

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

JOURNAL OF THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

VOL. LXXXIV

1952

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

VOL. LXXXIV

1952



LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY

THE INSTITUTE, 21, LOWER BELGRAVE STREET, WESTMINSTER,
S.W.1.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

PAST PRESIDENTS.

- 1865-1886.—The Right Hon. The EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, K.G.
 1886-1903.—Sir GEORGE GABRIEL STOKES, BART., D.C.L., F.R.S.
 1903-1921.—The Right Hon. The EARL OF HALSBURY, P.C., F.R.S.
 1921-1923.—The Very Rev. H. WACE, M.A., D.D., Dean of Canterbury.
 1927-1941.—Sir AMBROSE FLEMING, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.
 1941-1946.—Sir CHARLES MARSTON, F.S.A.
 1946-1952.—Sir FREDERIC G. KENYON, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.LITT., LL.D., F.B.A.

OFFICERS AND COUNCIL.

*President.**Vice-Presidents.*

- The Rev. Principal H. S. CURR, M.A., B.D., B.LITT., PH.D.
 The Rt. Rev. H. R. GOUGH, O.B.E., T.D., M.A., H.C.F. (Bishop of Barking).
 Professor MALCOLM GUTHRIE, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.R.S.M.
 Professor A. RENDLE SHOBT, M.D., B.S., B.Sc., F.R.C.S.

Trustees.

- ERNEST WHITE, M.B., B.S.
 F. F. STUNT, LL.B.
 E. J. G. TITTERINGTON, M.B.E., M.A.

*The Council (Limited to twenty-four Members).
 In order of original election.*

- DOUGLAS DEWAR, B.A., F.Z.S.
 W. E. LESLIE.
 PERCY O. RUOFF.
 ROBT. E. D. CLARK, M.A., Ph.D.
 ERNEST WHITE, M.B., B.S. (*Chairman of Council*)
 Rev. C. T. COOK.
 Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT, M.A.
 E. J. G. TITTERINGTON, M.B.E., M.A.
 R. J. C. HARRIS, A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D.
 F. F. STUNT, LL.B.
 W. E. FILMER, B.A., F.Z.S.
 D. J. WISEMAN, O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C.
 F. F. BRUCE, M.A.
 Lt.-Col. W. LEON DALE, M.B.E., B.Sc., F.R.G.S.
 A. H. BOULTON, LL.B.

Honorary Officers.

- F. F. STUNT, LL.B., *Treasurer.*
 E. J. G. TITTERINGTON, M.B.E., M.A., *Secretary.*
 F. F. BRUCE, M.A., *Editor.*

Auditor.

- G. METCALFE COLLIER, *Incorporated Accountant.*

Assistant Secretary.

- Mrs. W. R. OWEN.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR, 1951	vii
THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 26TH MAY, 1952	xiii
SIR FREDERIC G. KENYON, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.Litt., LL.D., F.B.A.	xv
GOD IN HISTORY. By Dr. FRANCIS RUE STEELE	1
<i>Discussion.</i> —D. J. Wiseman, O.B.E., M.A., Gordon E. Barnes, M.A., Ph.D.	16
<i>Communications.</i> —Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A., R. E. D. Clark, M.A., Ph.D., B. B. Knopp, A.I.B., Lt.-Col. L. Merson Davies, M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.G.S., F.R.S.E., Mr. Saggs	18
THE PLACE OF MIRACLE IN MODERN THOUGHT AND KNOWLEDGE. By Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT, M.A.	27
<i>Discussion.</i> —A. H. Boulton, LL.B., Dr. Stokes, Rev. C. T. Cook	48
<i>Communications.</i> —R. E. D. Clark M.A., Ph.D., E. H. Betts, B.Sc., E. J. G. Titterington, M.B.E., M.A., Rev. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead	50
MODERN NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP AND PSYCHOLOGY IN REGARD TO THE MIRACLES OF HEALING. By Rev. JOHN CROWLESMITH	55
<i>Discussion.</i> —Ernest White, M.B., B.S., B. C. Martin, A.C.I.I.	74
<i>Communication.</i> —E. H. Betts, B.Sc.	76
RELIGION AND THE GOSPEL. By Rev. JAKÓB JOCZ, Ph.D.	79
<i>Discussion.</i> —Rev. C. T. Cook, B. C. Martin, A.C.I.I.	100
<i>Communications.</i> —R. T. Lovelock, A.M.I.E.E., Douglas Geary	103
THE AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION. By the Very Rev. W. R. MATTHEWS, K.C.V.O., D.D., D.Litt	109
<i>Discussion.</i> —Rev. Prof. E. O. James, M.A., D.Litt., Ph.D., D.D., F.S.A., Rev. C. T. Cook, P. O. Ruoff	123
<i>Communications.</i> —E. H. Betts, B.Sc., F. F. Bruce, M.A.	127
THE LIMITATIONS OF NATURAL THEOLOGY. By R. T. LOVELOCK, A.M.I.E.E.	131
<i>Discussion.</i> —Ernest White, M.B., B.S., B. C. Martin, A.C.I.I., E. J. G. Titterington, M.B.E., M.A., W. E. Filmer, B.A., F.Z.S.	149
<i>Communications.</i> —F. F. Bruce, M.A., Rev. H. Townsend, M.A., D.D., Douglas Dewar, B.A., F.Z.S., Lt.-Col. L. Merson Davies, M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.G.S., F.R.S.E.	154

