living, and this done, he is *immediately* ready for the heavenly state : " You have *become* faithful in a *very little* : have authority over *ten cities* " (Luke 19 : 17). It is like learning to play a musical instrument : the first two or three years are full of stumblings and mistakes, but when once the basic

principles of theory and technique are mastered, no further errors occur, but all further progress is blissfully smooth and enjoyable. That is the simple scientific truth; and against it the teachings of Theosophy cannot stand.

Personally, I am convinced that even if we do not return to this earth again, yet those of us who have not mastered the true principles of living—and the vast majority of men, I fear, do not—must inevitably return to conditions similar to those of this earthly life: for until we become *real*, we can only continue to exist in conditions of unreality—those of the flesh, which “half conceal and half reveal the soul within.” How profoundly significant is that word “*any*” in Luke 20:36!

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I am grateful for the kind and helpful comments that have been made on this paper. If I do not comment on them all, this is not because I think them valueless. I quite agree with the Chairman on what he says about the puzzling nature of all psychic phenomena. We seem to be in a world that refuses to measure up to those standards by which we judge the rest of our experience.

Both the Chairman and Dr. White rightly call attention to the need for a stricter examination of the alleged evidence. But very few of us are in a position to investigate this for ourselves. In this paper I have had to take the best evidence available and assume that it is in the main accurate. But certainly one would like some medical evidence as to whether the birth of Alexandrina II was premature. Also it would be helpful to have a psychiatrist's first-hand report of some of these people who identify themselves with characters of the past.

Dr. Clark's interesting theory is developed elsewhere in this volume. He goes further than I have.

Dr. Atkinson's explanation is certainly simpler than mine, but the examples that he quotes from Scripture are not of people who are led by evil spirits to suppose that they have previously been someone else. I am rather afraid of using Satan as a *deus ex machina*, as has sometimes been done in other connections.

Mr. Leslie cautions against accepting alleged supernormal phenomena too readily. Since I am now convinced of the facts of Psi phenomena, I am, perhaps, more ready to accept some case

as genuine than I should be if I were approaching it without any previous knowledge of Psi. This may in another way be relevant in considering the evidence for *An Adventure*. In dealing with this case in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (April, 1950), W. H. W. Sabine calls attention to the fact that Miss Moberly had comparable experiences on other occasions; in other words, she was apparently one who was open to psychic impressions. Therefore, even though her original experience at Versailles may have been touched up in the process of time, there remains, in my judgment, sufficient indication that she did perceive something abnormal then. Mr. Sabine startlingly regards the experience as one of precognition, and not of retrocognition. Mr. Leslie suggests the same as a possibility in the experience of Mr. Bligh Bond. Scientific commonsense, if forced to choose between retrocognition and precognition, would say that retrocognition was more "likely" than precognition, since at least one is dealing with events that have happened, and so have a sort of existence. But the evidence of Psi phenomena would forbid us to say that one is more likely than the other—or so it seems to me. But admittedly I have made more use of the idea of retrocognition in this paper, since the reincarnationist is "remembering" events that are past.

In spite of what Mr. Goold says, I still think that, if Jesus Christ had known reincarnation to be true, He would inevitably have indicated it in His teaching about man's future destiny. If a Christian rejects the idea of reincarnation, he does not thereby reject the idea of progress hereafter; though I personally believe that the Bible suggests that such progress begins at the resurrection, when the Christian is once again fully man, and not a disembodied spirit.

## 899TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 69, GREAT PETER STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 19TH MARCH, 1951.

PROFESSOR HERBERT DINGLE, D.Sc., A.R.C.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The following election was announced:—Rev. Herman B. Centz, Fellow.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Professor W. H. McCrea, M.A., Ph.D., to read his Paper entitled "Continuous Creation."

### CONTINUOUS CREATION

BY PROFESSOR W. H. MCCREA, M.A., Ph.D.

#### SYNOPSIS

Some of the difficulties and paradoxes of the previous theories of the expanding universe are reviewed. It is shown how attempts to overcome these difficulties appear to require the continuous creation of matter in the manner suggested by H. Bondi and T. Gold and by F. Hoyle. The new theory preserves the features of the previous ones that had already proved satisfactory. However, not only does it overcome the immediate difficulties which have been mentioned; it offers further the possibility of constructing a comprehensive cosmology. It is too early to estimate the successfulness of this possibility, but it appears to constitute the major reason for pursuing the new ideas.

#### 1. Introduction.

IT has recently been suggested that all the matter in the universe is the result of a process of *continuous creation* that takes place at all places and at all times. According to this suggestion, the matter is not infinitely old nor is it the result of one unique past event of creation. The process of continuous creation, if it takes place as suggested, thus determines the nature of the whole universe.

Certain problems concerning the large-scale behaviour of the universe appear to demand some new fundamental physical hypothesis in order to achieve agreement between theory and observation. H. Bondi and T. Gold have proposed one such hypothesis, what they term the "perfect cosmological principle", and F. Hoyle another, a certain modification of the formulae of relativity theory. Either of these is found, as an immediate consequence, to require the continuous creation of matter. The fact that this concept has thus made its appearance in such a

technical setting probably accounts for its having provoked rather less comment than might have been expected. On the other hand, the fact that it does arise in this manner, rather than as being itself an isolated hypothesis, is an added reason for its serious consideration. And, of course, its possible fundamental significance is widely appreciated.

The present paper is an attempt to review the reasons for suggesting that the process does take place, the characteristics of the suggested process itself, the way in which these characteristics would determine certain properties of the astronomical universe, and the possibility of using the observable features of the universe to discover whether the process does actually occur. In conclusion, the history of the subject is briefly sketched. No attempt is made here to treat any possible philosophical implications.

The reader might suppose that a process which corresponds to what seems such a revolutionary concept must have simple and obvious consequences both theoretical and observational. It may come as a surprise that somewhat lengthy discussions are needed in order to discover what the consequences are and how they differ from those of traditional views. That this is so can be taken as indicating that, in the present state of development of physical science, the concept is actually not so revolutionary as it at first appears. It will also be seen to mean that no definite decision can yet be reached as to the validity of the concept.

The present situation appears to be this:—When we apply current physical theory to the phenomena of the universe on the largest scale on which we are at present able to observe it we encounter certain difficulties. It seems that these can be overcome by hypotheses which require a process of continuous creation to occur in nature. It then turns out that the occurrence of this process would provide quite naturally the hitherto undiscovered connexions between various other cosmic phenomena. Therefore, whether or not the original reasons for suggesting the process are judged to be compelling, the general coherence it would give to cosmological theory is the strongest reason at present for believing that it does occur. Nevertheless, further progress in theory and observation is needed in order to provide crucial tests.

## *2. Expanding Universe.*

On the largest scale on which it has hitherto been possible to study the universe by astronomical observation, the "units"

into which it is found to be organized are *galaxies*. These, which include the objects more familiarly known as "spiral nebulae", are systems each of which is believed to be comparable in size and in the amount of its material to the particular system of which the Sun is a member. The latter system is known as *the Galaxy* (or the "Milky Way"). Most astronomers have for many years believed that effectively all the matter in the universe is concentrated into these galaxies.

The number of observable galaxies is very large. It is estimated, for instance, that a photographic survey of the sky now being made with the Palomar Schmidt Camera will record 10m (m = million) of them. Surveys made in the past have been interpreted as showing that, on a large-scale statistical basis, they are distributed uniformly through space.

By about 1930 spectroscopic evidence had been accumulated whose only possible interpretation in accordance with known physical principles showed that all other galaxies are receding from our own (and its immediate neighbours) with speeds proportional to their distances. The empirical result, known as "Hubble's law", is that a galaxy whose distance in millions of light-years is  $D$  has an apparent speed of recession of about  $100D$  miles per second. The new 200-inch Hale Telescope can photograph galaxies out to an estimated distance of 1000m light-years: if Hubble's law holds for these, they must be receding with apparent speeds of about 100,000 miles per second.

A simple inference from Hubble's law, if the interpretation of the evidence in terms of actual motions is correct, is that every galaxy must be receding from every other, and not merely from our own, according to the same law. This is the phenomenon of the *expansion* of the universe.

Now up till about 1930 it had been generally supposed that the universe as a whole must be in a mechanically *static* state. Of course, well-established physical principles such as the second law of thermodynamics demanded that the contents of the universe should be evolving in some manner. But it was not generally conceived that the total amount of material in any large tract of space could change progressively with time: whither, in fact, could the material go? By 1930, however, mathematicians had shown that the accepted laws of mechanics and gravitation do not in fact allow the universe to be static and that, as a *theoretical* necessity, it must be expanding (or contracting). As to whither the material goes in the process, relativity



theory describes the state of affairs by saying that space itself is expanding. But, for our purpose, we may equally well think of the matter as receding *in* unbounded space.

Thus both observation and theory led almost simultaneously to the same remarkable conclusion and seemed to leave scientists with no alternative but to accept the astonishing concept of the expanding universe.

Now if the galaxies are receding with speeds proportional to their distances, and if each galaxy has always had the same speed as it has now, then it would follow that every galaxy in the universe was at zero distance at one and the same particular epoch in the past. A simple application of Hubble's law would show that this occurred about 2000m years ago. Even if the calculation is carried out making full allowance for the mutual gravitation of the galaxies and its effect upon their motion in the past, and whether we treat space-time and gravitation according to the methods of classical theory, general relativity theory, or of kinematic relativity, we reach effectively the same conclusion. According to any of these theories, *the universe must have started upon its career of expansion about 2000m years ago and must have been initially in a state of enormously greater congestion than it is now.* Since the theories had to view the start of the expansion as a singular epoch and since they could attach no meaning to events earlier than this, the conclusion could be expressed by saying that the universe was *created* 2000m years ago, that it was then highly congested, and that it has been dispersing ever since.

On the whole, astronomers were at first favourably inclined towards this conclusion. For ages of a few thousand million years were being inferred independently for a number of astronomical systems. Studies of radioactive substances or their products give  $2-3 \times 1000m$  years for the age of the oldest rocks on the Earth and (provisionally) up to about  $7 \times 1000m$  years for the ages of meteorites. From this and other evidence, the age of the Solar System is generally believed to be between  $3$  and  $6 \times 1000m$  years. In so far as it was then possible to estimate the ages of the stars, these too came out in certain cases to be of the same order of magnitude. Again, our Galaxy was known to be rotating about its centre, and it was calculated that certain observed features could not have survived more than 10 to 15 rotations; at the relevant distance from the centre, this would mean  $2-3 \times 1000m$  years. And several other cases could be mentioned.

Though some of these estimated ages of systems in the universe were rather more than the estimated age of the universe itself, what seemed significant was that they were all of the same order of magnitude. It was tempting to believe that any incompatibilities between the results would be resolved by taking account of a speeding-up of some evolutionary processes in the early stages when the universe was so much more congested than now. So it seemed that the theory of the expanding universe supplied the general explanation of the order of magnitude found for all these "ages".

Another consequence of the theory requires mention. If Hubble's law, or anything like it, holds for all galaxies, then those at some particular distance  $R$  would be receding with the speed of light. (Hubble's law would give  $R = 2000m$  light years, approximately, *i.e.* about twice the estimated distance at which galaxies can be photographed with the biggest existing telescope.) But an object receding with the speed of light would be invisible, since the Doppler effect would reduce to zero the apparent intensity of its radiation. Any galaxy further away than distance  $R$  would also, of course, be unobservable. There would in fact be no physical meaning to be assigned to the existence of such a galaxy. Therefore, the distance  $R$  affords a natural frontier to the observable universe.

A more technical discussion according to relativity theory might express the conclusion in a different form, but the physical interpretation would be effectively the same.

This again is a satisfactory outcome of the theory. For it at once explains why we do not observe a bright background to the sky. Any "static" theory, on the other hand, suggests that there should be such a background supplied by light continually arriving from distant parts of the universe or by light that has travelled more than once "round the universe".

### 3. Criticism of "capital" theories of the expanding universe.

I shall call any theory, such as that just described, which supposes all matter to have existed in one possible form or another throughout the lifetime of the universe, a *capital* theory.

To my mind, the most serious criticism of the capital theories of the expanding universe is that they have explained so little. I shall return to this in section 10.

However, the most immediate difficulty is that no way has in fact been found of reconciling the estimated age of about 3000m

years for the Earth and of about 5000m years for the oldest stars with the conclusion that the age of the universe itself is only about 2000m years.

Moreover, when Hubble attempted to match all the observational data concerning the apparent motion and distribution of the galaxies with the properties of the "model" universe calculated from relativity theory, he found that theory and observation could not be brought into agreement.

These difficulties have been appreciated for about fifteen years. It is not considered by those qualified to judge that they can be ascribed to the uncertainties in the observational data or in the calculations. Drastic hypotheses designed to overcome the difficulties have been tentatively proposed by Dirac, Hubble and Milne. But none of these has gained general acceptance and none apparently would meet the general criticism I have mentioned.

There is another objection. Observations such as those yielding Hubble's law constitute a "snapshot" of the universe as seen at our own epoch. According to the capital theory of the expanding universe a "snapshot" taken, say, 1000m years hence would be different. Any individual galaxy would be receding with a smaller speed than now on account of the gravitational attraction of the rest of the universe having retarded its motion during the interval. In particular, a galaxy now seen to be moving with almost the speed of light would then be moving with a speed  $V$ , say, less than that of light. But if our snapshot does show galaxies receding with all speeds up to that of light then we should expect one taken by an observer 1000m years hence also to do so. Therefore all the galaxies he would see having speeds greater than  $V$  *must have entered the observable universe* between now and the time of his observation. In other words, galaxies are being *created* at the frontier of the universe.

This is a simple description of what is in fact found to be a property of the "model" universes provided by the theory. We have thus the paradox that a theory which does not profess to treat of creation, demands not only creation at a singular epoch in the past but also continuing creation at all epochs at the frontier of the universe in space. Thus a capital theory of the expanding universe demands that the total amount of "capital" should increase even though it becomes more dispersed.

#### 4. *Continuous creation.*

If, as we have seen, the capital theory allows too short a past

duration of the universe, we must now enquire how that duration could have been extended.

To consider the extreme possibility, we ask what would be required in order to ensure that the universe, instead of changing apparently too rapidly, should not be changing at all.

We shall, in fact, make the working hypothesis that the universe is in a statistically *steady state*. Having seen the implications and consequences of this hypothesis, we shall ask if they indicate any process whose existence would, conversely, ensure a steady state or some state of not too rapid change.

The universe is said to be in a steady state if, on the large scale, it looks the same at all epochs. It does not mean that any particular galaxy must always look the same. Also it does not mean, as will become clear, that the universe is "static" in the sense previously used. In fact, we use the word "steady" in the sense in which we might say that, as shown by the vital statistics, the population of a certain country has been "steady" for several years.

We continue to accept and use the same *observational* data as before concerning the expansion of the universe.

We consider the part of the universe within any fixed distance  $D$  million light-years of our Galaxy, where  $D$  is large enough for this to contain a large number of galaxies. Then, according to the hypothesis, this region must always contain the same amount of matter. But, according to the observed recession of the galaxies, matter is flowing out of this region, and according to our hypothesis it must be doing so always at the same rate.

Clearly these two conclusions are compatible only if fresh matter is appearing in the region at the same rate as matter is flowing out of it. This fresh matter cannot come from outside the region. For no in-flow of matter is observed. In any case, an in-flow which would balance the out-flow at all distances would establish our Galaxy as the unique centre of the whole universe, and would have the absurd consequence that the motion of matter at the remotest distances would depend solely upon its position relative to ourselves. Consequently, we describe the fresh matter as being *created* inside the region.

A short calculation on the basis of Hubble's law shows that the required rate of creation is for any region approximately  $\left(\frac{3}{2,000,000,000} \times \text{matter present at any time}\right)$  per year.

Another way of stating this result is to say that the rate is the same as if all the material in any region were entirely replaced by

new material once in about 700m years. In round figures, which are all that we can use here, we may call this 1000m years.

If we take what the astronomical evidence would seem to give as an upper bound to the average density of matter in the universe, this rate is the creation of no more than one gramme of matter in a volume equal to that of the Earth in a thousand million years.

This rate of creation is far too small to be observed directly. It would have no effect upon laboratory physics. Indeed, it could have no direct effect even upon most of the problems of astronomy; it could be significant only for problems of long-term evolution in the Galaxy and for the study of the universe of galaxies.

##### 5. *Resulting description of the universe.*

We now consider more fully some general features that would be possessed by the universe if it is in a steady state.

Every observer would see the universe as expanding away from himself in such a way that matter is continually disappearing at the frontier. For the previously described gravitational slowing-down could not occur in a steady state. It is to be noted, however, that the disappearance would not look like the annihilation of matter at a definite boundary: owing to the increase of speed of recession with distance and the consequent weakening of the radiation received from them, the observer would most naturally describe the remotest galaxies as "receding to infinity".

Nevertheless, however long the observer continues to observe he would see the same amount of matter in the universe as a whole, or, apart from random fluctuations, in any region which he would describe as a "fixed" part of the universe. In passing, we may therefore remark that, on this view, there is conservation of mass in every fixed part of the universe and in the universe as a whole; *i.e.* unlike the capital theory, it requires no *net* creation of matter to be proceeding in the universe. Since the steady state hypothesis is only provisional this point should not be overstressed except as showing that the consequences of the views we are developing may be less, and not more, extraordinary than those of the older views.

Further, the observer would see the matter to behave on the average always in the same way. So, since he sees some galaxies receding out of any region he must also witness the birth of

other galaxies in that region. Now, our conclusion that the rate of creation is such that the matter in the region could be renewed in about 1000m years does not mean that no particular matter remains in the region longer than this. The matter leaving in any interval includes some created during the interval, while that remaining includes some that was there at the start of the interval. Our conclusion means that the *average age* of matter or of galaxies in any region is about 1000m years.

On any conception of the birth and evolution of a galaxy we should not expect it to count amongst the observed galaxies until its evolution has proceeded for a considerable time. The average age of *recognizable* galaxies must therefore be considerably more than 1000m years.

The hypothesis that the universe is in an unchanging steady state might have been thought to be equivalent to assuming merely that it is infinitely old. This is not the case. In fact, it gives for the average age of what is observed the same order of magnitude as does the capital theory. Thus the *generally* satisfactory nature of this feature may equally well be claimed for the new theory. What the hypothesis enables us to avoid is the conclusion that everything we see dates from the same singular past epoch. But it actually denies the conclusion that we can observe anything that is infinitely old.

The age of the observable universe does not increase indefinitely simply because, on account of its recession, any other galaxy (save one bound to our own by gravitational attraction) cannot remain indefinitely within the observable universe.

On the other hand, *the age of an observer's own particular galaxy does increase indefinitely*. No observation, and no form of the theory of the expanding universe, suggests that the mutual recession of different galaxies is accompanied by the dispersal of the material of a single galaxy. All material that belongs to a galaxy is to be considered as permanently held together by its own gravitational attraction.

In particular, therefore, the hypothesis removes any limitation upon the age of our own Galaxy. That age has to be discovered from the Galaxy itself. It no longer has to be thought of as being determined or restricted by anything we call the "age of the universe." This is how, perhaps less obviously than might have been expected, the hypothesis resolves the age-paradox produced by earlier theories.

## 6. *Creation process.*

The preceding discussion requires that, averaged over long periods of time and large regions of space, the rate of appearance of fresh matter should be constant. So far as we have gone, it would make no difference whether, at the one extreme, fresh galaxies are created entire, or, at the other, the fresh matter makes its first appearance in some diffuse form throughout all space and is thence gradually gathered up into galaxies.

There are several grounds for investigating the latter possibility:— (a) It is essentially the simplest that we can conceive. (b) The alternatives would tend to restore for each galaxy separately the sort of difficulty previously encountered for the system of galaxies. (c) There is already good reason to believe that a galaxy starts as a gas-cloud and that stars are formed from the gas by processes of condensation and accretion; it is more natural to believe that the galaxies themselves are formed analogously by condensation from a still more extensive gas-cloud than that radically different concepts are needed to account for them. (d) It does offer the possibility of tracing the evolution of cosmic systems back to the simplest possible beginnings instead of simply having to accept their existence in some already complex state.