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS—TOWARDS A PERSPECTIVE. By Rev. BLEDDYN J. ROBERTS, M.A., B.D.	163
<i>Discussion.</i> —F. F. Bruce, M.A., Rev. H. L. Ellison, B.A., B.D., D. J. Wiseman, O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C., W. E. Filmer, B.A., F.Z.S.	180
ANNUAL ADDRESS: THE CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE. By Rev. Principa F. CAWLEY, B.A., B.D., Ph.D.	187
FELLOWS, MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES ELECTED DURING 1951-52	196
CONTENTS OF THE LAST EIGHT VOLUMES	199

**** 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

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 1951

READ AT THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MAY 26TH, 1952.

1. *Progress of the Institute.*

The Council presents to the Fellows, Members, and Associates the Eighty-fifth Annual Report, together with a Balance Sheet and Statement of Income and Expenditure, and renders thanks to God for the continuation of the work of the Institute.

There has been some reduction in membership during the year. This may be attributed to two causes. Firstly, the increase of the annual subscription of Fellows and Members led to a number of resignations on financial grounds. Secondly, a scrutiny of the lists showed that a number of Fellows and Members were in arrears with subscriptions. Reminders were sent out to all defaulting subscribers, and the names of Fellows and Members who failed to make good the arrears were removed from the list.

Owing to notice of termination of lease by the National Club, the Council was obliged to find new premises for the Offices of the Institute. A three years' lease has been taken of office accommodation at 21, Lower Belgrave Street, Westminster.

A change of Assistant Secretary has taken place since the last Meeting. Mr. T. Wilson, who served the Council faithfully for several years, has been replaced by Mrs. Owen, who is proving herself efficient and capable.

The Council is seriously concerned about the financial position of the Institute. The greatly increased cost of printing, and the increase in rent, are proving a great strain on our resources. A further difficulty has been that the printing of Transactions has fallen into arrear, with the result that two volumes had to be printed in one year in order to bring the issue of the Transactions up to date.

The result of these necessary increases in payments has been a considerable excess of expenditure over income. This state of affairs obviously cannot continue indefinitely.

The Council is seeking to devise means by which expenditure may be reduced, but it is felt that the best solution to the problem would be an increase in membership.

Fellows and Members are urged to co-operate by making the work of the Institute more widely known, and by introducing new members.

Also, it would reduce office work, and greatly help if subscriptions were sent in more promptly at the commencement of each year.

The Council wishes to express thanks to all those who contributed papers during the past session, and to those who contributed to the discussions. Suggestions of Authors and of subjects for papers will be welcomed.

The Council also asks for the prayers of the Fellows and Members or the successful continuation of the work of the Institute, and that guidance may be given to the members of the Council in all decisions made by them in the future.

2. *Meetings.*

Seven Ordinary Meetings were held during the year, in addition to the Annual General Meeting and Annual Address. The papers published were:—

“Progressive Revelation,” by Rev. Principal H. S. CURR, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D.

Rev. C. T. Cook in the Chair.

“The Place of Miracle in Modern Thought and Knowledge,” by A. H. BOULTON, Esq., LL.B.

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

“A Preface to Biblical Psychology,” by ERNEST WHITE, Esq., M.B., B.S.

Rev. Canon A. St. J. Thorpe, M.A., L.Th., in the Chair.

“The Supposed Evidence for Re-incarnation,” by Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT, M.A.

Rev. Canon Marcus Knight, B.D., B.A., S.T.M., F.K.C., in the Chair.

“Continuous Creation,” by Professor W. H. MCCREA, M.A., Ph.D.

Professor Herbert Dingle, D.Sc., A.R.C.S., in the Chair.

“Prophecy and Psychological Research,” by R. E. D. CLARK, Esq., M.A., Ph.D.

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

“The Composition of St. Matthew’s Gospel,” by B. F. C. ATKINSON, Esq., M.A., Ph.D.

Rev. Alan M. Stibbs, M.A., in the Chair.

Annual Address—“The New Materialism,” by ERNEST WHITE, Esq., M.B., B.S.

3. Council and Officers.

The following is a list of the Council and Officers for the year 1951 :—

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.
Wilson E. Leslie, Esq.	E. J. G. Titterington Esq., M.B.E., M.A.
Percy O. Ruoff, Esq.	R. J. C. Harris, Esq., A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D.
Robert E. D. Clark, Esq., M.A., Ph.D.	F. F. Stunt, Esq., LL.B.
Rev. C. T. Cook.	W. E. Filmer, Esq., B.A., F.Z.S.
Ernest White, Esq., M.B., B.S. (Chairman of Council).	D, J. Wiseman, Esq., O.B.E., M.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.

G. Metcalfe Collier, Esq., *Incorporated Accountant*.

Assistant Secretary.

Theodore I. Wilson, Esq. (to 31st August).
Mrs. W. R. Owen (from 1st September).

4. Election of Officers.

In accordance with the Rules the following Members of the Council retire by rotation : Rev. C. T. Cook ; Douglas Dewar, Esq., B.A., F.Z.S. ; W. E. Filmer, Esq., B.A., F.Z.S. ; and P. O. Ruoff, Esq., who offer (and are nominated by the Council) for re-election.

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

5. *Obituary.*

The Council regrets to announce the following deaths :—

Rev. Pres. Emeritus C. C. Ellis, Ph.D., D.D.; Rev. E. H. Hadwen, L.Th., B.D.; Rev. E. E. Ingham; F. Junkison, Esq.; Rev. R. R. Neill, M.A.; Lt.-Col. P. W. O'Gorman, C.M.G., M.D., M.R.C.P.; Miss Oke.

6. *New Fellows, Members and Associates.*

The following are the names of new Fellows, Members and Associates elected in 1951 :—

FELLOWS : Capt. W. R. Carlile, R.E.; Rev. Herman B. Centz; Rev. A. F. Glasser, C.E., B.D.; Rev. C. A. Noad; Rev. A. J. Richardson, O.C.F., F.L.C.Th.; Rev. D. J. Smyth, S.T.D., LL.D.; Rev. S. H. Sutherland, A.B., Th.B., D.D., LL.D.; W. R. Thompson, Esq., F.R.S., F.R.S.(Canada); R. S. Timberlake, Esq.; Rev. C. A. Turner, D.P.A., F.S.S.; D. R. Woodley, Esq., F.R.S.A.

MEMBERS : D. B. Allbrook, Esq., M.B., B.S. (on transfer from Associate); J. D. C. Anderson, Esq. (on transfer from Fellow); J. D. Bales, Esq., B.A., M.A., Ph.D.; Rev. A. L. Blomerley; D. G. Brown, Esq.; J. O. Buswell, Esq.; Rev. W. F. Chandler, M.A.; R. R. Gibson, Esq.; F. P. Preston Goddard, Esq., M.A.; C. W. Haigh, Esq., M.A. (on transfer from Associate); R. E. Harlow, Esq., Ph.D.; J. S. Henderson, Esq.; Rev. P. B. Hill, A.B., B.D., D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.; G. H. Johnson, Esq.; Rev. A. Kimmorley, A.C.T., Th.L.; A. W. Langford, Esq., M.A., B.Ch., M.D., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. (on transfer from Fellow); I. G. Mackay, Esq., B.Sc.; Alan R. Patrick, Esq.; Lt.-Col. A. N. Skinner, M.V.O. (on transfer from Fellow); Miss Joyce van Straubenzee (on transfer from Fellow); Gordon W. Thomas, Esq., B.A., M.D., C.M. (on transfer from Associate); R. H. Wood, Esq., Ph.D., B.Sc., A.M.I.C.E., A.M.I.Mech.E.