We therefore make the tentative assumption that the newly created matter appears *uniformly* (in a statistical sense) *throughout all space*.

This implies that a unit of newly created matter should be nothing more complicated than a single atom, and moreover the simplest sort of atom, *i.e. a hydrogen atom*. For anything more complicated than this could be ranked as some form of "condensation."

It does not signify, for our purpose, whether we suppose the hydrogen atoms to appear first in the form of complete atoms, or of neutrons, or of protons and electrons separately. Other "elementary" particles might make temporary appearances without affecting the results.

## 7. *Formation of galaxies.*

The *tendency* of the recession of the galaxies is to leave more and more space devoid of galaxies; the *tendency* of the postulated creation process is to occupy this space with a tenuous uniform distribution of hydrogen gas.

Now it was long ago pointed out by Jeans that a uniform distribution of gas is unstable towards certain small disturbances of its uniformity. We can describe the effect by saying that a uniform gas in otherwise empty space has an ever-present tendency to "clot" on account of this phenomenon of gravitational instability, as it is called.

Combining this effect with the two tendencies already noted, we obtain the following picture of the happenings in any large region of space. Scattered through the region are a number of condensations of matter which we can regard as being already well-defined galaxies. Spread through the whole region there is the gas which has not yet gone to form galaxies and which tends to be endowed with uniform distribution. In any locality not predominantly under the influence of a particular galaxy, the combined effect of the galaxies is merely to disturb the uniformity of the gas and so to promote the formation of "clots"; these we envisage as incipient new galaxies. In the vicinity of an already well-defined galaxy, on the other hand, the gas tends merely to be drawn into the galaxy by its gravitational attraction. The result is that such a galaxy is continually growing by accretion. This is, of course, only an advanced stage of the "clotting" or "condensation" process.

Such, briefly, is the conception we attain of the birth and growth of galaxies, the process as a whole being never nearer to completion at one epoch than at another.

Granting the creation process, the rest is not purely speculative. Though on a different scale, we have *within* our Galaxy more or less direct evidence of the operation of the other basic processes. If, in the description of their operation, for "stars" we read "galaxies" and for "interstellar matter" we read "intergalactic matter", we do obtain essentially the picture of the evolution of galaxies as described above. (The analogy is to be taken only in general terms: the methods of operation of the basic processes must differ considerably.)

According to this picture, the galaxies produced would naturally tend to be uniformly distributed through space. But a uniform distribution of galaxies would be unstable for the same reason as a uniform distribution of gas. Hence the galaxies would themselves tend to "clot" or "cluster". Now this is what is observed. The statistically uniform distribution of the observed galaxies is claimed to hold good only on a very large scale. Viewed in rather more detail, it is seen that some galaxies are scattered



through space in an apparently random fashion while others do form definite clusters of anything up to several hundred members.

No full mathematical treatment of this part of the subject has yet been given. (Such a treatment should, of course, treat the "condensation" and "clustering" processes as acting simultaneously.) For this reason one does not care to have to discuss it very much at this stage. But it will be seen that what we are primarily concerned about is the fact that the treatment is possible in principle. Provided the creation of hydrogen atoms is admitted as supplying the raw material, it would trace back all the large-scale features of the universe to the occurrence of this one rudimentary process, using otherwise only well-established physical theory.

Though the proper mathematical treatment is lacking, Bondi and Gold, Hoyle, and the present writer have called attention to certain "order of magnitude" estimates which do in fact show that the quantitative results may prove satisfactory. (References given in section 12.)

### 8. *Evolution of the Galaxy.*

It has long been realized that hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe. But it has only recently been appreciated how great its preponderance is. Reckoning by numbers of atoms, the empirical evidence is that probably less than one per cent of the material in the Galaxy is neither hydrogen nor helium, possibly about one per cent. is helium, and all the remaining 99 per cent or thereabouts is hydrogen.

This in itself suggests that hydrogen is the parent element of all others. This view is supported by the now generally accepted fact that the stars generate the bulk of their radiation by the transmutation of hydrogen into helium, so that hydrogen is the essential fuel of stellar luminosity. Acceptable conclusions follow from the assumption that stars are initially formed of pure, or almost pure, hydrogen. The view in question may be said, in fact, to have been held by many astrophysicists for the past twenty years. The creation hypothesis in the form here discussed may be regarded as providing a possible basis for this view.

The alternative on a capital theory would be to suppose that the material at or shortly after the epoch of creation consisted almost entirely of hydrogen. But this would mean that the universe has been consuming its stock of hydrogen ever since and it would be difficult to account for the fact that there is still so

much remaining. According to the continuous creation theory, however, a galaxy is continually growing by accretion and, since the accreted material consists of hydrogen, the persisting abundance of this element is explained.

If this is granted, existing knowledge of the evolutionary processes going on within the Galaxy is probably sufficient to enable a theoretical estimate to be made of the consequent relative abundances of the chemical elements at any particular epoch.

The purpose of this section is to indicate that processes within a galaxy, and so, after what has already been said, all astronomical processes can in principle be incorporated in a single coherent system of cosmology based upon the continuous creation of hydrogen atoms.

#### 9. *Construction of a cosmology.*

The accompanying table is an attempt to summarize the construction of a cosmology of the sort just indicated.

In order theoretically to predict the mean density of matter in the universe we should require an appropriate field-theory as discussed by Hoyle (*Monthly Notices, R.A.S.*, 108 (1948) 372, 109 (1949) 365 and McCrea (*Proc. Royal Soc. A.* (1951))). If for the moment we take say the rate of recession of the galaxies to be supplied empirically, then everything else in the table appears to be deducible *seriatim* using only known physical theory.

As already stated the programme as indicated has not been carried out in any but a fragmentary manner. For instance, what Hoyle in his *Nature of the Universe* calls the "new cosmology" can be regarded as a preview of some parts of the programme. His discussion encourages a favourable view of its possible success.

It cannot be asserted that no such programme could be based upon a capital theory. But it is difficult to see how this would be done, and nobody has yet done it (except in regard to a small proportion of the items in the Table and then apparently without definite success).

#### 10. *Conclusions*

We are now in a position to state some of the main conclusions of the discussion.

(1) It does appear that the creation theory can in principle predict effectively all the properties of the astronomical universe from exceedingly simple premises.

*Construction of a Cosmology for a Universe in a steady state*

	Phenomenon	Theory required for predicting the phenomenon.
1.	Rate of creation	[Postulated]
2.	Mean density of matter in the universe	Field-theory
3.	Rate of recession of galaxies Size and mass of observable universe Mean age of galaxies	Consequences of 1, 2
4.	Mean distance between galaxies	Theory of gravitational instability (adapted for application in expanding universe)
5.	Mass of galaxy as function of its age	Accretion theory
6.	Ratio of galactic to intergalactic matter	Consequence of 2, 5
7.	State of rotation of a galaxy	As in 4, 5
8.	Clustering of galaxies	As in 4
9.	Chemical composition of galaxy as a function of its age	Consequence of 5 and theory of stellar evolution
10.	State of Galaxy Ratio of stellar to interstellar matter Numbers of stars of various sorts etc.	Consequences of 5, 9 and astrophysical theory.

For the most part, we do not yet know whether it will give quantitatively correct results.

Whether it will or not, we contrast it with the capital theories. These can be said to have predicted the expansion of the universe and then proved completely barren of further progress. It is truly astonishing that the discovery of such a fundamental feature of the universe as its expansion has hitherto helped to explain practically none other of its properties.

In so far as the creation theory can yet be said to have a definite formulation, that formulation may not prove to be correct. But, if not, the situation I have tried to state is such that cosmologists will be almost bound to keep up their attack along generally similar lines; it now appears extremely unlikely that they will ever withdraw again to the position they were in before the creation theory was proposed.

(2) The creation theory is found to require a rate of creation that we can never observe directly. Nevertheless, the theory is capable of observational test just like any other. If its predictions of the phenomena listed in the table are found to be in quantitative agreement with observation, this will be "verification" in the accepted sense.

It is important to see that it ought to be possible to discriminate observationally between predictions due to the two kinds of theory. For the capital theories require all galaxies to be of the same age at the same cosmic epoch. Therefore they require that remote galaxies should *all* appear younger than our Galaxy simply because the time taken by their radiation to reach us means that we see them at an earlier cosmic epoch than our own. On the other hand, according to the creation theory, when our own Galaxy was born there must have been some much older galaxies in its cosmic vicinity. Owing to the recession, these must now have become remote and, of course, still older. But meantime new galaxies must have been born in *their* vicinities. Therefore remote galaxies should include some older and some younger than our Galaxy. If we can discover some observational criterion for the age of a galaxy and if this latter inference can then be checked it will give a fairly direct verification of the creation theory.

(3) This brings us to the conclusion already stated in the first section—that there is without doubt a case to be considered; but that the evidence is not yet sufficiently complete to obtain a verdict.

### 11. *Further considerations.*

There remain several considerations each of which could be enlarged upon but which have here to be mentioned very briefly.

(1) The approach we have followed has been of the same general character as we might adopt for any other general problem of astrophysics. It would not be unfair to compare it with discussions that were going on some twenty years back about the source of *stellar energy*. These latter were speculative and inconclusive at the time, but they helped to clarify the issues, so that when, several years later, an acceptable solution of the problem was presented it was possible to recognize it as being acceptable. Further, when this solution was found, it came from natural developments in atomic physics, but it is generally admitted that the discussions of the astrophysical requirements had played a significant part in stimulating these developments.

Astrophysicists and cosmologists have now proceeded to the next stage and are now asking about the source of *stellar matter* and, indeed, of all matter. Clearly, atomic physics is not yet ready with a complete solution. But it is significant that cosmology has reduced its problem to one of *atomic* physics, for the creation process it believes to be required is one of single elementary particles. Once again astrophysics may have indicated a needed advance in pure atomic physics.

(2) We have perhaps over-stressed the considerations relating to *continuous* creation. As Hoyle has pointed out, were it possible to conclude that the creation of matter was over and done with very much longer ago than several thousand million years, then the foregoing discussion might be taken to show that the physics of the creation process can have little significance for the various astronomical systems known to us; conversely, the study of these systems would tell us little about the creation process. The whole trend of the discussion is, however, to show that whether we are ultimately led to adopt a "capital" theory or a theory involving continuous creation, a knowledge of the physics of the creation process, *i.e.* the physical nature and physical state of newly created matter, now seems to be essential for the construction of a cosmology.

(3) The significance of our basic requirement being an *atomic* process is very profound. For it now appears that a knowledge of this process may well provide the long-sought connexion between atomic physics (quantum theory) and large-scale physics (relativity theory). This is a far-reaching question. All that

can be said here is that the indications provided by the continuous creation theory are promising.

(4) Most of our discussion has dealt with a universe which is supposed homogeneous in space and "steady" in time. In the past, writers on cosmology have elevated these suppositions to the rank of "cosmological principles". I think it is preferable to regard them merely as providing in the first instance the simplest cases for mathematical treatment, and, if the results of such treatment are found plausible, in the next instance as providing a first approximation applicable to the part of the universe in space and time which is accessible to existing means of observation.

## 12. *Historical survey.*

This is not intended to be complete. Indeed the physical principles which may be violated by a possible continuous creation of matter have been formulated only in comparatively modern times, and indeed I doubt whether they ever have been precisely formulated so as to apply to the universe "as a whole." It is therefore probable that many cosmological speculations of the past would on analysis be found to suggest continuous creation.

In recent times, apparently the first definite suggestion was that of J. H. Jeans (*Astronomy and Cosmogony* (Cambridge 1928), p. 352) who briefly considered the possibility that the centres of galaxies might be places where matter is "poured into our universe." The general possibility that the number of protons and electrons in the universe might be increasing with time was tentatively suggested by P. A. M. Dirac (*Nature* 139 (1937), 323) but was not maintained in his later work on cosmology. Dirac's ideas seem, however, to have been the stimulus for a form of the theory of continuous creation developed by P. Jordan (*Die Herkunft der Sterne* (Stuttgart 1947); *Nature* 164 (1949) 637). This theory requires the spontaneous appearance of quantities of matter of stellar dimensions. While based upon arguments having considerable physical interest, it is scarcely in conformity with current trends in astrophysics. In 1940 R.O. Kapp (*Science versus Materialism* (London 1940), Ch. 26) independently raised the question of the possibility of the continuous creation and disappearance of matter in the universe, giving a stimulating review of the general considerations involved. My attention has also been called to Sir Robert Kotzé's book, *The*

*Scheme of Things* (London, 1949), in which he presents a hypothesis of continuous creation or re-creation, but without discussing physical evidence or physical arguments in support of his contentions.

The theory in the form discussed in the present paper was originally presented, almost simultaneously, by H. Bondi and T. Gold (*Monthly Notices, R.A.S. 108* (1948), 252) and by F. Hoyle (*ibid.*, 372). It is highly significant that the very different approaches they adopt led them to very similar conclusions. The cosmological and astrophysical implications have been discussed in further writings by Hoyle (*Monthly Notices, R.A.S. 109* (1949), 365; *Nature 163* (1949), 196; *The Nature of the Universe* (Oxford 1950)) and I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to his ideas at almost every stage in my presentation. I have previously discussed some aspects of the problem in *Endeavour 9* (1950), 3 and have recently shown how an interpretation in conformity with orthodox relativity theory appears to be possible (*Proc. Royal Soc. A.* (1951)).

A very general survey of the whole situation in modern cosmology has been given by H. Dingle (Norman Lockyer Lecture 1949, *Advancement of Science 7* (1950) 3).

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Prof. HERBERT DINGLE) said: The idea of the continuous creation of matter seems to be regarded in some quarters as highly revolutionary, if not essentially unscientific, and I think Professor McCrea has done well to point out that it is not essentially different in character from ideas with which the scientist has long been familiar. The fundamental particles that are assumed spontaneously to appear must not be thought of as small bits of ordinary matter; they are conceptual entities to which are assigned whatever conceivable properties are necessary to enable us to explain what we observe, regardless of whether those properties are familiar or not. Thus, it is meaningless to speak of the colour of one of these particles, or of its temperature or its velocity at a given place, or of many other qualities which we quite properly associate with a bit of observable matter, however small. In particular, we cannot count the particles as we count ordinary objects—they obey, we say, different statistical rules—and their “number” does not mean exactly the same as the number of

persons, for example, that will be revealed by the forthcoming census. We have, in fact, to form for ourselves the conception of number which we can apply to them in order to enable them to fulfil their function of explaining observations, and what the new idea suggests is that that conception should include the property of variation with time. This may turn out to be right or wrong, but it is quite a normal scientific hypothesis. Like all such hypotheses it will stand or fall by its consistency with observations that we can make here and now: that remains the final court of appeal in all science.

There are many points in Professor McCrea's interesting lecture on which I should like to comment, but I must confine myself to one or two. I do not think he does full justice to the "capital" theories when he accuses them of involving creation of matter at the boundary of the universe. Such theories do not necessarily require that the speed of a galaxy decreases with time; it might increase quite consistently with the conservation of capital—indeed that, I think, is what has usually been held—and in that case this objection does not stand.

Another point of interest that arises from the scheme that Professor McCrea has put before us is the question concerning what we are to mean by the word "universe." He has identified the universe with what is observable now, and the galaxies that have passed beyond the bounds of observability are not included in it. Hence the universe is definitely limited in its spatial extent to a sphere with a roughly assignable radius. But he makes no such limitation with regard to time. One would have thought that on this principle time began when the oldest galaxy now visible was born, but an eternal past and an eternal future are contemplated in this theory. The whole question of the relation between "existence" and "observability" requires more attention, I think, than it is given here.

Finally, according to the picture we have been given, a galaxy is always acquiring new hydrogen and simultaneously transforming its stock of hydrogen into heavier elements; there is no provision for the loss of matter from a galaxy. Hence each galaxy grows continuously richer in all the elements as time goes on. If we are to contemplate an eternal past, then we cannot help contemplating



galaxies containing amounts of matter ranging from a rather indefinite minimum up to infinity. What distribution of galaxies would be visible at any moment from such a one as ours would seem to depend on what happened to be in our neighbourhood when our galaxy was born and what happened to have been removed from the "universe" by recession since its birth. This, I suppose, would be largely a matter of accident, but one would expect a very large range of size, with the average size getting greater at greater distances. In fact, however, to a first approximation all the visible galaxies appear to be roughly equal in size. Indeed, if this is not so, the accepted law of the expansion of the universe breaks down, for the distances of most of the galaxies are determined on the assumption that their size is uniform. There is a problem here also, I think, which needs more attention than it has been given.

It will be clear that whatever else may be said of this theory, it excels in raising questions for discussion. The meeting is now open for such questions.

Dr. R. J. C. HARRIS said : Since the evidence for the expansion of the Universe appears to rest almost exclusively upon the red-shift of light received from the galaxies and the application to this of Doppler's Effect, is it not possible that there could be an alternative explanation for this reddening which does not involve the recession of the light source from the observer ?

Mr. W. E. FILMER said : The conception of an expanding universe and the theory of continuous creation appear to me to involve more difficulties than they seek to solve. They appear to violate those generally accepted laws which we have always considered governed the universe, and consequently a number of amendments to these laws have to be postulated.

The conception of continuous creation is first of all by definition contrary to the law of the conservation of matter. Further, since matter and energy are regarded as of fundamentally the same nature, the law of conservation of energy is likewise violated.

The conception of an expanding universe involves an amendment to the law of gravity which hitherto has only included a force of attraction. Now a force of repulsion which increases with distance must be postulated in order to account for the nebulae receding

from one another with ever-increasing velocity. This, again, leads to further difficulties with the law of conservation of energy: for, consider any large but finite volume of space, matter is continually moving out through the boundary of this volume with some finite velocity by virtue of which it possesses kinetic energy. Thus, kinetic energy is perpetually passing out through the boundary of any given volume, and it is difficult to understand where all this energy comes from. The question becomes even more difficult when we consider the whole observable universe, where it is postulated that matter is continually passing out through its frontier with the velocity of light. According to the Einstein formula the kinetic energy of a body moving with the velocity of light becomes infinite. Hence it would appear that an infinite amount of kinetic energy is perpetually passing out through the frontier of the observable universe. Where does all this energy come from?

It would be interesting to have Prof. McCrea's explanations of these difficulties. Do they not involve a whole series of amendments to the laws of nature which have to be postulated to account for one simple observed fact, namely, the red-shift in the spectra of distant nebulae? Would it not be simpler, and therefore nearer the truth, to suppose that the propagation of light is subject to a dissipating force analogous to friction, whereby the energy content of a quantum of light is gradually dissipated in its passage through space, thus leading to a corresponding increase in the wave-length associated with this quantum? Such an hypothesis would appear to be in line with such accepted principles as those of entropy and the second law of thermo-dynamics.

Mr. F. W. COUSINS said: Continuous creation, the Professor tells us in his synopsis, is born from the paradoxes associated with the expanding universe. Hoyle and others have suggested that it is preferable to the idea of creation all in one "big bang"; while Professor Dingle, in his Norman Lockyer lecture, November 22nd, 1949, said: "So far as I can see, the hypothesis of continuous creation of matter is the only one that allows us to admit a one-way direction in cosmical processes without demanding a special act of creation or its equivalent at an arbitrarily selected moment of time."

Here, then, we have the setting—a possible dislike of cosmologists for a creation in the Genesis sense of the term or an attempt to

overcome the paradoxes of an expanding universe, itself not an established fact. It must be pointed out that the red-shift is considered as a Doppler effect only on the basis that the light from distant nebulae is the same as light in our laboratories and it may well not be the same. Zwicky has suggested a "gravitational drag of light" since light has mass and passes matter in space—while MacMillan has pointed out that loss of energy of light photons would, as in the case of the gravitational drag, cause a decline in the frequency of the radiation and thus a reddening during transit. Hubble has been led to dispute the validity of the concept of expansion based on red-shift and he is no mean authority and fully aware of the difficulties.