ASSOCIATES : John Brown, Esq.; A. G. E. East, Esq.; Charles Hartley, Esq.; M.A., M.B., B.Ch. (on transfer from Member); D. H. Jones, Esq.; John A. Mikaelson, Esq.; Siew-Kheng Oh, Esq.; Colin E. Southee, Esq.; G. D. Vinden, Esq.; J. S. Westmuckett, Esq.

7. *Membership.*

Life Fellows	...	...	...	22
Annual Fellows	...	...	...	155
Life Members	...	...	...	33
Annual Members	...	...	...	235
Associates	...	...	...	70
Library Associates	...	...	...	56
Total Nominal Membership				571

8. *Donations.*

D. A. Burgess, Esq., £1; Mrs. Scott Challice, 10s.; Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, £1 1s.; W. E. Filmer, Esq., £35; Rev. Matthew Francis, £6; W. E. Leslie, Esq., 9s. 6d.; J. McGavin, Esq., 7s.; J. B. Nicholson, Esq., £5 5s.; Siew, Kheng Oh, Esq., 5s.; A. E. Preece, Esq., £1 1s.; D. Prismall, Esq., 9s. 6d.; Rev. G. A. Scott, 11s. 6d.; R. S. Timberlake, Esq., 4s.; E. L. Ward-Petley, Esq., 11s. 6d.; D. Whitney, Esq., 7s.; Miscellaneous, 4s. 6d. Total: £53 6s. 6d.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1951

EXPENDITURE.

1950		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
£	To PAPERS, LECTURES, ETC. :—						
824	Printing	833	2	6			
15	Hire of Halls	16	0	6			
					849	3	0
	ADMINISTRATION :—						
210	Salaries and National Insurance	248	13	7			
100	Officers' expenses, travel and sub-						
	sistence	71	14	11			
192	Rent and outgoings of office						
	premises	244	5	9			
68	Postages	49	7	2			
84	Stationery and other office inciden-						
	tals	93	16	1			
7	Audit fee	7	7	0			
—	Removal and incidental expenses						
	(net)	26	11	0			
—	Miscellaneous items	21	1	8			
					762	17	2
<u>£1,500</u>					<u>£1,612</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>

INCOME.

1950		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
£	By ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS :—						
347	Fellows	458	9	6			
373	Members	480	2	9			
37	Associates	40	8	6			
							979 0 9
	„ LIFE SUBSCRIPTIONS :—						
45	Proportion for the year						31 1 3
180	Sales of publications						136 7 7
	„ DONATIONS :—						
21	Casual	26	13	6			
—	Covenanted (gross)	63	12	9			
							90 6 3
13	„ INTEREST FROM " CRAIG " MEMORIAL						
	FUND						13 3
2	„ SUNDRIES						15 10
1,018	„ EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER						1,265 9 2
482	INCOME						346 11 0
<u>£1,500</u>							<u>£1,612 0 2</u>

PRIZE FUND.

		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
	To PRIZES AWARDED :—						
	Schofield Trust				42	0	0
	„ AMOUNTS IN HAND, 31st Dec., 1951 :—						
	Gunning Trust	101	17	9			
	Langhorne Orchard Trust	70	16	0			
	Schofield Trust	24	6	11			
					197	0	8
					<u>£239</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>

		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
	By AMOUNTS IN HAND AT 1st JAN., 1951 :—						
	Gunning Trust	78	5	0			
	Langhorne Orchard Trust	61	14	0			
	Schofield Memorial	56	17	7			
							196 16 7
	„ INCOME :—						
	Gunning Trust	23	12	9			
	Langhorne Orchard Trust	9	2	0			
	Schofield Trust	9	9	4			
							42 4 1
					<u>£239</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 1951

LIABILITIES.