The Professor has some dislike, it seems, for a static universe; and in 1930 he tells us mathematicians required the universe either to expand or to contract—why, may I ask? Is it not an over-simplification to state this so? Did not De Sitter construct a static world-model which satisfied the Einstein laws of world gravitation? The more one reads of world-models and mathematicians in dispute over them, the more one inclines to the view that world models are as women's fashions—ephemeral things, which have their day and gracefully depart. The objection to a "static" theory at the end of paragraph 2, regarding a bright background to the sky, was raised by Olbers in 1826 but it can be overcome by assuming that the stars in the remote regions of space are much fainter than those in our neighbourhood—or that light is gradually absorbed during its passage through space.

The paradox on pages 109 f., the estimated age of the Earth as 3,000,000,000 years and an age of the universe of 2,000,000,000 years, is, to my mind, due to the view expressed on page 108, lines 8-26, viz., that expansion of the universe puts creation at 2,000,000,000 years ago; but it is purely a legacy of the expansion concept and if this is considered untenable, then the estimate of 2,000,000,000 years is untenable with it.

In place of the paradoxes associated with the expanding universe, we are asked to accept the *tentative assumption* that newly created matter appears uniformly throughout all space. On what grounds is such an assumption tenable, and is this not the very assumption which the scientific method should seek to establish? On such

an assumption we are led to the statement on page 116—"provided the creation of hydrogen atoms is *admitted*"—that is just what I personally am not prepared to admit.

The other objection to a capital theory raised on page 116, last paragraph, has little force unless the stock of hydrogen in the universe at creation is known, the date of creation assigned, and the rate of consumption specified.

No one to-day is in a position, I feel, even to say whether we are at the moment observing a representative portion of the universe, let alone criticise the hydrogen content, with so much of cosmology on the shifting sands of speculation—where the postulates are so often, it would seem, the most important bias for a biased answer. I like the thought recently expressed that it is easy in cosmology to be like the man cutting up a block of soap with a little square tool who then decides that squareness is the *sine qua non* for soapiness.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. E. H. BETTS wrote : This paper is an authoritative review of the case for continuous creation, a theory which is itself necessitated by the theory of the expansion of the universe, which expansion is, in turn, an interpretation of the spectral shifts as velocities of recession. The whole theoretical structure resembles the proverbial castle of cards. Professor McCrea is under no illusions about this : "If it takes place as suggested . . ." ; "No definite decision can yet be reached as to the validity of the concept" ; "Further progress in theory and observation is needed in order to provide crucial tests." He acknowledges, too, that the expanding universe is an "astonishing concept," and we must remember that it is acceptance of this astonishing concept that creates the need for the perhaps still more startling concept of continuous creation.

It should be noted, further, that the rate of creation required by the theory is too minute for direct observation. This deprives the theory of all possibility of direct observational verification. The claim of Professor McCrea that the theory is nevertheless "capable of observational test just like any other" means simply that the elaborate and intricately interwoven combination of theory and observation adumbrated in his table (page 118) when carried to completion may possibly yield numerical results which "work."

Apparently we shall have to wait a long time for even these, and, in the meantime, direct observation of the present continuous creation or coming into being of new matter, whether hydrogen atoms as such or their constituent protons and electrons, is not only not forthcoming but impossible. But it is well known that many theories which may be physically false may yet provide figures which are not incompatible with experience. We must suspend judgment. In fairness to the author we would point out that such is, explicitly, his own attitude of mind. Yet, additionally, although several explanations of the spectral shifts not involving recession have come up for consideration only to be set aside, what is to prevent, after all, some much less "astonishing" explanation?

As Christians we are fascinated to observe that the theory invokes "creation." That implies a creator. But the Creator has, in Holy Scripture, revealed His creative act as taking place "in the beginning" and as being that of an ordered system, viz., "heavens and earth" (Genesis 1:1). This ordered system was found to be "waste and void" in *one* of its parts ("and *the earth* . . ." (Gen. 1:2)) and not as a whole. There is indeed revealed explicitly in Scripture no universal chaos which could correspond to a primeval and universal cloud of hydrogen or to any of the suppositional equivalents of this. Further, any action of the Creator subsequent to those days of creation is spoken of as an "upholding" and not as the creation of new matter, though it is not to be denied that this "upholding" may resolve itself into the creation of new matter. (Such, however, nowhere seems to be its meaning on careful study.)

Professor McCrea's paper reveals that science is on the move, and maybe in the right direction. It has a long journey before it. At the end it will find that Scripture has arrived first.

We thank Professor McCrea for his very honest exposition of the theory. It has been written with restraint and with very great humility, considering the author's own noteworthy contributions to the subject. The paper is in the true spirit of science.

Dr. R. E. D. CLARK wrote: Professor McCrea's paper is absorbingly interesting and lucid. From the fact that he refrains from indulging in philosophical speculations, one may, presumably, draw the conclusion that he does not think that it is wise to draw conclusions until the premises have been more firmly laid.

In §6 the suggestion that fresh matter makes its appearance in space in a diffuse form certainly *seems* simpler than the alternative suggestion of the fresh creation of new galaxies—or of gas clouds about to turn into galaxies. But is not the simplicity deceptive? The condensation of a gas cloud into a galaxy is a process involving an increase in entropy. So, the further we push it back in time the more improbable, or the less “simple,” is the state from which we start. A half-evolved galaxy is so difficult to treat mathematically that we are apt to imagine that an inchoate gas cloud is a simpler structure—but may not the simplicity be psychological rather than physical? From this point of view, P. Jordan’s suggestion that stars are created whole seems preferable.

Professor C. A. COULSON wrote: The concept of Continuous Creation sounds at first sight extremely revolutionary. It is important, however, that we should recognise how, during the last thirty years, several separate strands in the thinking of modern physicists seem to have been leading us in this direction. One of the most surprising of these is our conviction that particles of matter can be created out of radiation. Another is our conviction that what may come out of the nucleus of an atom in a process of disintegration need not be the same as anything that was in the nucleus before. Continuous creation differs from these chiefly in that it represents the arrival of new matter out of nothing.

There are at least two important considerations which we ought to have in mind when thinking about it. The first is: is it true? the second is: what effect, if any, should it have on Christian thinking, assuming that it is true?

To the question, is it true? the scientist will answer “That depends on what you mean by truth.” And for him truth requires: first fitness, second economy, and third coherence. In other words a theory is regarded as true if it appears adequate to the phenomenon it is describing, if it contributes as little in the way of new hypothesis as possible, and if it coheres with the thought forms which are current at the time. In every one of these respects the theory of continuous creation seems to satisfy our requirements.

On the other hand, this creation is not directly observable. For the creation of one atom of hydrogen in a volume the size of St. Paul’s Cathedral during one year is, and probably always will be, not

directly measurable. Thus, by "true" we must mean "it is *as if*. . . ." That is the only meaning that can here be given to the word "truth."

There is a little more to be said about the effect of this theory on Christian thinking. The Christian doctrine of creation was an attempt to assert that physical existence has a meaning and that meaning derives from God. Just how creation took place or whether there are other possible worlds does not matter. It may even be unknowable, or we may be able to learn it. Even the infinite age of our own Earth is irrelevant. It seems to me that there is no fundamental antagonism between this new theory and Christian tradition. One might, indeed, say that in so far as this theory provides more colour to our picture of the physical world, it helps the worship of the Christian.

It would be fair to say that Christians are now obliged to consider more seriously what they mean by the statement that the Kingdom of Heaven is not only outside space but also outside time. I believe that this incentive will be a useful one because it may help us to recognise that there are several ways in which our existence may be described, several languages which we may use; each language is valid but each is different from the other. Questions which are posed in scientific terms such as: how old is the Universe? can only be answered in scientific terms. That does not preclude or deny that the same question may be asked in artistic or religious terms and receive other answers. It is true that the answers given in the one language do not prescribe the answers given in another language. It is also true, however, that they affect it both by cutting out certain conceivable answers and by enlarging others. It seems to me one of the major duties of those Christians who are also scientists to explore more fully this border-line territory where echoes of at least two languages can be heard together.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I should like to express my appreciation of the stimulating remarks by Professor Dingle as Chairman and of the thoughtful comments made by him and all the other contributors to the discussion.

The treatment of the subject that I give in my paper is obviously a deliberately restricted one. It is only natural that some of the points mentioned in the discussion concern questions outside the

scope of my treatment. In attempting to reply to the discussion I must, however, beg leave to keep within this scope. To do otherwise would require the writing of several fresh papers! For instance, while I readily agree with Professor Dingle that the relation between "existence" and "observability" requires more attention, its examination would take us too far afield from the order of ideas dealt with in the paper itself. Also, while it would be entirely relevant to the subject of cosmology as a whole, it is not a new problem arising out of the possibility of continuous creation.

As Mr. Betts is kind enough to say, I have tried, within the scope of my present treatment, to present a critical account of the situation as it is at present and of the way in which further developments may be expected to clarify this situation. I feel bound to say, in response to Mr. Cousins' remarks, that matters of "dislike" and "bias," in the sense in which he uses these terms, do not have a place in such work.

A very general point is raised when Mr. Filmer refers to "the generally accepted laws which we have always considered governed the universe" and proceeds to mention the "law of conservation of matter" and "the law of conservation of energy" (and also more detailed considerations regarding kinetic energy). The point is raised by the expression "always." As a matter of history, the meanings of these "laws" have been repeatedly changed. At the time, about a century ago, when the law of conservation of energy was first formulated, the law of conservation of matter meant, presumably, the law of conservation of mass. But Einstein's special theory of relativity (1905) showed that mass and energy should be convertible into each other and this has been confirmed by observation. According to this theory, the two laws are therefore replaced by a single law. However, according to Einstein's general theory of relativity (1915), this single law cannot be stated in isolation. It has to be incorporated in a more complex law involving stress and momentum as well as mass (or energy). My recent paper (*Proc. Roy. Soc. A.* 206, 562-575, 1951) shows that the "creation" with which we are here concerned does *not* violate this general law. The remarkable thing about the concept of continuous creation is that it is a new concept which is found not necessarily to *conflict* with anything else in current physical theory.



If the process of continuous creation does occur as here contemplated and if we try to give an account of it in everyday physical language, then the sort of account given in my paper is probably the natural one. But this almost inevitably makes it appear more revolutionary than a strictly technical account would show it to be. From what I have just said, this is certainly the case from the side of relativity theory. From the side of atomic physics, no proper theory of the process has yet been given. But the considerations presented in Professor Dingle's opening remarks, the current trend of the quantum theory of "fields," and certain numerical considerations, all suggest that such a theory could result from a natural development of the subject. [This is not to say that both relativity theory and quantum theory will not be re-formulated and re-interpreted in the course of the evolution of scientific ideas. But that is another matter.]

Most contributors to the discussion ask if the red-shifts in the spectra of the external galaxies admit of any explanation other than as Doppler-displacements produced by the recession of the galaxies. Here we must be clear as to which of two possibilities is contemplated: (a) That the red-shift is due entirely to some unknown agency or (b) that the red-shift is a Doppler-displacement complicated by some other effect.

I do not think that (a) need be taken seriously. Not only would the unknown agency be in itself probably more difficult to admit than the possibility of continuous creation, but it would explain too much. For it would mean that the universe is in a static state and, as we have seen, this is impossible according to all existing theories of gravitation (see below also).

The possibility (b) would mean that the universe is expanding less rapidly than is inferred from the usual interpretation. So the difficulty regarding the "age of the universe" as compared with other ages might be resolved. Two types of suggestion have been advanced. One type does not invoke a new agency but new principles for computing the effect of a Doppler-displacement. All one can say, without going into technical details, is that these principles have not been accepted. The other type of suggestion is to invoke a new agency, as in (a). Here there is the same difficulty as in (a) about admitting the agency itself. It seems that it is not

demanded by any other phenomenon in nature and it would not help towards the solution of any other problems. This should be contrasted with the possibility of continuous creation which, as I have tried to show, may lead to the solution of many other problems in cosmology. Finally, we should be admitting the necessity of two effects instead of only one in order to explain the red-shifts.

All this will, at least, show that the hypothesis of an alternative interpretation of the red-shifts is not *simpler* than that of continuous creation.

As regards the impossibility of a static universe, Mr. Cousins asks if de Sitter did not "construct a static world-model which satisfied the Einstein laws of world gravitation?" The answer is No; what de Sitter found was one particular case of the expanding universes later discovered by Friedmann and Lemaître.

It is true that, as de Sitter first worked it out, it was "static" in regard to the time-coordinate he employed. But, as is well known, his model nevertheless exhibited the phenomenon of the recession of the galaxies, *i.e.*, the "expansion of the universe." A simple transformation of coordinates (which, of course, has no effect upon the observable properties of the model) puts de Sitter's solution into the same mathematical form as a limiting case of those of Friedmann and Lemaître.

"The Einstein laws of world gravitation" used by de Sitter are those extended by the introduction of Einstein's "cosmical constant  $\lambda$ ." Both de Sitter's universe and Einstein's static (and unstable) universe exist only if  $\lambda$  is non-zero. Also, Professor Dingle's statement that "capital" theories "do not necessarily require that the speed of a galaxy decreases with time" holds good only if  $\lambda$  has a sufficiently large positive value.

It is worth pointing out that this cosmical constant was even more mysterious than the proposed continuous creation. For it could not be interpreted in terms of any property of the local material contents of the universe. The mathematical treatment of continuous creation does not require the presence of the  $\lambda$ -terms in Einstein's equations, but the admission of the possibility of continuous creation achieves much the same mathematical results as those which the introduction of these terms was designed to achieve.

[For the sake of readers referring to the recent literature of the subject it is important to point out that there is a distinction between the de Sitter *universe* and de Sitter *space-time*. The latter can be, and is, used in current work which does not use the same field-relations as those which de Sitter used to derive his "universe."]

Turning to a brief mention of more detailed matters we consider, first, Professor Dingle's final remarks about the range of sizes of galaxies. As he says, on the new theory we should expect a large range of size. At any rate, to a first approximation, however, the average size would be *the same* at all distances. Also, this is all that is required for the statistical establishment of "the accepted law of the expansion of the universe," *i.e.*, Hubble's law. The empirical fact that the galaxies do possess a considerable range in size, as well as in other properties, is becoming more fully recognised (see, for instance, Professor Harlow Shapley's *Russell Lecture* for 1950).

Referring to Dr. Clark's considerations regarding entropy, we have to remember that the laws of thermodynamics as ordinarily formulated apply only to closed systems, and that temperature, entropy, etc., have precise meanings only when these systems, or their parts, are in thermodynamic equilibrium. In the present work we have to deal with a system which is neither closed nor in thermodynamic equilibrium. So I think that we cannot apply the criteria suggested by Dr. Clark.

It is true that, apart from the hypothesis of continuous creation we might devise thermodynamic considerations that could self-consistently be applied to any suitably chosen region of the universe. But, if we have to allow for the possibility of the "creation" of fresh matter in such a region, these considerations would no longer apply. It is to be noted that such "creation" would not conflict with the laws of thermodynamics: they merely become inapplicable to any problem for which the occurrence of creation is significant.

I should like to close with a general comment which I believe to be desirable. I have tried to give due recognition to the tentative character of much of the work described. At the same time, I should not wish to leave the impression that everything in modern cosmology is only tentative. Those who are working in the subject are convinced that a progressively more satisfactory theoretical

system is gradually being evolved by all the processes of tentative exploration, trial and error, successive approximation, and so on, which are familiar in every branch of science. It just happens that the particular branch with which we are here concerned is, at this particular juncture, in a somewhat specially fluid state—and a specially interesting state.

## 900TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 69, GREAT PETER STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 2ND APRIL, 1951.

ERNEST WHITE, ESQ., M.B., B.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The following elections were announced :—Dr. Randal Herbert Wood, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.M.I.C.E., A.M.I.Mech.E., Member; Desmond Hector Jones, Associate; Miss L. M. Mackinlay, Honorary Life Member (formerly Member).

The CHAIRMAN then called on R. E. D. Clark, Esq., M.A., Ph.D., to read his Paper, entitled "Prophecy and Psychical Research."

### PROPHECY AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

BY ROBERT E. D. CLARK, M.A., Ph.D.

TO the modern Christian few subjects are more perplexing than that of prophecy. Repeatedly, the New Testament presents us with claims that certain prophecies of the Old Testament have been fulfilled in the life of Christ and yet, when we examine these prophecies in their context, we find that they refer to events taking place in the life-time of the prophet, and it is sometimes difficult to suppose that any other reference could have been intended. St. Matthew's Gospel, in particular, abounds with difficulties of this kind and even orthodox scholars have now largely ceased to defend them.

What, for instance are we to make of the assertion that when our Lord was a child, his parents brought Him for a while to Egypt "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son" (Matt. 2: 15)? The reference here is to Hosea (11: 1) where it seems plain that the words do not refer to the future at all, but to the past history of Israel: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Other instances of a similar kind might be given: they are familiar enough to students of the Bible.

Obviously the difficulty is not one which concerns the prophecies of the first coming of Christ alone. We are faced with the same problem when we consider the prophecies that relate to the so-called "last days" or the "day of the Lord". Here also prophecies which until recent times have been regarded by Christians as predicting events in the closing period of our era were written to people who lived thousands of years ago and were intended to apply to *them*. So much is clearly stated in the book of Revelation where, both at the beginning and end of the book, John says that "the time is at hand" (1: 3; 22: 10).

And scholars have found no difficulty in showing that the symbolism of this strange book had reference to the contemporary world in which its author lived.

Obviously we must consider the problem as a whole. If, with the modern critic, we think that most of the prophecies of the Old Testament, declared to be fulfilled in the New, related *only* to events in the days of the prophets concerned, we shall almost certainly take the same view with regard to the prophecies of the "end of the age," and shall claim that these were in no way intended to foretell a detailed history that still lay aeons ahead. If, on the other hand, we believe that the New Testament writers made a right use of Old Testament prophecy, we shall probably feel that, despite the fact that prophets wrote of contemporary events, their words may often have referred also, at times perhaps even *mainly*, to events that still lay in the dim and distant future.

The nature of Biblical prophecy is still a matter on which there is no agreement among Christians. An older generation insisted upon a theory of "verbal inspiration," while the modern theologian tends often to suppose that the Biblical writer was no more inspired than a Shakespeare or a Blake. Musty volumes attempting to thrash out this issue have collected in their hundreds—or thousands—in our great libraries. But the very intensity with which the controversy has been waged in the past seems to have diverted attention from an altogether different way of regarding prophecy—or to be more accurate, of regarding *some* kinds of prophecy—of which hints are to be found in many parts of the Bible. It is these hints which, as we shall see, will help us in our quest.

Consider, for instance, the story of the journey which Elijah and Elisha took together before Elijah was carried up into heaven. As the two prophets passed through Bethel and Jericho, they were met by the "sons of the prophets" who resided in these places. And the latter, when once they saw Elisha, said to him: "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today?" (2 Kings 2 : 3, 5).

In the New Testament we read of similar occurrences. Paul was on his way to Jerusalem and as he passed through numerous villages and towns he conversed with the local disciples. And the record he leaves us is this: "The Holy Ghost testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me" (Acts 20 : 23).

Here are prophecies in a blatant form. Verbal inspiration? Hardly. Would God have directly inspired hundreds of prophets to tell Elisha and Paul what they knew already? Inspiration of the Shakespeare-Blake variety? Certainly not. It seems clear that prophecy of the kind we are considering differs greatly from the types which theologians are wont to discuss. The implication is rather that there are times when God "speaks" and that prophets are then often able to "pick up" His thoughts, by a kind of telepathy or extra-sensory perception. As a result, the prophets who prophesied, did not always do so in a useful way. "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace," said Elisha; and Paul often had occasion to speak in the same vein. The fact was simply this: that God had "spoken" of the future and all sensitive people, everywhere, were capable of "picking up" the message. This, surely, is what the prophet Amos means when he says (3 : 8) : "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy ? "

Let us take the passages we have quoted at their face value. If we do so we must suppose that there is in nature what we may conveniently call a "realm of ideas" where concrete information is stored. This realm is real in the fullest sense of the word; it is as real as books or microfilms. And sometimes God pours into it His own thoughts. Here He may enshrine prophecies of the future or plans and messages for His people. Those who are endowed in a special way, about which we know little or nothing, are then able to pick up the ideas which the "realm" contains and to translate them into the ordinary language of the day.

If we take this view, we shall perhaps want to add that the ideas contained in this mysterious psychic "realm" may not all be good ones. Not only may God cause His voice to be heard in it, but evil men and perhaps evil spirits may do the same. With one consent Ahab's prophets told him to go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for there was a lying spirit in the mouths of all of them, so that they all "picked up" a false prophecy (1 Kings 22 ; 2 Chron. 18).

There are several passages also in the Bible which resemble Paul's significant remark: "God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2 : 11). In these passages it seems to be presupposed that human beings may pick up false conceptions and ideologies from a non-human "realm of ideas," and we are left to conclude that the nature of the ideas which are picked up depends very largely upon the character of those who pick them up. Perhaps it is that the good "pick up" what is true and the evil what is untrue.

One more point before we close this discussion of Biblical prophecy. In the examples cited it is obvious that before a prophet can prophesy, he must be in some kind of relation to the person which the prophecy, already present in the "realm of ideas," concerns.

It is when the prophets meet Elijah or Paul, and not till then, that they spontaneously sense what God has "said" about these men. In other words, prophecy (or at least prophecy of this particular kind) obeys a *law of association*.

The power of this association is often seen in the Bible records. The terror of natural calamities, including an earthquake in the days of Joel, brings prophecies of similar days in which the Lord "shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem" (Joel 3 : 1). Our Lord rejoices when the seventy cast out demons: is it not the thought of this limited triumph over Satan that conjures up in His mind a vision of the day when Satan shall fall from heaven quick as lightning? (Luke 10 : 17). And prophecy, as all recognise, is not concerned with the future alone. When the heart of the prince of Tyre was so swollen with pride that he thought himself divine, Ezekiel prophesies not only against him but—just as if there were no hiatus—tells also of past ages when pride resulted in the condemnation of the devil (Ezek. 28). And because prophecy obeys the law of association, it is sometimes telepathy pure and simple—the ability to know what another man is thinking—as when the prophet Elisha told the king of Israel the words that the king of Syria spoke in his bedchamber (2 Kings 6 : 12).

Some such view as that here suggested must long have been familiar to many readers of the Bible. At all events, though he cannot remember having seen it expressed in print, it has commended itself to the present writer for many years past. But until recently it seemed so "theoretical" and difficult to substantiate that it was scarcely worth while raising it in public. It was difficult to believe that ideas could have an independent existence—that they were as "real" as physical objects—or that concrete information could be stored in something that was neither mind nor matter.

Today, however, the position is completely reversed. A few years ago the late Mr. Whately Carington, who was, incidentally, an avowed agnostic, submitted all the theories which had hitherto been advanced to explain telepathy to an exhaustive analysis.



There is no space here to discuss the subject fully—Carington's book (*Telepathy*, 1945) may be referred to for this—but a short summary of his arguments can scarcely be omitted.

Like others before him, Carington points out that the degree of success obtained in telepathic experiments is independent of distance—results obtained across the Atlantic were as successful as those within a few yards, or within a mile or so. This seems to show quite definitely that telepathy is not caused by the transmission of any *physical* influence—for physical influences all obey some kind of inverse law (such as the inverse square law).

Secondly, every method we know of by means of which a message can be transmitted to a distance, involves some kind of coding followed by a de-coding at the other end. We may turn our ideas into letter of the alphabet, into sounds, into dots and dashes, into electrical fluctuations, etc., but both the sender and the receiver must first of all agree on the code and learn it properly before any transfer of thought can take place. Now in telepathy, there is no shadow of evidence that anything of this kind is happening. It seems to be ideas themselves and not "codes" which enter the mind of the person who is at the receiving end—in other words ideas themselves, though clearly not *physically* real, do seem to possess a reality of their own; and in order to account for telepathy we must hold that in some sense they pervade space.

Thirdly, we have to consider the degree of resemblance between the original idea and the idea as it is picked up. The evidence goes to show that a subject does not "see" and then proceed to draw, say, a hand. It is often the idea or shape or meaning of the original that gets across, not its exact form.

Suffice it to say, then, that *all* theories which seek to explain telepathy in terms of physical ideas seem to be doomed to failure. But there is one line of explanation which, however startling it may be, at once brings it into line with facts with which we are already familiar.

In our minds, ideas often become linked or associated with one another. Thus, when we think of the word "wine" we tend to associate it at once with "women and song" or again, the letter "O" may at once suggest "K". Often, however, the associations are peculiar to ourselves—thus a particular book may suggest its donor.

So, then, our minds obey the "law of association". Ideas which have once been presented to us together tend to become

so grouped that, later on, when one of the ideas is presented, the other may also vividly come before us.

Now let us suppose that the "law of association" does not merely apply within a single mind, but that it can also apply between two or more minds. Then it is clear that we shall at once have something very like telepathy. For if you and I both decide to conduct an experiment in telepathy, and I then endeavour to connect the idea of my experiment in telepathy with, say, a particular kind of animal, then you also, presented with the one idea, may tend to think of the second idea with which it is now become associated.

This theory at once explains a formidable difficulty which seems to be insuperable on any other view. We have said that telepathy is not dependent on distance. This seems to imply that we are liable to "pick up" any or all of the thoughts of any of the millions upon millions of people in the rest of the world—or at least those within the range of the few thousand miles or so over which telepathy has been proved to work effectively. Clearly, even the most receptive person does not pick up all those thoughts. Therefore the existence of the "sender" is not by itself enough. But what else is required? The view that the "law of association" holds between *different* minds at once answers the question. Telepathy cannot take place unless there is a chance for "association" to operate.

Nor is the "law of association" the only law to which telepathy appears to conform. We are all familiar with the "law of recency" in psychology. In telepathy, too, the "law of recency" holds good—successful scoring in telepathic experiments is at a maximum at the time when association is established in the sender's mind and, after that, it falls off gradually. Similarly, the "law of repetition" also applies—the more often ideas are presented together, the more they tend to stick together.

Telepathy, in short, does not fall into line with physical laws, but it does seem to conform to psychological laws. And it would seem that not only telepathy, but many other curious psychical happenings, can be profitably regarded in the same light. Psychometry—the ability of certain people to say something about the past history of objects which they handle—might well be explained along the same lines. Then again, the evidence for ghosts and haunting is exceptionally strong, but in a majority of instances ghosts appear only to be "hallucinations"; for, although they appear to walk about, they rarely interact

with the physical world. Here again, then, we may imagine that when people have been associated with certain surroundings for a long time or in very emotion-stirring circumstances, an association of ideas is established in an independent "realm of ideas," and we may suppose that association is so strong that acquaintance with a locality may bring up a vivid hallucinatory image of a person who once lived there.

The same explanation may be advanced for much of the circumstantial evidence which seems to point in the direction of spiritualism. There are good grounds for scepticism concerning the spiritualist interpretation—the theory that it is dead people who manifest themselves at séances. In the well-known Gordon Davis case, Davis, who was thought to be dead and had produced much startling evidence that he had survived the death of his body, turned out later to be alive—nor was he at all interested in psychic matters (*Soc. for Psychical Research Proc.*, 1925, **35**, 560). But if we suppose that two people know one another so well that their thoughts and personalities become linked, and that one of them dies, Carington's theory would certainly explain how the living partner might find apparent "evidence" of survival of his friend as a result of messages through a "medium."

Here, at all events, we have the only rational suggestion that appears yet to have been made with regard to these extraordinary happenings. And even if we remain sceptical about the reality of psychometry, hauntings, and the goings-on in the séance-room we can scarcely afford any longer to be sceptical about telepathy, for which the evidence is now so strong that few who have studied it have for long remained unconvinced.

From this point Carington goes on to make the suggestion—an old one in philosophy—that our minds are not really as individualistic as they seem. There is, he says, a universal subconscious mind, common to all of us, and it is out of this so-to-speak higher mind, that thoughts come welling up into our consciousness. He goes on to make a vigorous attack on all religious faiths on the ground that all that they stand for that is of importance can be adequately accounted for by postulating a "group-mind" of humanity. Even immortality can be explained, he says, by supposing that the associations of ideas which have come to us, as a result of our individual experiences, will continue to remain intact in the world-mind after we are dead.

Along these lines, Carington proposed to found a new religious

faith which would altogether do away with the need for postulating God or a belief in Christ as divine. Moreover, associations of ideas in the world-mind—"psychon systems" as he pleased to call them—would do all that had ever been claimed for devils, so that there would be no need for devil-worship or Black Mass either! In fact religions of the orthodox kinds, both good and bad, would, he thought, have to beat a hasty retreat before the rapidly advancing tide of his new psychon-system religion.

All this is ingenious and impressive. But what, in fact, has been established and what is mere conjecture? The suggestion has been made that *if* we postulate the independent existence of ideas and of their associations, *apart* from the human mind, we shall throw light upon a wide variety of curious and unexplained phenomena. So far so good. But Carington did not adduce the slightest reason for going further than this. He produced no reason whatever for belief in an all-pervading unconscious *mind*, a world-mind of humanity.

At this point, of course, questions of definitions of words become very perplexing. According to Carington, *sensa*, together with associations of ideas, constitute a *mind*. But he did not say why he thought that his world-mind experienced *sensa*. Moreover he believed, apparently for no reason at all, that, provided they became large enough, psychon-systems, or groups of associations of ideas, would automatically develop consciousness as an epiphenomenon.

It seems clear that Carington made the mistake of defining mind in terms of one or two of its attributes. This is, of course, akin to the mistake of those biochemists who have defined life as a conglomeration of proteins, carbohydrates, lipoids, nucleotides, etc., in dynamic equilibrium. None of us can define either *mind* or *life*, but we may fairly entertain more than a shrewd suspicion that definitions of this kind are coverage for ignorance!

In short, Carington's supposed universal mind possesses only one or two of the many attributes which ordinary people associate with mind. It can merely store ideas and their associations. Self-consciousness and ability to experience *sensa* have been added gratuitously. In fact, one cannot help suspecting that this whole theory arises, not from reason and fact at all, but out of Carington's strongly marked theophobia. He seems to have been bent, at all costs, to discredit religion rather than to put forward a balanced philosophy.

We may, then, safely set aside the world-mind theory and adhere rigidly to the ascertained fact. And the ascertained fact brings us back precisely to the point at which the Bible leaves us. There is a "realm of ideas" which exists quite independently of man. And man's own thoughts and associations of thoughts can be transmitted to and stored in this realm, from which also man is able, at times, to draw ideas in the reverse direction.

Thus, far from discrediting the Christian view of the world, developments in psychical research have done a great deal to confirm it. And for this extremely interesting development in our understanding we must, above all, be grateful to Whately Carington.

We started by pointing out the well known fact that Biblical prophecy shows some curious features which, at first sight, are likely to make us highly sceptical of its reality. Why was it that Biblical writers seemed to show no sense of the context in which the "prophecies" were written? Why did it never dawn on them that the principle of "two-fold fulfilment" is a mere playing fast and loose with the sacred text?

In the light of the conclusions we have reached we may now turn to study this problem anew. Let us accept the teaching implied throughout the Bible, that there is a "real" but non-physical realm of ideas with which man—or at any rate the prophet—is in partial contact. So when we build up associations of thoughts in our minds, these associations are not private: they become stored not in our minds alone but in a cosmic "realm of ideas." And we may well suppose that God's thoughts—His plans and intentions for the future of our race—also form part and parcel of that realm. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that God's thoughts and associations are far more indelibly impressed upon that realm, than are those of angels and men.

With this picture in our minds let us see what we can learn about prophecy. Firstly we may say at once that the prophet himself need not necessarily be God-fearing. The Bible itself makes this abundantly clear. Saul prophesied among the prophets. The pious Jew was warned that false prophets might arise who were able, nevertheless, successfully to predict the future (Deut. 13 : 2). Gazing intently upon the hosts of Israel, Balaam, against his own will, was obliged to prophesy blessing for God's chosen people (Num. 23-24). Again, scholars have often remarked upon the amazing similarities between the Biblical pro-

phesies of the King who is to reign in righteousness and the similar (though less exalted) but apparently independent passages in the sagas of ancient Egypt, Greece and Persia. Coming to more modern times we think also of Nostradamus. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suppose that God gave the prophets of His chosen people a power that was unexcelled by false prophets or by the prophets of other nations.

The Bible makes it plain that from the beginning God had determined upon the way in which He would redeem mankind. Prophecies of the First Advent were fulfilled literally and in great detail and there hardly seems room to doubt that those relating to the Second Advent will be fulfilled in like manner. In early days little was revealed but, as time went by, more and more of the Divine Plan was unveiled. This was because, in the long history of the Jews, it often happened that the various situations in which the chosen people found themselves resembled situations which would arise again as the plans of God unfolded themselves in history. And of these plans those which related to the Advents—the most direct by far of all encounters between man and God—were naturally of supreme importance.

Thus it happened that, whenever there was an earthquake, a famine, an invading army, the eruption of a volcano, widespread unbelief, idolatry and so on, prophets prophesied of these things, warning their generation of the judgment of God. But as they did so their minds made contact with the "realm of ideas." Hardly realising the fact they began to link their thought about the contemporary situation with the ideas with which similar thoughts were most powerfully linked in the plan of God. They spoke of Antichrist, of Armageddon, of fearful catastrophes, of a king meek and lowly and riding upon an ass, of a king scattering his enemies and establishing his Kingdom. All these associations were present and are still present in the "realm of ideas"—a timeless realm. And prophets too lost their sense of time. Without knowing it they mixed the immediate with the distant future. But as the ages passed more and more of the details of that distant future became revealed.

These are the main features of prophecy which we should expect to find if the theory that we have advanced be true. And it conforms exactly with the pattern of Bible prophecy with which we are so familiar. The lack of sense of time in the prophetic utterance—so that millenniums can be interspersed in the middle of a sentence with no warning of the fact (see Luke 4 : 19 and Acts

2:17 for familiar instances); the apparent unawareness of the prophet as to what is contemporary and what is not, the gradual unfolding of the Divine plan: all are there. What more could we demand?

If this view be true, prophecy is indeed enigmatical and hard to interpret. That we may freely grant. But why should we expect it to be otherwise? It was no part of God's plan to make His secrets known to experts in the logician's art. The numerous and astounding little details fulfilling the prophecies in the life of our Lord are a sufficient vindication of the source of the prophecies. It is a faithless generation that demands more—and no more will be given.

We may approach our subject from another point of view. How did those who *wrote* the Bible think of prophecy? It seems clear that they must have held a view that differed not greatly from that which we have advanced. Even regarded from a purely human standpoint, St. Matthew was no fool. He was extremely familiar with the Old Testament writings, and it is difficult to credit the view that, although he knew full well the various contexts in which the passages he quotes occurred, he was always so perverse as to take them out of their context! It is manifest that neither he nor the other writers of the Canon approached the subject from the angle of the writer of the modern commentary. Without doubt St. Matthew would have laughed at the critic, saying that God was catching the wise in their own craftiness—and surely he would have been right.

Two further comments seem called for. In the first place we must remember that if this idea of prophecy seems strange to us, it will hardly seem strange to the psychologist. In our everyday thinking we pay far less regard to context than we are apt to suppose.

Here is an illustration given in a modern book on psychology.<sup>1</sup> Shortly before World War II, a business man was talking about the frightful injustice done to small nations. He went on to speak about his tailor with an equal sense of annoyance, for a very long time ago a coat he had ordered had not been delivered on time. Next he talked about a doctor with whom he was also angry, because the latter had withheld information about the nature of a drug he was prescribing. Now the immediate contexts of each of these complaints are easy to understand, yet they

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<sup>1</sup> K. Horney, *Self Analysis* (1942), p. 127.

are almost totally irrelevant. The man was busy and his lady secretary had stayed away from the office with a bad attack of 'flu. Obviously, he could not blame her for this nor could he do anything effective about it. So he showed his annoyance by thinking of other instances in which annoying things had happened about which he could also do nothing. The connexion between these thoughts and their cause did not dawn upon him; it was there none the less.

Now if, in everyday life, it is only too easy for the words we utter to have practically no relation to their logical context, we must not be surprised if we discover something of the same kind in ancient writers also. A prophet might, in his consciousness, be entirely engrossed with the affairs of his day, yet the choice of his ideas and the form they took might be largely under the control of forces about which he knew nothing. His prophetic power (or however else we like to describe it) might, indeed, ensure that the immediate context of his words was of very secondary importance.

The example of the man and his secretary affords a homely illustration which serves to show how easily logic may lead us astray. Indeed, though we often hardly realise the fact, a large amount of our thinking is conducted by means of analogies. All our thinking in dreams and much of our waking thinking too, is of this character, and it ill behoves us to complain if, at times, we find evidences of alogical thinking in the Bible also.

Secondly and finally, a word of caution is necessary. If these ideas appeal to us, we may be tempted to think that psychological research has presented us with a comprehensive theory of prophecy. No idea could be more dangerous. It is rare indeed that any theory, however convincing it may be, will comprehend all the facts which it was advanced to explain. We have good reason to think that some of the prophecy in the Bible may be explained in the way we have described—but it is impossible to read the Bible intelligently without realising that much Biblical prophecy is of a different kind. The value of the present theory is not that it explains all that there is to be explained, but that it explains *some* of the facts and that, in doing so, it removes at one stroke many of those difficulties which, in the past, have so often turned the devout Biblical scholar into the sceptical Biblical critic.



## DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Dr. E. WHITE) said: Dr. Clark has presented what to most of us, perhaps to all of us, is a new and original conception of prophecy. He has used his scientific imagination to some purpose in the way he has dealt with a difficult and obscure subject.

Carington's theories of the nature of Telepathy rest upon the assumption of the existence of a group mind common to humanity. This is somewhat akin to Emerson's conception of the Over Soul, and it is faintly reflected in Jung's theory of the Collective Unconscious. If this theory is dismissed as false, then the explanation of Telepathy on the grounds of association of ideas must be given up.

Quite apart from Carington's theories, it seems to me that the association of ideas is not a satisfactory ground of explanation of prophecy, even if we grant the realm of ideas postulated by Dr. Clark. Each individual mind forms its own particular association of ideas connected with any given object or event. For instance, a book on my bookshelf will bring to my mind certain ideas and feelings which I have obtained and selected from its contents, but it does not follow that another person seeing the book would associate the same feelings and ideas with it when he saw it.

Associated with every object or event in our environment, each one of us forms a constellation of associated ideas peculiar to himself and different from the constellation formed by others. This is because any given object does not automatically produce the same association in the mind of each beholder. The associations formed depend upon the particular interests and attitude of mind of each beholder, and depend, not only upon the perception of the object itself but on all the past relations of each person to that and similar objects. For example, I go to see a house in which I lived for many years in my childhood; that house will bring to my mind a flood of associated memories and feelings which could not possibly exist in the mind of a stranger who saw the house for the first time.

The conception of a realm of ideas seems to have some affinity to Platonic conceptions. Plato described a heavenly sphere in which the ideas of things we see on earth had eternal existence. Things on earth were the embodiment of these eternal ideas. For example, there was a real "Chairness" of which all chairs were the visible

expression. In other words, universals were not abstractions, but were actual entities.

Why should we postulate a realm of ideas? Is it not simpler to suppose that God communicated ideas directly to His servants rather than to suppose that He first of all put His ideas into a kind of separate realm where they remained stored up until they were tapped by somebody who became in some way sensitized to them? However, having said all this, I must express gratitude, shared no doubt by all of us, for a very interesting and ingenious paper.

Mr. TITTERINGTON said: Dr. Clark has given us a very interesting theory. About the theory itself I am hardly competent to express an opinion; but there is one remark I would like to make: that, in spite of what Dr. Clark has said, I cannot conceive of a repository of ideas that can be tapped by the human mind that does not in itself partake of the character of mind. What can this "mind" be? It cannot be the Divine mind, certainly not the Satanic; and if we reject—and as Christians I think we are bound to reject—Carington's concept of a collective human mind, what remains?

It is the proposed application of the theory to Biblical prophecy, however, in which I am more interested. Now, the Bible teaches us that there are spiritual beings—angels and demons, as well as the Holy Spirit Himself and the devil—who are able to communicate directly with the human mind. With regard to the major prophecies of Scripture, Dr. Clark himself admits that these are directly divinely inspired. Peter tells us that "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21), and that their prophecies were inspired by "the Spirit of Christ that was in them" (1 Pet. 1:11). Is it not, after all, the simplest assumption that the minor prophecies to which Dr. Clark has called our attention were inspired in exactly the same way? Dr. Clark asks: Would God have directly inspired hundreds of prophets to tell Elisha and Paul what they knew already? Why not? The very Scripture Dr. Clark quotes in this connection says: "The Holy Ghost testifieth." And we must remember that in the days of Elisha and Paul the gift of prophecy was very widely diffused.

The main difficulty I feel about the theory is this: that if the

prophecy comes about by a sort of "picking up" by the mind, it depends to a large extent on the accuracy of the percipient. The message might be picked up partially or indistinctly; it might be confused by a sort of "interference" from some other source; or it might be vitiated by the admixture of something from the mind of the recipient himself. This would do away with that characteristic of prophecy to which Peter again calls attention that we have a "*more sure*" word of prophecy. This certainty comes about because the message is *not* so confused or vitiated, but is communicated directly by God Himself: False prophets are similarly inspired by evil spirits, but here the spirits can for their own ends convey a true or false message as they desire, and the certainty is not there.

One further point. We must guard against the idea that there is only one way in which prophecy can be given. The Bible shows us the contrary: the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that God has spoken by the prophets "at sundry times and in divers manners." Of these "divers manners" Scripture gives us abundant examples. God has spoken by angels (Daniel, John, the Virgin Mary, Manoah, Gideon—and see Heb. 2:2), by dreams (Joseph, Daniel), and visions (Ezekiel, Isaiah, Zechariah, Peter), and sometimes by direct speech—"opening the mouth" (Ezekiel), and perhaps in other ways as well. But the point is that in each and every case there was a direct, objective communication that did not depend upon the recipient, and was not liable to be mutilated in the transmission.

Mr. B. C. MARTIN said: I would like to express my appreciation of Dr. Clark's thought-provoking paper. There is one comment, however, which I would like to make in regard to the suggested unconscious use of the timeless "Realm of Ideas" by the prophets. Dr. Clark says that this may account for their loss of the sense of time—"without knowing it they mixed the immediate with the distant future."

But this feature of the immediate and distant futures being telescoped together is found also in the prophecies of our Lord (*e.g.*, Matt. 24, which deals with the Destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in A.D. 70, and the Second Advent). There is surely no suggestion that He had need of recourse to a "Realm

of Ideas" but spoke rather from His Own omniscience: it was only the "hour" that He chose, as man, to be ignorant of (v. 36).

It would seem probable, therefore, that a better explanation is that the near event adumbrated the distant.

Mr. W. E. FILMER said: There are a number of examples in the Bible of a series of events or experiences happening to one set of people at one time repeating themselves in the lives of other people at another time. For instance, a number of unusual things happened to Moses which also happened to Jesus Christ: both were law-givers who worked signs and wonders, both as children were providentially saved from death under an edict for the destruction of all male children, both fled their country to escape the king, and so on through a remarkable series of parallel events (see Newton, *On the Prophecies*, Vol. I, pp. 90-101).

It is evident, therefore, that if a prophecy is made regarding the one series of events, it would of necessity be equally applicable to the other series. This provides an adequate explanation of the dual fulfilment of prophecy and the apparent vagueness of the time element without recourse to Dr. Clark's theory. What still requires explanation is the fact that a series of historical events does repeat itself.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT wrote: I am afraid that, owing to my being away from home, I have to make these comments from my memory of the original MS. of the paper without having been able to see the galley proof.

I can see no harm in our trying to investigate what one might call the mechanism of prophecy. In fact, if we are to have a total view of reality, we are bound to hold some hypothesis, even if later we have to revise it. Dr. Clark's paper is an excellent attempt to state a hypothesis in the light of modern investigations into the workings of extra-sensory perception. The late Mr. Whately Carington's book is a most stimulating piece of work, and even if one cannot agree with all his conclusions, one can admit that his theory of the persistence of psychon systems is worthy of careful consideration.

So long as Dr. Clark does not regard his theory as covering all prophecy, it would account for many of the things that he mentions.

My difficulty is that there need be nothing of specifically divine inspiration in the picking up of the psychon systems attached to people, places, and situations. Could not any person with clairvoyant ability have done the same? Perhaps he could, and this would account for the recognised ability of even false prophets to predict accurately (Deut. 13 : 1, 2). But experience shows that ESP gifts are very much of a mixture; their percentage of accuracy is small, even though the accuracy is there. With regard to precognition, I take it that the inspired prophet would still need something more than natural gifts to sift the true from the false, though God might well make use of these natural gifts of ESP in the same way as He obviously used the poetic and literary ability of men to convey His truths.

What I think is specially valuable is the light that is thrown on the time element in predictive prophecy. The prophet is not debarred from making definite statements about time (*e.g.*, Daniel 9 : 24-26—though, of course, this is something revealed directly by an angel, and may be different), but it seems clear that we cannot look normally for precise sequence such as we are accustomed to in daily life. The time element in predictive prophecy seems to be of the same sort of quality as time in our dreams. After all, 1 Peter 1 : 11 suggests that the prophets themselves were doubtful about the dates to which their prophecies applied.

We can be grateful to Dr. Clark for a most thought-provoking paper.

Mr. F. F. BRUCE wrote: I am in no way qualified to pass any comment on the main suggestions in Dr. Clark's very interesting paper. But a professional exegete may make some remarks on the Biblical passages mentioned.

I agree that St. Matthew was no fool. He knew what he was doing in selecting Old Testament quotations to illustrate his nativity narrative; he was, in fact, interested in showing how the fortunes of the messianic people were recapitulated in the experience of the infant Messiah, that He might be seen to be afflicted in all their affliction. As Israel went down into Egypt and was called thence by God (Hosea 11 : 1), so must Messiah go down thither and return. And in the tears of the bereaved mothers of Bethlehem he sees repeated the sorrows which had attended so much of Israel's history.

in which the matriarch Rachel had so much cause to weep for her children, as on the occasion when Jeremiah pictured her as bewailing their deportation from the homeland (Jer. 31 : 15). If a modern writer wished to trace this parallelism he might use another method, but this was St. Matthew's method. The concept of "corporate personality" (on which Dr. Wheeler Robinson insisted so), and what Father Lattey calls the principle of "compenetration" in Biblical prophecy, are, of course, very relevant in this regard.

As regards Peter's quotation of Joel 2 : 28-32 in Acts 2 : 17-21, the apostle seems to regard the whole prophecy as fulfilled in the events of Pentecost and does not suggest that millenniums are "interspersed" in the middle of any of the sentences he quotes. That idea, in my opinion, does not emerge from the consideration of Acts 2 : 16 ff. in its context but from reading the passage in the light of a certain scheme of prophetic interpretation.

On the whole question of Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, Professor R. V. G. Tasker's book *The Old Testament in the New Testament* (1946) may be consulted with profit—not to mention a paper on the textual aspect of the subject by Dr. Basil Atkinson in our *Journal of Transactions* 79 (1947), pp. 39 ff.

Mr. L. D. FORD wrote : (1) The prophecy by Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called my son," was literally fulfilled when Joseph was advised by God in Egypt that he might take the Holy Babe back to Palestine. Our Lord as an infant traversed the same path that Israel ["my firstborn," Exod. 4 : 22] traversed many years before. Why say, "What are we to make of the assertion?"

(2) "The so-called last days." Why "so-called"? This suggests some fallacy somewhere. Are not the "last days" a familiar Old Testament subject of prophecy from the time of Jacob (Gen. 49 : 1) onwards? They relate to the day when Christ shall come as the Lord God and Messiah to reign and judge.

(3) Dr. Clark suggests a kind of floating pool of ideas to which God also contributes and from which the prophets, who were *en rapport* with God, drew their inspiration and messages. St. Peter says that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1 : 21). There is no intermediate state of "ideas" but a direct giving from the Holy Ghost, Who Himself is God, to the prophets. Has Dr. Clark drunk from those popular

streams of thought—popular in all ages—in which some kind of intermediary is interposed between God and His creature? The Bible teaches that human souls can have direct access to God in the Person of Jesus Christ and are indebted to no intermediary whatever; and God throughout the ages, as shown in the Old Testament abundantly, has Himself appeared and spoken to men (“By Myself have I sworn,” to Abraham, Gen. 22 : 16; and “*I am* hath sent thee,” to Moses, Ex. 3 : 14).

Lt.-Col. L. MERSON DAVIES wrote: I am very glad to see a paper by Dr. Clark, and hope that he has recovered from his most serious illness. I cannot discuss all that he says; but as a student of Bible Prophecy for over 50 years, I heartily agree with his statement that “Prophecies of the First Advent were fulfilled literally and in great detail and there hardly seems room to doubt that those relating to the Second Advent will be fulfilled in like manner.”

I discussed the former Prophecies in my booklet *The Credentials of Jesus*, published thirty years ago; and the latter Prophecies in ten articles on “Signs of the Times” in *The Life of Faith*, beginning with the issue for November 30th, 1949. The literal fulfilment of 2 Peter 3 : 3-4 by the rise of the modern geological doctrine of Uniformity (*alias* Continuity) with all its consequences, beginning with denial of the Flood—exactly as Peter foretold—was also discussed in my article, “The Philosophical Basis of Modernism” (*Trans. Vict. Inst.*, 61 (1929), pp. 191-222).

The subject is vast, and it is difficult even to take up certain points in a letter; but the symbolism of Revelation certainly did not refer to the world of John’s day. The writings of the earliest fathers prove that they regarded it as referring to a future state of things. Their views were very like those of our “futurist” school.

I also accept Matthew’s claim that the latter part of Hos. 11 : 1 refers to our Lord. Hosea repeatedly switched from Israel the man to Israel the nation (*e.g.*, 12 : 2-3, 12-13); and the first part of Hos. 11 : 1 seems to refer to the man (*cf.* Mal. 1 : 2). How could the *nation* be a “child”? And the words “called My Son out of Egypt” cannot refer either to Jacob or to the nation. Remember that the Jews of our Lord’s day equated God’s SON (in the singular) with “The” Christ; and our Lord was crucified for calling Himself that SON (Matt. 26 : 63 ff.; *cf.* Ps. 2 : 7, 12; Heb. 1 : 5-8).

Thus, Hosea's unique reference to God's Son (in the singular) being called out of Egypt does not fit the national exodus, although it might—as Dr. Clark suggests—come in here by association of ideas. And note that it is Matthew, the most legally trained of all the Apostles, who claims this as a prophecy about our Lord.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I should like to thank those who have participated in this discussion and I am sure that we shall all agree that useful points have been raised. Some of the questions put to me have, I think, been answered—so far as they can be answered—in the paper itself. Some of the others are beyond my wit to answer. But one cannot help feeling that a good deal of the criticism of the view put forward in the paper would take a different turn if Christians would seek to understand prophecy in general rather than Biblical prophecy alone.

Several critics suggest that St. Matthew's gospel and the facts of prophecy generally are perfectly intelligible without recourse to the views I have put forward. Even if they are right (and I would not in the least detract from Mr. Bruce's comments) that is no reason for shutting our minds to a new approach. A bad harvest may be due to bad weather, but late sowing or lack of fertilizer are not thereby ruled out.

When we look back on the prejudices of former ages we find, every time, that men were prejudiced because they were so contented with current explanations that they did not bother to look for new approaches. Truth, like error, can dull the mind. We Christians must never forget that the sin of dullness turns more of our generation away from Christianity than those other sins into which Christians are at times prone to fall. Clearly we must explore every hopeful avenue of approach. The Jews were satisfied that the prophecies referred to their nation. They were right. But St. Matthew opened the eyes of those who were not too blind to regard the same fact in a new light. In the same way our theory of prophecy may be convincing and right—but let us not therefore refuse to consider another theory.

Turning now to specific points that have been raised. Dr. White argues that private associations "could not possibly exist" in alien minds. But we cannot argue *a priori* in this way. The fact that seemingly private associations *do* at times exist in the



minds of others is surely an incontrovertible finding of psychical research. Is not the "realm of ideas" conception the simplest explanation we can offer?

Several speakers ask whether the theory is consistent with 2 Peter 1 : 21 and similar passages. I think it may well be. If we said we had heard a friend speaking directly to us on the wireless, we should not be lying because we knew that he was hundreds of miles away or even if we knew that it was a recording of his voice that we had heard. The Bible constantly speaks in the same way. God is said to send the sun and the rain : with Old Testament prophets we may hear His voice in the thunder. He is behind the natural order which He uses to accomplish His ends. The Bible stresses the ultimate spiritual facts and often omits to mention the natural order of which God's spirit makes constant use. We must not jump to the conclusion that the natural order is therefore excluded ! The "realm of ideas" may well be a part of that natural order. To suggest, as Mr. Ford does, that on such a view nature is a mediator between man and God in the sense of 1 Tim. 2 : 5 is surely as disingenuous a way of proving a man a heretic as was ever invented !

As for Mr. Titterington's main point, do not most of us agree that, in fact, the details of prophecy are "partial," "indistinct" and seemingly if not actually confused by "interference" from other sources—especially contemporary events ? If not, why do we differ so in their interpretation ? It is not in the details but in its general tenor that we may speak of the "more sure word of prophecy."

Mr. Martin asks if these theories would apply to Christ. Of course they would. Our Lord had command even of the winds and waves—why not of the "realm of ideas" too ? Does Mr. Martin suggest that He was unable to do what prophets of the Old Testament could do with comparative ease ? Or is it suggested that our Lord, who humbled himself to become a mere baby and to learn from *men*, never partook of the nature of man sufficiently to learn from one of man's main sources of inspiration down the ages ? Surely such a view is not compatible with the teaching of the New Testament.

901ST ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING  
HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 69, GREAT PETER STREET, WESTMINSTER,  
S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 16TH APRIL, 1951.

REV. ALAN M. STIBBS, M.A., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The CHAIRMAN then called on B. F. C. Atkinson, Esq., M.A., Ph.D., to read his Paper, entitled "The Composition of St. Matthew's Gospel."

*THE COMPOSITION OF ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL*

B. F. C. ATKINSON, ESQ., M.A., PH.D.

SYNOPSIS

The author may perhaps be identified from Matt. 9:10, and the identification confirmed by his interest in money, his curt style and his methodical arrangement of his matter.

The first readers may be supposed to have been Jewish religious leaders or Hebrew Christians from the occurrence of various Jewish expressions and an interest in things Jewish.

An early date may be implied from some of the material and from the text of quotations from the Septuagint. There are many small indications that Jerusalem was the place of publication.

The relationship of the Gospel with that of Mark is discussed. The best modern views are shown to be not necessarily conclusive, and the suggestion is made, based on a close examination of the parallel texts, that Mark knew that Matthew had been an eyewitness of the facts reported in parts of his Gospel and, writing subsequently to Matthew, treated differently the sections of Matthew's text where the author was an eyewitness from those of which he was not.

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AUTHOR

THE first Gospel like the rest is anonymous. An ancient and commonly-held tradition has connected it with the apostle Matthew, one of the twelve (Matt. 9:9; 10:3; Mark 2:14; 3:18; Luke 5:27; 6:15), a tradition that is usually traced back at least as far as a well-known statement of Papias in the second century. It is not certain that Papias means to state that Matthew was the author of the first Gospel in Greek as we have it. However, we find some slender evidence in the Gospel itself that points to Matthew's authorship.

After Matthew's call we find Jesus invited to a meal (Matt. 9:10). We know from Mark 2:15 and Luke 5:29 that the meal

took place in Levi's (that is, Matthew's) house at his invitation. In the parallel account in Matt. 9:10 the pronoun "his" after "house" (in the Greek) is omitted, and the statement is made that Jesus sat down to table "at home". This cannot have been the Lord's house, as we know it from the other Gospels to have been Matthew's. It must therefore have been the home of the writer of the Gospel. The writer must therefore have been Matthew.

Now, Matthew before his call was a publican or tax-collector. He was therefore a business man whose chief secular interest was financial. It would not therefore be surprising to find a certain interest in *money* appearing in his work, and this is what in fact we find. He alone supplies the detailed description of money in 10:9, "gold, silver, brass." Peculiar to Matthew are the parables of the treasure hid in the field and of the pearl of great price (13:44-46). These parables have a commercial flavour, which at least would appeal to the former business man and tax-collector. No one but Matthew tells the story of the tribute money in the mouth of the fish (17:24-27). This story would interest him because it concerned money. The discovery of money needed for paying a tax in so remarkable a manner could not fail of course to attract the attention of a former tax-collector, and it is natural to find the story included in his Gospel on this ground alone.

Matthew alone records the parable of the unforgiving servant (18:23-25). It may be that its interest for him again lay in the fact that it dealt with debts and money. The parable of the talents, reported by Matthew at length (25:14-30), would have particular interest for him as dealing with financial matters, although Luke in another context has a very similar parable.

No one can read through this Gospel without noticing the curt style in which much of it is written. This trait is not a proof of authorship, but it is not inconsistent with the author having been a business man. The first occasion on which it becomes noticeable is in the account of the healing of the centurion's servant (7:5-13). If we compare the description of the miracle with the Lucan version, we shall find in Matthew an omission of detail, and a running together of incidents. He leaves out the fact that the centurion addressed the Lord through intermediaries. He is inclined not to be able to see the trees for the wood. He gives us no vivid picture. This agrees well with the Matthean authorship.

If we compare Matt. 8:21, 22 with Luke 9:39, 60, we shall

notice another instance of Matthew's compression of style. The account of the storm on the lake (8 : 23-27) is given in the same curt and unadorned style. If we look carefully at the section of the Gospel between 9 : 9 and 13, we shall see that the curt style is evident in the description of events, though not always when the evangelist reports what the Lord said. In the account of the healing of the demoniac boy (17 : 14-21) the curt style becomes specially evident again. The account of the preparation for the Passover (26 : 16-19) is in the same curt business-like style. Again if we contrast Matthew's account of the Lord's trial before the council with that of Mark (26 : 57-75), we shall see the curt style appearing again. The details of the resurrection narrative are blurred, and the story is run together (28 : 1-10), while the last four verses of the Gospel again betray the curt business-like style (28 : 16-20).

There is another characteristic of the first evangelist which does not prove authorship, but points in the same direction as does the style. The events described in between the discourses are sometimes arranged in groups of three. This is to facilitate memory. The same kind of methodical arrangement is found in the Lord's genealogy which opens the book (1 : 1-17), where the individual generations are arranged in three groups of fourteen at the cost of omitting some of the links. This method fits in well with the authorship of Matthew, who was a business man engaged on revenue duty before his call to discipleship.

Arrangement is apparent in the connecting words with which the evangelist begins 8 : 1. Matthew alone puts the Lord's words to the disciple who was too eager and to the disciple who hung back in a time setting (8 : 18-22). There is a mark of time in 12 : 1, although it is a vague and general one. Matthew alone preserves the connection between the lament over Jerusalem (23 : 37-39), which contains the words, "Your house is left unto you desolate," with the discourse on Olivet which in his Gospel immediately follows it. The remarks by the disciples on the temple buildings (24 : 1) and the Lord's prophecy of the destruction of the temple (24 : 2) fit into the background of 23 : 38.

None of these things amounts to proof of authorship, for even the reference to Matthew's home in 9 : 10 stands alone, but taken cumulatively they provide a working hypothesis upon which it seems safe to rely apart from direct contradiction, which does not seem to be forthcoming.

## THE FIRST READERS

Are there in the first Gospel any indications of the readers to whom the Gospel was immediately addressed? There seem several reasons for supposing that those whom the evangelist was aiming to reach were Jews, or Hebrew Christians, or both. In the sermon on the mount the important teaching about the law (5 : 17-20), some of that about murder (5 : 21-24), and the principal sentence about adultery (5 : 27, 28) are peculiar to Matthew. These passages have a strictly Jewish, even rabbinic setting, which makes them difficult for Gentiles to understand even today. In a Gospel written for converted or seeking religious leaders in Jerusalem they have an apposite place. The same sort of Jewish ecclesiastical atmosphere comes out in the evangelist's account of the discourse which followed the dispute as to who was the greatest (18 : 17). He speaks of the "church" and the "heathen" and has a poignant reference to the "publican."

The first evangelist's use of certain *expressions* confirms this suggestion. In 4 : 17 occurs for the first time his peculiar expression, "*the kingdom of heaven.*" This, as is well known, is a Jewish euphemism for "the kingdom of God," the phrase used by the other evangelists and elsewhere in the New Testament. Semitic thought, if not Semitic language, lies behind the expression, and it may indicate that the author's usual language was Aramaic. But so was that of the fourth evangelist, and perhaps also that of the second. The evangelist is not afraid of speaking himself of the kingdom of God, as is shown by his use of the expression in 12 : 28 ; 21 : 31-43. Does he not use the expression "*kingdom of heaven*" out of deference to the thought and custom of his readers, and if so, who are they more likely to be than the religious leaders and those at the centre of the cultural life of Judaism?

The first evangelist alone refers to the levitical offering for leprosy as τὸ ἔδωρον, 'the gift,' perhaps a technical religious term used and understood by the priests for whom we have suggested that he was primarily writing (8 : 4). His use of the term πορνεία, 'fornication', in 19 : 9, omitted by Mark, has perhaps a technical rabbinical significance and is in accord with the Jewish tendency of his expression. He supplies in addition to the other accounts the statement about judging the twelve tribes of Israel (19 : 28), though Luke has this in another context, and he again alone uses the semi-technical term *regeneration*.

The use of certain other expressions by the first evangelist suggests that he was writing for Jews. Such is the word *Gentiles*,

in 5 : 47, where the Lucan parallel has *ἁμαρτωλοί* 'sinners'. This has a peculiarly Jewish tone. There is a clearly Jewish atmosphere in the use of *τὰ ἔθνη* in 6 : 32, an expression which the third evangelist does not indeed obliterate, but expands to *τὰ ἔθνη τοῦ κόσμου* (Luke 12 : 30). The reference in 12 : 5 to the priests in the temple and to the One greater than the temple confirms the Jewish trend of the evangelist. Again in contrast to Mark, Matthew calls the Gospel "this Gospel of the Kingdom," a phrase that would make a special appeal to Jewish readers, as well as remind them that in the Christian Gospel was the fulfilment of their hopes of a Messianic Kingdom (24 : 14).

The Jewish emphasis again comes out in the expression, 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (10 : 6, repeated in 15 : 24) recorded only by Matthew. Another possible indication of the intended readers is the reference to the cities of Israel (whatever its exact meaning) in 10 : 23. This does not occur outside the first Gospel.

The author's well-known habit of *quotation* from the Old Testament, sometimes in a version that is not that of the Septuagint but seems to be taken direct from the Hebrew, or at least a Semitic source, confirms the impression that he was writing for Palestinian Jews. All the New Testament writers relate what they have to say to the Old Testament by the method of direct quotation or identity of thought, but the author of the first Gospel makes quotations with a view to supplying his readers with such evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus as would particularly appeal to them, often in a version with which Palestinian, rather than Hellenistic, Jews would be likely to be familiar. This trait occurs throughout the Gospel.

The golden rule (7 : 12) is followed in Matthew's version by a reference to *the law and the prophets*, only relevant in the case of those brought up to them. This strengthens our impression of the evangelist's Jewish background and outlook, and agrees with the suggestion that he wrote for converted religious leaders. The allusion to prophets and righteous men in 10 : 41 points in the same direction.

Matthew alone in his account of the miracle of the healing of the centurion's servant records the Lord's words that "the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out" (8 : 12). He records much the same thing in 21 : 43. Though he writes to Jewish religious leaders and aims at including what might specially appeal to them, he writes of course as a Christian missionary. It is because

he is writing to them that he emphasises the change that has taken place from the old Israel to the new. He reports the parable of the wicked husbandmen at greater length than the other evangelists, and adds to it a saying of fundamental importance for Judaism, as we have seen (21 : 33-44, especially ver. 43). He alone records the parable of the wedding-feast (22 : 1-14), (though Luke has something like it in another context (Luke 14 : 16-24)), which contains a saying with the same anti-Judaistic emphasis (ver. 7).

Peculiar to Matthew is the parable of the tares (13 : 24-30, 36-43). This parable presents a picture not only of the then future visible church in the Gospel age, but also of Old Testament Israel as a whole. It therefore would have great significance for the Jewish religious leaders.

There seems too to be a certain significance in the emphasis laid by Matthew upon the *Pharisees and Sadducees*. He alone of the synoptists mentions them in connection with the ministry of John (3 : 7). The teaching about almsgiving (6 : 1-4) and about prayer (6 : 5-8) was given by the Lord against a background of Pharisaic hypocrisy appreciated by His hearers. Matthew retains this teaching and background, a fact that suggests that both were still applicable when he wrote. Both other synoptists drop them. The same is true of the Lord's words about fasting (6 : 16-18).

The incident of the healing of the paralytic (9 : 1-8) took place before the call of Matthew, as all three synoptists agree. It happened however in Capernaum, where Matthew's home and business were, and there were crowds present (ver. 8). It is quite possible that Matthew was among them. The incident appears to have immediately preceded his call. Perhaps he shared the emotions of the crowd who were struck with fear and gave glory to God (ver. 8). In this way perhaps his mind was prepared for the call which followed. The emphasis given by Matthew in his Gospel to the opposition of the religious leaders may be due to the impression made on his mind by this incident in which, with other observers, he must have been aware of the atmosphere of antagonism created by the Scribes (ver. 3). If it were in fact this incident which finally softened his heart, this antagonism would be likely to assume large proportions in his mind, which might partly account for the large amount of space given to the Scribes and Pharisees in his Gospel, and might even have finally led him to address a Gospel primarily to them.

The saying about the householder inserted in 13 : 52 speaks in a rather unexpected way about a "scribe." Here perhaps is another link with those who we have suggested may have been the evangelist's first readers.

The rather difficult saying in the sermon on the mount about casting pearls before swine would perhaps be more intelligible to those who had been accustomed to the *exclusiveness* of Judaism. It is peculiar to Matthew (7 : 6).

In the account of the arrest of the Lord His words about the sword, the twelve legions of angels, and the Scriptures, recorded only by Matthew (26 : 52-54), are particularly suited to Jewish readers. The principle relating to the use of violence would help to correct their ideas about the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, and their interest in angels is well known.

A final indication that points in the direction of the readers for whom the Gospel was first intended is the interest shown by Matthew in the apostle Peter. In the account of the apostle's call (4 : 18-22) where the second Gospel is content with the name Simon, Matthew calls this apostle "Simon called Peter." This implies that the apostle was known to the evangelist's intended readers as Peter, a fact that further implies that these readers were not Galileans, though there are many indications that they were Jews. In his account of the healing of Peter's wife's mother (8 : 14-17) the evangelist again refers to the apostle by the name by which he was known in the Christian church and not in his Galilean home town. Again in the list of names of the twelve we find the emphasis upon the name Peter as that by which the apostle was naturally known to the readers of the Gospel in contrast to that in Mark (3 : 16), where the opposite is implied.

Matthew alone tells the story of Peter's walking on the sea (14 : 28-32) and reports at length the Lord's words to him after his confession (16 : 17-19). The apostle is called throughout the account of these incidents by the name Peter by which he was known in the church at Jerusalem. Perhaps these things were reported by Matthew with a view to giving the Hebrew Christians to whom he wrote additional confidence in, and respect for, the apostle who was charged with the spiritual welfare of 'the circumcision' (Gal. 1 : 8).

We have seen that the incident of the discovery of the tribute money in the mouth of the fish may have specially interested the evangelist because it concerned money (17 : 24-27). It also concerned Peter. As we have seen, he seems to have had for the



purpose of his Gospel a special interest in Peter, the reason for which may have lain in the particular concern of Peter for the spiritual welfare of those to whom the evangelist was writing. Incidentally we may notice again that, while he reports the Lord's address to the apostle by the familiar name of Simon (ver. 25), he himself, as always, refers to him as Peter (ver. 24).

In themselves these indications amount to little, but taken together they have a certain weight. All seem consistent with the suggestion that the Gospel was first written to Hebrew Christians, or to religious leaders among the Jews, who were either seeking for faith in Christ or had already been converted.

#### THE DATE OF THE GOSPEL

We have seen that there is some slender direct evidence in the first Gospel pointing to its authorship, and that there are indications that it is primarily written for Hebrew Christians, possibly for those who were or had been Jewish religious leaders. Similarly there appear to be one or two indications, external and internal, which point to its having been written at an early date. The widely held view that the Gospel dates from after the siege of Jerusalem seems to be based upon preconceived notions that certain elements in its teaching could not have belonged to the original doctrine of the Lord, but represent later ecclesiastical tradition.

Against this view the following points taken together appear to have some weight. The matter of the sermon on the mount is basic to Christian teaching. The sermon lays the foundation of Christian ethic. It deals with fundamental principles, and with reality in religion. It obviously stands in its right place almost on the threshold of the New Testament. In the same way it is the opening of Matthew's Gospel most definitely of the four that throws back tentacles to grip the Old Testament. The genealogy at the beginning is a deliberate link with the Old Testament Scriptures. The Gospel stands in its right place at the beginning of the New Testament.

Did someone realise this in very early days and place it in the primary position standing before at least one Gospel which was the earliest written, as soon as ever the four Gospels—or the three synoptists—were collected together? Is it not as probable that, whether or not the Epistle of James or the Epistles to the Galatians and Thessalonians had already been written, the evangelist himself realised that he was compiling the first systema-

tic narrative of events, which he regarded as the fulfilment of the Old Testament and as having an intimate connection with it? In other words, Matthew's Gospel actually was the earliest. If so the writer would of course not know that other Gospels would follow. When they did follow, their writers had no need to repeat the link with the Old Testament, which was already in existence. We shall of course discuss this question of the priority of Matthew more fully when we come to deal with the material which he has in common with Mark.

Meanwhile a few further indications point to the early date of his Gospel. In common with all the New Testament writers the synoptic evangelists take the majority of their Old Testament quotations from the Septuagint version. The proportion is least in Matthew, but even here quotations taken from the Septuagint as opposed to direct translations from Semitic texts amount to about two-thirds of all quotations. Now when a quotation from the Septuagint appears in a parallel context in one or both of the other synoptists as well as in Matthew, and when, as is usually the case, the wording of the quotation differs in the different Gospels, it is Matthew's quotation which in almost every case is nearest to the Septuagint text. Mark's quotations are less near, and Luke's least near of all. This fact suggests that Matthew's quotations are those which were originally taken from the Old Testament text, whether by copying or from memory, and that Mark's quotations are an edited version of Matthew's, Luke's again of Mark's. Let anyone examine the parallel quotations and judge of the effect on his mind. This does not amount to proof, but it is suggestive and indicative.

The Olivet discourse, often referred to as the Little Apocalypse (Matt. 24-25), provides further indications. The phenomenon of the \*quotations is marked in it. The discourse is more of a unity in Matthew's account, and a culmination is supplied by the judgement scene at the end, absent in the other synoptists. Again it is Matthew's version of this discourse, not the Marcan or Lucan versions, which forms the background of some of the eschatological statements of the apostle Paul in the Thessalonian epistles, which are among the earliest of the apostle's writings. It thus appears that the first Gospel may have been written some fifteen years after Pentecost.

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\*It must be remembered that the original Sept. text of the Book of Daniel is not that which appears in the printed versions, but that represented by the copy once in the Palazzo Chigi at Rome, and (since 1931) by the portions of Daniel in the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri.

Here and there again the text of Matthew gives the impression of breaking new ground. The methodical arrangement may perhaps imply this. The same impression seems to be given in a case such as Matthew's description of the incident of the call of the disciples (4 : 18-22). He does not introduce the two pairs by name as is the case in the parallel passage in the second Gospel (Mark 1 : 16, 19). He refers to each pair as *δύο ἀδελφούς*, *two brothers* (ver. 18, 21). This suggests that his account is the earlier, introducing the incident to the public for the first time.

There are two points in the text of Matthew's Gospel which appear at first to suggest the very opposite of an early date for its appearance. The time-phrase with which the evangelist opens chapter 3 is peculiar to him, and it is not easy to visualise its standpoint: "In those days". The events now to be described took place some thirty years after those of which the story had just been told. To cover events taking place thirty years apart by the expression, "In those days", purely as a mark of time, must indicate a long interval between the events and the description, perhaps two or three generations. But there is another explanation. The intervention of a crisis or series of critical events of such force as to appear to change the world causes anyone passing through them to lump together the whole past in which he or his parents once moved as a single whole in contrast with the present. Elderly people today speak of the whole Victorian age and the years immediately following it up to 1914 in the same way, while many who are not elderly speak of the years from 1919 to 1939 similarly.

In the case of our evangelist a crisis greater than any other in the world's history had supervened upon the events which he was describing. After his association with the Lord, the passion, the resurrection and Pentecost, the period which was normal to him in his childhood and youth, even if it extended to within ten years of his writing, would be naturally referred to by him in this way.

The second point is to be found in the language of 27 : 15. This implies that the custom of releasing a prisoner at the Passover had ceased by the time that the Gospel was written. This can of course be taken to indicate that the Gospel was written long after the events that it records took place. But this need not be the case. There appears to be very little, if any, evidence outside the Gospels of this custom of releasing a prisoner. Per-

haps it was devised and practised by Pilate alone. If so, this would account for the past tense used by the evangelist in describing it, even if he wrote only some ten or fifteen years after the crucifixion.

#### PLACE OF PUBLICATION

There are various indications in the Gospel which point to Jerusalem as the place where the evangelist was when he wrote his Gospel, and where the readers were whom he intended first to read it. The way in which Jerusalem is introduced in 2 : 1 suggests, but does not prove, that the author was there as he wrote.

We may notice also the use by the first evangelist of the word *ἀνεχώρησεν* to describe the Lord's withdrawal to Galilee. It gives a strong, though perhaps not conclusive, impression that the writer is speaking from a point outside Galilee. The second evangelist gives quite definitely the opposite impression, while the word used by the third is neutral. Matthew's use of the word would be natural if he was writing in Jerusalem and addressing himself primarily to the inhabitants of that city.

Again it is noticeable that Matthew speaks in 9 : 26, 31 of the district surrounding Capernaum as if it were a foreign land. While this would be the case if the Gospel had been written a generation or two later away from Palestine, it is equally compatible with publication in Jerusalem designed primarily for the people of the capital.

Matthew deals in considerable detail with the deliberations of the priests and elders, which he describes after the Lord's prediction of His coming crucifixion (26 : 3-5). The naming of the place of meeting would be natural in Jerusalem. The introduction of the high priest's personal name need not mean that the Gospel was written many years after his death for people who had never heard of him. He may only be named to distinguish him from Annas (see John 18 : 13).

The evangelist's information about the Lord's trial before Pilate may well have come from one of the priests or officials who afterwards became obedient to the faith (Acts 6 : 17). His informant must have been someone who saw Judas in his remorse and terror throw down his money in the temple precincts and was probably present at the deliberation which followed (27 : 3-10). This means that the evangelist must have had direct contact with the priestly circles at Jerusalem.

Information about the priests' interview with Pilate is likely to have been obtained by the evangelist from the same source as that from which he derived his account of the trial before Pilate. Matthew alone tells of the setting of the watch and of the subsequent adventures of its members. It was current talk in Jerusalem. Elsewhere the fact would have little force. Matthew may have been the only evangelist who had access to the source of information (27 : 62-66).

In his account of the arrest of the Lord (26 : 47-56) the evangelist Matthew in common with the other two synoptists fails to name the one who struck the high priest's servant, though he must have known it to have been Peter. This is natural and intelligible if his Gospel was written in Jerusalem in the early years after Pentecost. Malchus himself or his relatives would still be alive, and a disclosure of names might have had serious consequences. There was no need for concealment by the time the fourth Gospel was written and there does not appear to be any intrinsic reason for the omission by Mark and Luke. Were they not simply following Matthew ?

The story of the message from Pilate's wife is told only by Matthew (27 : 19). It must have come from someone standing near Pilate at the time and was doubtless thought by the evangelist to possess special interest for those in Jerusalem who remembered the events. Naturally it adds force to the account as a whole. Again the incidents of Pilate's washing his hands, and of the people's calling down the blood of Jesus upon their own heads, are peculiar to Matthew's Gospel (27 : 24-25). They would have a special and indeed poignant interest for the people of Jerusalem. The account of the resurrection of the sleeping saints is given by Matthew alone (ver. 52, 53), and was of course of special interest in Jerusalem where the phenomenon had occurred.

The descent of the angel and the rolling away of the stone at the time of the Lord's resurrection are facts recorded only by Matthew. They must have come originally from the members of the watch, who actually saw the occurrence and fled in terror from the angel whom they last saw seated on the stone. Again, this may have been current talk for a long time in Jerusalem. At any rate these facts soon became public in Jerusalem, and it would naturally be there that the recollection of them would tend to confirm faith in the resurrection by contrast to the shifts to which those who would not accept it were obliged to resort. The story of the watch would be of interest in Jerusalem because

it dealt with ground familiar to the readers, and most people enjoy hearing stories about things with which they are familiar (28 : 1-15).

There is perhaps some significance in the fact that when describing the ministry of John the Baptist Matthew mentions Jerusalem first (3 : 5), the order in Mark being opposite. We may again notice that in 4 : 25 Jerusalem precedes Judea in contrast to the order in Mark 3 : 7, 8. All these things perhaps indicate an emphasis upon Jerusalem.

There are further indications that the city of Jerusalem took a prominent place in the author's thought. His Gospel is the only one that refers to it as "the holy city" (4 : 5; 27 : 53). He refers either to Jerusalem as a whole or to the temple precincts as "the holy place" (24 : 15), an expression for which Mark has a circumlocution (Mark 14). Luke says bluntly "Jerusalem" (Luke 21 : 20). Matthew alone calls Jerusalem "the city of the great King" (5 : 35), and his reference to the city set on the hill would have special force with the people at Jerusalem (5 : 14). The passage about the temple and the altar (23 : 16-22), which is peculiar to this evangelist, would have special significance in Jerusalem. It is also worth noticing that Matthew alone of the evangelists in his account of the cleansing of the temple refers to it as "the temple of God" (21 : 12). This again fits in with the suggestion that he wrote in Jerusalem for the religious leaders and other inhabitants of the city who had believed.

Slighter indications pointing in the same direction may perhaps be seen in the reference to the military law of the occupying power (5 : 41), and in the occasional prominence given in the narrative to the Sadducees, who were the dominant party in Jerusalem after Pentecost. The former might be relevant anywhere in the Roman empire, but seems peculiarly applicable to Palestine. Of course it was there that the Lord uttered the words, but the point is that it is this evangelist alone who retained it as useful for his readers. The Pharisees and Sadducees are mentioned by Matthew alone in the context of the ministry of John the Baptist (3 : 7). The Sadducees are also introduced in 16 : 1, 6, 11, 12, though they are not mentioned in this connection by the other synoptists. Both these trifles confirm our suggestion that the religious leaders at Jerusalem were in the writer's mind when he produced the Gospel. What is said about them is intended either to remind those converted of what they had been, or to warn the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem against them.

## SOURCES OF THE GOSPEL

No conclusion can be reached about the sources of the first Gospel without first discussing the relationship between it and the other synoptists. There were many other things that Jesus did (John 21 : 25) which have never been recorded in writing. The material that we have in the Gospels represents a selected cross-section of this activity which is illustrative of the whole. The fact that we have in the first three Gospels so much of the same material, largely the same cross-section, proves their interdependence. If they were all writing independently of each other, they must have made different selections from the material at their disposal, as in fact the fourth evangelist did.

The prevailing view of this interdependence today is that the second Gospel, which we know as Mark, was the earliest written of the three, and that the remaining two used his Gospel and other sources of their own in the compilation of their work. There is as a matter of fact only a negligible amount of the Gospel of Mark which does not appear in varying style and form in the other two, so that it is almost certainly true to say that it is Mark which forms the link between Matthew and Luke.

The classical English work of modern times on the origins of the Gospels is *The Four Gospels* of Canon B. H. Streeter, of Queen's College, Oxford, first published in 1924, and reprinted at least twice since. Canon Streeter sums up the argument for the priority of Mark under five heads (2nd edition, 1926, pp 159-169), and strongly expresses his view of the complete finality of the conclusion (p. 164). The five points are as follows: firstly, over nine-tenths of the material of Mark appears in Matthew in an abbreviated form comprising nearly half of Matthew, yet in the overlapping material about half of the vocabulary is the same. Secondly, in vocabulary and structure of sentences Matthew and Luke are singly or together generally in agreement with Mark but never agree against him. Canon Streeter considers this conclusive proof that Mark was original. Thirdly, "the order of incidents in Mark is clearly the more original; for wherever Matthew departs from Mark's order Luke supports Mark, and whenever Luke departs from Mark, Matthew agrees with Mark" (*The Four Gospels*, 2nd ed., p. 161). Fourthly, Matthew and Luke both in their varying ways improve upon Mark's language, which appears to be conversational. Matthew and Luke turn it into literature. Finally, Matthew and Luke combine the Marcan material with other sources in different ways. Matthew fits other matter into

a framework formed by the Marcan material. Luke starts with another framework into which he fits the matter that he takes from Mark.

There is no dispute over the relationship of Luke to Mark that is outlined above, and there is no dispute over the facts as they appear in the Gospels. It seems however that the same facts, in so far as they apply to the relationship of Matthew and Mark, are capable of the opposite interpretation. Let us look at Canon Streeter's five heads again. Firstly, the extent of the identical vocabulary in Matthew and Mark clearly proves that one† took from the other. True, the narrative portions of the common material (most of it, that is to say) are almost always briefer in Matthew than in Mark. But where Mark includes teaching or discourses, such as the parables or the Little Apocalypse, he is generally shorter than Matthew. On the same reasoning Mark boiled down the discourses of Matthew. Again Mark's Gospel contains about half of Matthew's material. Why may we not suppose that Mark produced his own shorter Gospel by editing Matthew?

The difficulty seems to lie in the length and fulness of Mark's narrative portions. Is this not explained by the fact that, as we shall see, he had been for long engaged in teaching the material orally to catechumens and those newly converted? He was also in close touch with the apostle Peter, from whom he had heard the stories. He therefore selects such material as he requires for his purpose from Matthew's Gospel, but tells it in the style and manner to which he had long been accustomed.

The facts brought out in Canon Streeter's second point would be equally satisfactorily explained if Mark took his material from Matthew and Luke later took his Marcan material from Mark. As a matter of fact there are a considerable number of places where Luke borrows Matthew's and not Mark's vocabulary. He used both Gospels. In the arrangement of the account of the Baptist's ministry, for example, Luke agrees with Matthew against Mark. The same may be said of Canon Streeter's third point. The departure of Matthew from Mark's order means that Mark altered Matthew's order. As Luke takes from Mark, he naturally follows him. Luke himself sometimes alters the order, but as he is taking from Mark, he naturally never agrees with Matthew

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†We need not consider the possibility of both taking from an earlier document, for which Canon Streeter does not contend.



against Mark. He might sometimes have an independent order, and in fact taking his Gospel as a whole, we find that he not infrequently has. Moreover in Matt. 9:18 we find Matthew's chronology correct as against that of Mark and Luke.

Fourthly, the improvement by both Matthew and Luke of Mark's style is a matter of judgment. The style of each differs. We have already remarked on Matthew's curt business-like style and accounted for it from the personality and occupation of the writer. Is this style an "improvement" upon Mark's? All would not agree that the conversational dramatic story of the miracles appearing in Mark does not give a more vivid impression of what happened and rouse the emotions more than the abstract supplied by Matthew. In the same way Luke writes in his own more elegant style.

Canon Streeter's fifth point is again consistent with Mark's editing of Matthew. There is no dispute over what he says about Luke. If his judgment of the respective purposes of Matthew and Luke had been reversed, his own conclusion on the priority of Mark would have been final. As it is, the facts seem open to the interpretation which we have put upon them.

We have to remember that the prevalent judgment of scholars upon the relationship of the synoptic Gospels, including that of Canon Streeter, is based upon the phenomena they exhibit as literary documents only. Their nature as historical documents is ignored. In fact Canon Streeter accepts only a partial historicity. To ignore such indications as we have tried to give above of the authorship of the first Gospel, or to overlook the need for accounting for the transmission of the facts, seems to leave out much that ought to be taken into account in assessing the relationship of the authorship of the synoptists. If Matthew were the author of the first Gospel, he was an eyewitness of much of what he wrote. If he was an eyewitness, it is unreasonable to suppose that he depended upon Mark. Eyewitnesses are mentioned by Luke in his preface among those who had produced written accounts of the facts. It is unlikely that neither of the two Gospels that were already in existence when Luke wrote, being of such a quality that they have survived till today and are likely to live while the world lasts, is among those to which he referred. At least one of the two is therefore likely to have been written by an eyewitness.

There is a further consideration. Identity of vocabulary in many places proves the dependence of one Gospel upon another.

But the selection of material may well have taken place long before the Gospels were written. It was the custom from the first to give instruction to those who were seeking baptism, and it may very well be that the selection of the material which was later incorporated in the written Gospels was drawn up by the apostles as early as the days immediately following Pentecost as being appropriate for teaching to new converts, whether before or after baptism. Indeed there is evidence that the Lord Himself, even before His death, took certain steps in the direction of such a selection (Matt 26 : 13, Mark 14 : 9). Again it may have been to such an early compilation that Papias refers when he says that Matthew compiled τὰ λόγια in Aramaic. Matthew may have been entrusted with the task.

The teaching must generally have been given orally, and we must remember that eastern and ancient memories were extremely tenacious as compared with ours. In this connection it is interesting to find that when Barnabas and Saul set out on their first missionary journey, they took with them John Mark as their "minister". The word translated "minister" in the original is *ὑπηρέτης*, which appears to have been the technical term for the official attached to each synagogue who gave oral instruction to the young. This implies that Mark accompanied the apostles in the capacity of catechist or instructor, who taught the converts by rote the facts about the Lord, which he himself carried in his own head.

This fact accounts for Mark's vivid style. He was not an eyewitness. He had obtained the facts from an eyewitness, probably the apostle Peter, who was a familiar visitor in his mother's house. When, years afterwards, he came to write down what he had been teaching orally for so long, what more natural than that he should use the Gospel of Matthew in which the incidents which he intended to relate, being part of the original selection, had for some years appeared in the published account of an eyewitness?

The above suggestions cannot be conclusively proved. Comparison of the parallel texts of Matthew and Mark reveals a medley of likenesses and of differences of varying degree and extent so tantalising, that unless other features are taken into consideration it seems impossible to decide with certainty how much of the text of one is dependent upon the other and how much either is independent. The degree of dependence differs and varies throughout. Would this not be the expected result, if we were to conceive of Mark using Matthew's written Gospel as an aid in

the compilation of a work substantially based on his own oral teaching ?

Both Gospels are anonymous. No question directly affecting inspiration arises if we prefer to regard Matthew as dependent on Mark. We may solve a literary problem in this way, but we do not touch the question of the source of the information. Mark was not an eyewitness. In taking into consideration such evidence, slight as it may be, that points to the apostle Matthew as the actual author of the first Gospel and that indicates an early date, we are able to see in the author of the earliest Gospel an actual eyewitness of the majority of what he narrates, and we thus have a firmer foundation for the facts than much modern scholarship has allowed itself. Our evidence is supported by a tradition that was not seriously challenged in the church between the second and the nineteenth centuries.

If we are right in the conclusions that we have reached about the author and date of Matthew's Gospel—conclusions admittedly contrary to the prevalent theory of today, but more agreeable to the documents taken at their face value, and not inconsistent with common sense—it is obvious that the first Gospel was the main written source of the second. While in Mark there are many additions to Matthew in detail, there is little substantial addition. The stories, especially the miracle stories, are told with fuller outline, but the framework is substantially Matthew's.

As well as additions to Matthew's text there are re-arrangements, abbreviations and omissions. Where the narratives are parallel, there are both similarities and differences, tantalisingly mingled and effectively preventing any dogmatic precision in estimating the extent to which Mark was dependent. Meanwhile there is one generalisation that we can cautiously suggest. It is this. Passages in which the similarity is most evident, that is to say, in which the appearance in Mark of sentences or phrases taken verbatim, or almost so, from Matthew are most obvious, are with scarcely an exception passages which we find to be related by Matthew as an eyewitness, or derived from information likely to have been supplied by the immediate entourage of disciples. On the other hand almost all those passages in Matthew where facts are told of which he was not an eyewitness appear in Mark, if they appear at all, either re-arranged in the telling, or told in words that do not follow Matthew's phraseology so closely, or show an extra vividness in the telling, or are abbreviated, or show additions. These include passages where the information

may be thought of as public knowledge, the passion narratives, the temptation, and the account of the death of John the Baptist. Of course there are many eyewitness passages included in these in addition.

If we add further passages in which Matthew has been re-arranged, abbreviated or added to, we shall account for nearly all the non-eye-witness sections. Take for instance the few passages where there is marked abbreviation of Matthew. They are in two classes, incidents and discourses. The incidents are as follows: the baptism (Mark 1 : 9-11; Matt. 3 : 13-17); the temptation (Mark 1 : 12, 13; Matt. 4 : 1-11); the arrest (Mark 14 : 43-50; Matt. 26 : 47-56); trial before Pilate (Mark 15 : 6-15; Matt. 27 : 15-26); the events at the crucifixion (Mark 15 : 38, 39; Matt. 27 : 51-54). All these incidents but one are from non-eye-witness sections of Matthew. The discourses are abbreviated in accordance with the general plan of Mark's work.

If we can accept such a division as actually representing differences in the extent to which Mark followed Matthew's language, then we may tentatively suggest that Mark was aware that Matthew was an eye-witness. He would have been further aware of those facts of Matthew's Gospel which depended upon the writer's first-hand evidence, and on the whole took pains to follow it more closely in phraseology. On the other hand he was rather freer with those parts of the narrative that were derived from public knowledge or from sources outside the apostolic circle.

Matthew's Gospel thus lay before Mark.

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Rev. A. M. STIBBS) said : I am sure you would like me to begin by thanking Dr. Atkinson for his valuable contribution to this particular study, for it is a subject on which such attention to detail and such intensiveness of mind as Dr. Atkinson brings, and has given, to its study, are particularly welcome ; and that applies, perhaps, most of all to the last section of the paper about the sources of the Gospel, and the relationship of St. Matthew to the other two Synoptics. For we live in a day in which the predominant theory so holds sway that very few ever give any alternative serious and adequate thought ; and, therefore, the fact that Dr. Atkinson has given serious attention to, and seen in the evidences ground for setting out a reasoned case for, an entirely

different theory is something which is to be welcomed in the pursuit of truth and in the right use of study and of learning.

Dr. Atkinson's contribution is the more important because this particular Gospel—the first Gospel—has been severely criticised in the last few decades, in what I should regard as a very extreme and unfair way, as to its historical reliability; and, therefore, a serious hypothesis of this kind, which puts it further back in writing, and makes its statements more authoritative as direct testimony from an eyewitness, is the more welcome and to be valued.

One knows that a similar case for the priority of Matthew's Gospel has been made by Roman Catholic writers, but their contribution has been suspected of special pleading to support their own ecclesiastical position; and, therefore, it is welcome to have a contribution from one who cannot be suspected of motives of that kind.

As far as my own reaction to this paper is concerned, I feel that its detailed argument does demand considerably more attention, by examining the texts of the Gospels themselves, before one can come to an adequate considered judgment. The measure of my reaction so far is that I am more persuaded now in the light of this paper to treat Matthew as possibly more independent of Mark and Luke than the predominant theory would allow. I was somewhat disappointed that no reference was made to the hypothetical document "Q"; for one would greatly like to know Dr. Atkinson's considered attitude to this hypothesis, and whether he thinks such a document existed.

I was interested by what seemed to be implied in one of Dr. Atkinson's suggestions that it was possible that Matthew began to write down not only the sayings of our Lord very early, which modern scholarship has stated as a possibility, but also that he started to write very early a written record of incidents. One would like to see that idea developed a little further; it might alter one's attitude to the synoptic problem very considerably.

On the question of authorship and date, I felt that some of the points made by Dr. Atkinson might support the idea that the gospel is more like the work of a converted rabbi than a converted publican. One wonders a little how a converted publican could adapt himself to Jewish ideas and prejudices in the way here suggested. As far

as I have any suggestions along that line, it seems to me possible to suppose that Matthew's treatment of his material had been influenced by evangelism among that particular kind of audience; and if he had done that evangelising together with Peter, such personal connection with Peter, first on the part of Matthew and later on the part of Mark, may explain some of the very close similarity between their written gospels.

I would like, therefore, to say how much I appreciate the potential significance of some of the thoughts which Dr. Atkinson's paper stimulates; and now leave the meeting open to you for some contributions.

Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT said: It is a good thing for accepted beliefs to be challenged from time to time, and Dr. Atkinson has certainly given a powerful exposition of what would normally be called the old-fashioned view. His purpose has been to vindicate the Matthaean authorship of the first Gospel, but I believe that this can still be done on the four-document hypothesis.

The *logia* in the Hebrew (Aramaic) tongue that Papias ascribes to Matthew may well be "Q," and it is possible that much of the first Gospel peculiar to Matthew (M) also belongs to "Q." We may imagine Matthew working particularly among the Jewish Christians in Palestine, and compiling for them a record of those teachings of Jesus Christ that had a special interest for them.

Eusebius suggests that Matthew later extended his ministry and had wider contacts with Greek-speaking peoples. He would naturally translate his *logia* into Greek for their benefit and Luke may well have used this translated version.

About this time Matthew received a copy of Mark, in which the outline of Christ's ministry was set out with far more narrative than he himself had used in his *logia*. Mark's Gospel was more than simply one man's story of Christ. It represented the *kerygma* of the early Christian Church and had the additional imprimatur of Peter himself. In these circumstances, it would be natural for Matthew, even though he himself had been an eyewitness, to use Mark as the framework of a fuller Gospel. A few years ago I did a similar thing when writing the history of a college with which I had been personally associated. I took the annual reports of the college activity as a basis on which to work, and wove into them facts that I remembered from personal experience.

With Matthew we may believe that originality was not so important as accuracy. Yet, with the privilege of an eyewitness, he employed a certain freedom. Thus, he did not always observe Mark's chronological order, but preferred a greater measure of arrangement by topics. Moreover, he had no hesitation in making some minor changes in Mark's version by way of amplification (e.g., 20 : 30 ; 21 : 1-7).

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. F. F. BRUCE wrote : The Gospel of Matthew presents more problems in respect of authorship, purpose and life-setting, possibly than any of the other three Gospels, and certainly than either of the other two Synoptics.

Dr. Atkinson has therefore earned our gratitude by drawing our attention to certain aspects of this Gospel, which must be allowed due weight in trying to solve some of these problems. If, after reading his paper, I remain a believer in the priority of Mark, that does not detract from my appreciation of Dr. Atkinson's arguments.

Certainly the hypothesis of a simple dependence of Matthew on Mark is inadequate. The relation is more complicated. In *Christ in the Gospels* (1930), p. 20, B. S. Easton points out that, whereas Matt. 24 is dependent on Mark 13, "Matt. 10 contains elements earlier than Mark 13 ; similarly, the mission charge in Matt. 10 is partly more primitive than the parallel in Mark 6. The result is, of course, a problem of great complexity that certainly will always defy final solution ; but we should not forget that the problem exists."

Two books on the subject, later than Streeter's, should be referred to : B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (1931), and G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (1946).<sup>\*</sup> The Clarendon Bible volume on Matthew, by F. W. Green (1936), is largely a popularisation of Bacon's work. Professor Kilpatrick suggests that a study of the relations between Jews and Christians between A.D. 70 and 132 will throw light on the life-setting of this Gospel. As he proposes to undertake such a study himself, we await his findings with interest.

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<sup>\*</sup> A more recent work, and one which approaches more closely to Dr. Atkinson's position, is *The Originality of St. Matthew* by Dom B. C. Butler (Cambridge, 1951).

Mr. L. D. FORD wrote : It is some relief to see so able a pen as Dr. Atkinson's turning the tables on the modern scholars, and by their own arguments showing that St. Matthew's Gospel might have been the first written (instead of St. Mark's Gospel, as commonly considered the first). As St. Matthew, was a chosen Apostle from the beginning, he would hardly need to turn to one who was not even there for his matter, if his writing was of such a kind as to need documentary helps. But whence comes all this "rummaging" in things which surely are here for our learning of what Jesus did and taught and that we might worship as we learn, and learn as we read? I think we greatly err in our present generation by seeking to do to the Scriptures the very thing that the Scriptures do to us. They are advertised to us as being "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword," dividing asunder soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4 : 12). They (by God's power) penetrate the spirit of man and reveal all things to him, showing him his sin and bringing him into the consciousness that he is thoroughly known by God. *They* are critical (*κριτικός*) : but modern scholars say, "We are critical." *They* judge of man and all his works. Modern scholarship says, "We judge of *them* and all *their* works."

Whilst appreciating the intentions of our learned contributor, which is to hold at bay the wolves of "higher criticism" (as I judge), perhaps the day will come again when these inquisitions into how the Scripture came will be a thing of the past and men will humbly return to the traditional attitude of the Church of receiving the Scriptures as being God's word, and thus above all assessment as ordinary writings—which they are not.

Lt.-Col. L. MERSON DAVIES wrote : This is a most valuable paper, whose conclusion is well worth noting ; for Modernists, denying our Lord's Virgin Birth, insist on the priority of Mark's Gospel when arguing that the first Christians knew nothing about such a Birth, the very idea of which came later. Another plea to similar effect is that only two of the four Gospels talk of the Virgin Birth.

I would therefore stress what I have long held to indicate Matthew's authorship of the first Gospel, that he gives what is clearly Joseph's account of our Lord's Birth. Obviously, the circumstances of that Birth were too delicate a subject for either Joseph or Mary



to tell to all; and whom would Joseph select for his confidence if not the most legally trained person among our Lord's disciples? For tax-gatherers were not only business men, as Dr. Atkinson rightly emphasises, but they also had to know the law, on which their revenue claims were based. Many of them might be "rascally lawyers," but lawyers of a sort they had to be. Hence (I hold) Joseph's approach to this one among our Lord's most intimate followers.

And to whom would Mary—woman-like—speak on this subject but to a doctor? So it is significantly Luke, "the beloved physician" (Col. 4: 14), who gives what is essentially, from first to last, Mary's account of that unique Birth. All Christians should note that both the third Gospel and Acts are packed with medical terms and notes which prove their *medical* authorship, and are unlike the terms, etc., used by the other three evangelists, even when describing the same events. See, *e.g.*, Inter-Varsity Paper No. 4, *A Doctor looks at the Bible*, by the late D. M. Blair, Regius Professor of Anatomy in the University of Glasgow, being his Presidential Address at the Inter-Varsity Conference in 1936; also the monumental work by W. K. Hobart on *The Medical Language of St. Luke* (Longmans Green & Co., 1882), to which Professor Blair referred as long ago proving Luke's authorship in unanswerable manner.

Dr. Atkinson's paper shows that Matthew's Gospel was also written by a technically trained man, although of a different type. And each man learns, and records, the facts as one of his kind would. Joseph apparently died before the Crucifixion, but what proof is there that he died before Matthew's call? And how, in that case, did Matthew acquire Joseph's details regarding his personal visions (Matt. 1: 20; 2: 13, 19) and reactions?

It is notable that while Matthew only traces our Lord's genealogy back to Abraham, Luke traces it back to Adam. Here we surely get another characteristic difference between the Jewish legalistic and the medical humanistic outlooks of these two complementary testifiers to the Virgin Birth.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I am most grateful to my Chairman and to the other gentlemen.

who have made comments on my paper, which I half suspected would come in for rougher weather than has actually been the case.

I see the force of Mr. Stibbs' remark about the "converted rabbi." It seems to me to strengthen the view that the Gospel, or the underlying substance of it, appeared very early, when the Gospel was being preached only or mainly to Jews.

The comments both of Mr. Stibbs and of Mr. J. Stafford Wright demand some expression of my opinion about the existence of Q. Here I will be cautious. I think it likely that Q existed, but I cannot say that I feel this to be proved beyond doubt. To the statement of Mr. Wright as a whole I feel I could, broadly speaking, subscribe. I should feel quite satisfied with it as a statement of the origin of the first Gospel.

I agree with Mr. Bruce that the relation between Matthew and Mark, indeed, between all the synoptists, is much more complicated than that of simple dependence the one upon the other. I should, however, very much doubt the dependence of Matt. 24 upon Mark 13. The opposite seems to me more probable. I should also feel that a study of the years 70 to 132 was a study of a period too late to affect the first Gospel at all.

I agree with the substance of Mr. L. D. Ford's remarks, but I think no aspect of reverent study of the Scriptures can do otherwise than help us to see something of the wonder of inspiration.

There is only one question for me to answer in Col. Merson Davies' remarks. He asks how Matthew received information from Joseph, if the latter died before Matthew's call. I believe that he received it from James, the Lord's brother, after he became leader of the church in Jerusalem.

## 902ND ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE LECTURE HALL OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 69, GREAT PETER STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 21ST MAY, 1951.

ERNEST WHITE, ESQ., M.B., B.S., IN THE CHAIR

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.  
The CHAIRMAN then delivered the Annual Address on "The New Materialism."

### ANNUAL ADDRESS

*Delivered before the Fellows, Members and Associates of the Victoria Institute on Monday, May 21st, 1951.*

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#### THE NEW MATERIALISM.

BY ERNEST WHITE, ESQ., M.B., B.S.

IT must be difficult, or even impossible, for the younger members of the present generation to realise the amazing revolution in ways of life, and the profound changes in basic conceptions of the universe around us, which have come about since the dawn of the present century. As those of us who are getting on in years look back on the world as it was in our childhood, and compare it with the world of to-day, we realise the amazing transformation which has come about.

We remember the security and peace of the late Victorian and early Edwardian era, the days when motor cars were almost unknown, radio was unheard of, and aeroplanes were dreams of the future; days when men envisaged the coming of the millennium by the peaceful evolution of civilization. The discoveries of the great scientific giants of the nineteenth century, the all-inclusive materialistic philosophy of men like Herbert Spencer and Haeckel, overwhelmed men's minds with the immense conception of the universal reign of Natural Law. The doctrine of Evolution was widely accepted, and it seemed as though men had reached the topmost pinnacle of intellectual achievement. The Universe was pictured as an immense and somewhat complicated machine, consisting of a very definite and solid basis called Matter, and another very definite, but immaterial factor called Force, or Energy. Apart from Matter and Energy we had another phenomenon called Life, which could be explained by chemical and physical processes. The Darwinian theory accounted for the development of life upward from the primitive cell right through all its manifestations until it reached its highest expression in man. Man in his turn would develop still further along evolutionary lines, until the super-man appeared. It

seemed almost possible that super-man was already on the way. Had not man formulated a completely satisfactory explanation of the Universe, and had he not so skilfully directed his own affairs, that wars had given place to arbitration? Democracy was triumphant, and men waited with confident expectation the full daylight and splendour of the New Age now dawning. The Christian conception of God was scarcely necessary. It might be necessary to postulate a First Cause, but once the Universe had been started upon its vast evolutionary career, everything took place according to eternal, immutable and universal Natural Laws. If God existed, He had no part in the Universe which He had created. Deprived of all personality and of all attributes except that of a problematical First Cause, He became an almost mythical abstraction, and could be left out of account in the thoughts and affairs of mankind.

Even Christian thought was rocked to its foundations, not only by the attack of revolutionary scientific hypotheses from without, but in addition by serious undermining and disruptive processes from within.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, destructive Biblical criticism, with its alleged assured results of scholarship, led men to lose faith in the Bible. Throughout the centuries of the Christian era the Bible had been regarded as the authoritative revelation and Word of God. Now men began to take a different view. It seemed that the Bible was no longer to be regarded as the revelation of God to men, but rather to be considered as a collection of human documents, in which might be discerned the quest of man for God. The history of the Old Testament was torn to shreds, and scarcely a single book of the New Testament was allowed to have been written by its traditional author. Extreme higher critical views found their way into our theological colleges, and from thence to the pulpits of every branch of the Christian Church.

Amid the flood of materialism and scepticism there were those who stood fast, and upheld the Christian faith, planting their feet firmly on the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture. Amongst those who remained faithful to the Christian tradition were the members of the Victoria Institute, and to-day, eighty-three years after the founding of the Institute, we may look back with satisfaction, and with thankfulness to an unbroken witness to the truth of the Bible as God's revelation to man. It is not that this Institute has closed its mind or shut its eyes to the rapid advance

of knowledge. We may reasonably claim, as we survey the contributions of the last few years, that the Victoria Institute has kept up to date. It has kept pace with modern advances in the various branches of science, seeking to examine them carefully in the light of the truths revealed in the Bible.

The materialistic theories of the late nineteenth century suffered rude shocks with the dawn of the present century. The complacency of the late Victorian era, and the external appearances of security and peace, were shaken and overturned.

The huge convulsions of the two World Wars of 1914 and 1939 destroyed the high hopes founded on a belief in the peaceful evolution of human society. Civilization, so painfully built up through the years, was revealed as a thin veneer covering savage and destructive forces which, in their eruption, threatened completely to overwhelm and submerge the fair hopes and prospects indulged in by previous generations. Nor is the threat removed to-day. Civilization, not yet entirely destroyed, stands trembling on the edge of an abyss of destruction, men's hearts are failing them for fear of the catastrophe which might be precipitated at any moment.

In quite other and different ways the ideas of thinking men have undergone a profound change in the last fifty years. In two main directions revolutionary discoveries have led to entirely new conceptions of the material universe, and have brought about a fresh assessment of human personality. These new ideas may be traced back to two lines of research, both set in motion by workers in the respective fields of physics and psychology. Many names might be mentioned, but perhaps Madame Curie in Paris, and Freud in Vienna, may be taken as outstanding figures in the vanguard of the multitude of scientific workers who have changed the whole outlook of the scientific world.

Madame Curie's researches with radium and radio-activity opened the road to a series of new discoveries concerning the structure of the atom, and the nature of matter. From the time of Leucippus and Democritus, Greek philosophers of the fifth century before Christ, and the first known originators of the atomic theory, down to the time of the atomic theories of the nineteenth century of the Christian era, atoms were considered to be minute solid particles, indivisible and indestructible. Recent discoveries have completely superseded this theory, and the atom has been demonstrated to be a complicated structure of protons, electrons, and neutrons. Without dipping further into

the fascinating world thus opened up, it will suffice to observe that the modern hypotheses of the nature of matter and of energy have assumed cosmological importance. The new discoveries in physics, combined with the researches of astronomers and mathematicians, have presented us with fresh conceptions of the structure of the Universe, and of the nature of space and time, very different from the scientific ideas held by men of science fifty years ago. In reading accounts of the new hypotheses it seems sometimes as though matter, which had hitherto appeared so solid, dissolves beneath our astonished gaze into intangible electrical charges, or into mathematical formulae. In turn, the Author of the Universe, if acknowledged at all, has become a Super-Mathematician instead of a Super-Architect or Mechanician.

The latest hypothesis of the Universe does away altogether with the idea of an original creation. We are now presented with a theory of continuous creation, a creation without a Creator. Incidentally it may be noted that Hoyle, the popular exponent of the continuous creation theory, goes out of his way to pour scorn upon the Christian belief in immortality.

If we turn to the realm of psychology, which deals with the nature of man, the researches of Freud and his followers tend to dethrone the intellect of man, and to trace the sources of human conduct to deeper and more primitive elements hidden in the depths of the unconscious Id, and emerging in instinctive and emotional forces activating human behaviour.

Certain psychologists have recently taken a more sinister and materialistic direction. Following on the work of Pavlov on conditional reflexes, the behaviourist school arose in the United States, Watson being its pioneer and earliest exponent. This school by-passes consciousness, and ignores mind, and seeks to explain the whole of human behaviour in terms of reflexes based on the structure of the central nervous system. In 1949 Ryle of Oxford produced a book entitled *The Concept of Mind*, which might well be regarded as an attempt at a philosophical description of human conduct along behaviourist lines. He too denies the necessity of any conception of mind or spirit apart from the material body. He professes to lay the ghost unnecessarily introduced into the centre of human personality. Man is a material being and nothing more.

The materialist conception of psychology is influencing more and more, and to an alarming extent, the treatment of sufferers from nervous and mental disorders. Instead of attempting to

discover the causes of conflict within the mind, and trying to help the patient to solve them, the tendency is to resort more and more to physical treatment. With some psychiatrists Electrical Convulsive Therapy is becoming increasingly the treatment of choice. If this treatment fails to achieve its purpose, the patient is liable to be subjected to the mutilating operation of Leucotomy, an operation which permanently alters the personality, and whose effects are irreversible. No doubt these, and other physical methods of treatment, have their legitimate application in certain carefully selected cases, but they are being employed almost indiscriminately for large numbers of people with all types of neurotic or psychotic symptoms.

Other psychologists, including Leuba, Freud, Cattell and Flügel, have regarded God and immortality as illusions. Some writers, realising the necessity of some sort of religion, have proposed a religion of humanity. A vague conception, the Spirit of Humanity, somewhat akin to Emerson's Oversoul, is to be the object of devotion and veneration. When psychologists depart from their proper sphere, and express opinions about philosophy and religion, they betray the same divergencies of belief or unbelief as might be found in any cross-section of educated and intelligent people. One finds in the literature many shades of opinion. At one end of the scale are those who hold a purely materialistic conception, and at the other end a few, less in number than some of us would wish, who accept the Christian view. In between these extremes we find many who accept a spiritual interpretation of a kind, but reject the Christian doctrine.

If we turn for a moment from science to political philosophy, we are faced with the world-wide expansion of Communism.

This movement appears to infuse its disciples with all the zeal and fanaticism hitherto associated with religious movements, in spite of the fact that it is essentially materialistic and atheistic in character.

It leaves the spiritual and psychological forces lying behind the history of mankind entirely out of account, and substitutes for them a blind, deterministic theory of economic and class causes behind historic events. Individual liberties and rights are completely ignored, and a soulless society is conceived, rolling on like a great juggernaut, destroying all who dare to oppose its onward march. In such a society God and religion

have no place, and the human liberties for which men have fought and suffered, and even died, are ruthlessly crushed under foot.

Since the days of the infant church, when it was threatened by the overwhelming might of the pagan Roman Empire, there has been no greater threat to the Christian ideal than that of the spread of Communism in the world to-day.

The materialism of the nineteenth century formed a fairly consistent body of doctrine, with clear cut theories, and definite dogmas. It was founded upon the Reign of Law, the doctrine of evolution, and a mechanical view of the Universe. As we have seen, many of the hypotheses upon which materialism rested have been torn to shreds by the revolutionary discoveries of the last fifty years, and the ground upon which the materialist stood has been blown sky high. This does not mean, however, that materialism does not exist any longer, or that there has been any large movement of thought in the direction of the truths of Christianity. Unfortunately the present situation in England and in other civilized countries is far otherwise. The difficulty, as it now exists, is that materialism, no longer presenting a consistent and homogeneous body of doctrine, has assumed multiple and confused forms. It becomes increasingly difficult to discover any particular school of thought which one could label as materialism. The new materialism is like a poison infecting the springs of many streams of modern thought. Before examining some of the particular channels followed by the water from these poisoned springs, let us consider briefly one feature apparent in modern thought and frequently remarked upon by more than one author and speaker. I refer to the confusion of ideas seen on every hand. The vast flow of new ideas, the catastrophic changes in the world since 1914, the apprehensions bred in men's minds by the destructive uses to which modern scientific discoveries may be put at any moment in the near future, have combined to produce fear and confusion on every hand. To this fear and confusion has been added a deep pessimistic note. Men tremble for the future of civilization. A horrid nightmare of man bringing about his own destruction, and of the reduction of the civilized world to dust and ashes, haunts men's waking thoughts.

If we look away for a moment from the specialized sphere of the scientist to the educated or semi-educated man in the street, we find often enough a kind of bewilderment and uncertainty. It can hardly be called a positive materialism, but it is closely allied



to materialism in so far as God is left out of account. Seven out of ten of our population enter no place of worship. Too often the homes of the people are Godless, and in them the Bible is a closed book. On every hand we hear of the amazing ignorance of the Bible shown by the youth of this generation. Earlier generations who attended Sunday School and Church, and had some sort of Bible instruction in the day schools, obtained at least a superficial knowledge of Bible stories and of Christian teaching. In the last few years all this has been changed. We have growing up in this England of ours a semi-pagan population, devoid of all religious faith.

It has been truly said that man is essentially religious. He needs religion, he needs God. Much of the restlessness and uncertainty of to-day may be attributed to this shedding of the old beliefs. Men drift upon a sea of doubt and fear, rudderless, anchorless, and with no chart to give them their position, to indicate the direction of their drift, or to direct them to any approach to a safe haven. "Without hope and without God in the world" is an apt description of tens of thousands of our fellow-countrymen to-day.

Looked at from another point of view, the minds of men of this generation are full of a great question mark. Has life any meaning and, if so, what is it? Whither are we going, and what is the significance of the vast Universe in which we find ourselves? These are questions being asked, and too often finding no answer—old questions in a new setting.

In his introduction to *Portrait of Socrates* Sir R. W. Livingstone well sums up the unrest of the present generation. He compares the intellectual unrest of fifth-century Athens with the unrest of to-day, and then continues :

"The settled orthodoxy of the early Victorians, in religion, politics, morals, is no more. They received their opinions from their parents, as if they were inalienable heirlooms. To-day the entail is broken and the heirlooms gone, and in their place is apt to accumulate a strange medley of miscellaneous beliefs—something heard in a play or read in a novel or in the review of a book, the opinions of a novelist on Immortality or of the *Daily Express* on Free love—till the mind is like a dusty bandbox, full of stray ideas, and when you open it, it is a mere accident what happens to be on top.

How salutary if these opinions were submitted to the cold searching analysis of the Socratic technique.

But he [Socrates] has not been reincarnated in our generation, and one of its tragedies is that when it needed a Socrates it got a Shaw."

While fully agreeing with Livingstone about the need for clarification of thought, many of us believe this generation needs also to turn to a greater than Socrates, to One Who claimed that He was the Truth.

Turning from the man in the street to the scientific world we find the same confusion and uncertainty. The scientist of to-day is not so dogmatic as his predecessors of the nineteenth century, but we may frequently detect the same opposition to revealed religion, howbeit expressed in different form.

In the realm of psychology, Freud, writing about twenty-five years ago, describes religion as the universal obsessional neurosis of mankind. In the same essay, entitled *The Future of an Illusion*, his thesis is that the idea of God and immortality are illusions to be discarded as knowledge advances. He admits the value of religion in unifying human societies, but maintains that it represents a stage in development, and that it should be left behind as the human race moves on toward maturity. Much more recently, about four years ago, a book appeared by Professor Flügel, of University College, London, entitled *Man, Morals and Society*, in which the author enlarges upon the views of religion put forward by Freud, and emphasises the necessity for scientifically minded people to abandon belief in God and immortality. He also takes the pessimistic view that no answer can be found to the riddle of the Universe, and men must be content to progress without the consolations of religion. Man is to find his satisfaction in drawing nearer to his fellow men, and in trying to make the world a better place for his children and descendants.

A more spiritual attitude is taken up by the followers of the Jungian school, but, on the whole, they reject the Christian revelation, and take refuge in vague statements about the need of man for a religious basis. No definite basis is offered, but at least the door is left open for a more definite religious faith.

The *Gestalt* school ignores religion, and deals chiefly with man in his material environment. The extreme materialistic position is taken up by the behaviourist school. This has found wide acceptance in the United States of America, but is less popular in this country.

From the purely material and scientific point of view, all these and other schools of psychology are contributing much valuable knowledge, and it is unfortunate that so many psychologists are either hostile to Christianity, or take up a neutral attitude. There are, however, some notable exceptions.

In passing, I would point out the need for a unifying philosophy of psychology. The different schools are not necessarily contradictory. Each is providing new lines of research from different angles, and establishing new facts bearing on human personality and behaviour. Unfortunately each school of psychology is producing a crop of new words, many of which are not clearly defined. In addition, one finds that different authors attach different meanings to the same words, and this does not make for clarity of thought.

There is an urgent need for workers of high intelligence, and trained in philosophy and logic, who would set themselves to two main tasks. The first task would be to clarify and define terms at present in use, and the second, perhaps a much greater task, to undertake a synthetic and constructive philosophy which would bring unity into the present diversity of thought. Such synthetic and definitive tasks are sorely needed over the whole range of modern thought, and in every branch of modern science.

I do not find myself qualified to deal with the materialistic tendencies emerging in other lines of scientific thought. It emerges here and there in broadcast talks on the wireless, and in popular scientific books. There has hardly been time yet to assess the philosophic and religious implication of the newest cosmological theories, but one's first reactions are rather in the direction of the opinion that these theories leave no room for the Creator of heaven and earth revealed in the Bible. Some of the leaders of modern thought in this country appear to be either frankly hostile to Christianity, or mildly agnostic.

It is as true to-day as it was when the words were written nineteen centuries ago that "the world by wisdom knew not God"; and there comes to mind the question asked at a still more ancient date, "Canst thou by searching find out God?"

If this generation needs a Socrates to clarify its thought, and to bring order and unity out of the confusion and bewilderment which abound, it still more needs to return to faith in God and His revealed Word.

In this address I have tried to bring before you some of the problems which confront us to-day. In science and philosophy,

as in the political arena, this is an age of revolution and confusion. The Victoria Institute has a unique function to fulfil in examining these trends of thought in the light of God's revelation as it is given to us in the Bible and in the Word made flesh. This is no unworthy task, but it is also a task of great magnitude. We need the prayers and the co-operation of all our present Fellows and Members in striving towards accomplishment. We need also (and we should extend a welcome to) men and women engaged in any branch of philosophical and scientific work who would be willing to throw in their lot with us and help us in the furtherance of our aims and objects.

We do not need to take up an apologetic attitude toward the world for the faith which we hold, nor do we believe that faith should be divorced from reason. We believe that all truth comes from God, whether it be found in science, philosophy, or in Scripture.

We are not to be carried away by every new hypothesis that comes along, nor are we to be dismayed by apparent contradictions between science and the Bible. It should rather be our task and our privilege to hold our minds open to the truth from whatever source it may come and wherever it is to be found, with the firm assurance and unshakable conviction that Truth, although it has many facets, is essentially one great Unity.