1950		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
£	GENERAL FUND :—						
	PREPAID SUBSCRIPTIONS :—						
32	Fellows	46	15	1			
23	Members	26	8	3			
1	Associates	6	5	6			
					79	8	10
	LOAN :—				210	0	0
	SUNDRY CREDITORS :—						
41	Expenses	11	19	9			
7	Audit Fee	7	7	0			
764	Printing	801	18	3			
					821	5	0
485	Cash overdrawn, General Fund				555	12	3
					1,666	6	1
1,353							
	SPECIAL FUNDS :—						
694	Life Compositions Fund	705	5	0			
508	Gunning Trust	508	0	0			
200	Langhorne Orchard Trust	200	0	0			
220	Schofield Memorial Trust	220	0	0			
400	Craig Memorial Trust	400	0	0			
197	Prize Fund	197	0	8			
					2,230	5	8
		£3,896	11	9			
		£3,572					

ASSETS.

1950		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
£	GENERAL FUND :—						
	SUBSCRIPTIONS IN ARREAR :—						
41	Fellows	74	11	7			
55	Members	76	16	6			
7	Associates	17	7	0			
					168	15	1
—	Office Equipment						22 6 0
168	Sundry debtors						40 19 2
	DEFICIT ON GENERAL FUND :—						
600	As at 1st January, 1951 (adjusted)	1,087	14	10			
482	Add Deficit for year 1951	346	11	0			
					1,434	5	10
1,353							1,666 6 1
	SPECIAL FUNDS :—						
694	Life Compositions Fund, Cash	705	5	0			
508	Gunning Trust, £673 3½ per cent. Conversion Stock at cost	508	0	0			
200	Langhorne Orchard Trust, £258 18s. 3½ per cent. Conversion Stock at cost	200	0	0			
220	Schofield Memorial Trust, £378 14s. 6d. 2½ per cent. Consol at cost	220	0	0			
400	Craig Memorial Trust, £376 7s. 4d. 3½ per cent. War Stock at cost	400	0	0			
197	Prize Fund, Cash	197	0	8			
					2,230	5	8
		£3,896	11	9			
		£3,572					

We have audited the accounts of which the foregoing is the Balance Sheet and have obtained all the information and explanations which we have required. Stocks of publications are held which do not appear in the Balance Sheet, subject to this, in our opinion the Balance Sheet shows a true and fair view of the affairs of the Victoria Institute, and is correct according to the books and records of the Institute, and the information and explanations given to us.

199, Piccadilly, London, W.1.
9th May, 1952.

(Signed) METCALFE COLLIER,
Incorporated Accountant.
METCALFE COLLIER, HAYWARD AND BLAKE.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE
VICTORIA INSTITUTE

WAS HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, AT
5.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, MAY 26TH, 1952.

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

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on May 21st, 1951, were read, confirmed and signed.

The Report of the Council and Statement of Accounts for 1951, having been circulated, were taken as read.

The Chairman then moved the *First Resolution*, as follows:—

“ That the Report and Statement of Accounts for the year 1951, presented by the Council, be received and adopted.”

The Resolution was seconded by Mr. TITTERINGTON, and, there being no comments or amendments, the Resolution was passed unanimously.

The Chairman then called on Mr. P. O. RUOFF to move, and Mr. W. E. FILMER 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., F.R.C.S., and the Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D. ; Honorary Treasurer, F. F. Stunt, Esq., LL.B. ; Honorary Secretary, E. J. G. Titterington, Esq., M.B.E., M.A. and Honorary Editor of Transactions, F. F. Bruce, Esq., M.A., be and hereby are, re-elected to their offices. Also that the election of the Bishop of Barking, the Rt. Rev. H. R. Gough, O.B.E., T.D., M.A., H.C.F., and Professor Malcolm Guthrie, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.R.S.M., Vice-Presidents, be, and hereby are, confirmed.”

There were no comments or amendments, and the Resolution was passed unanimously.

CAPT. A. L. PERRY was then called upon to move, and B. C. MARTIN, Esq., to second, the *Third Resolution*, as follows:—

“ That the Rev. C. T. Cook, Douglas Dewar, Esq., B.A.,

F.Z.S., W. E. Filmer, Esq., B.A., F.Z.S., and P. O. Ruoff, Esq., retiring members of the Council, be, and hereby are, re-elected. Also that the elections of Donald J. Wiseman, Esq., O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C., and Lt.-Col. W. Leon Dale, M.B.E., B.Sc., F.R.G.S., co-opted to fill vacancies on the Council, be, and hereby are, confirmed.

There were no comments or amendments, and this Resolution also was passed unanimously.

The Fourth Resolution,

“That G. Metcalfe Collier, Esq., Incorporated Accountant, of Messrs. Metcalfe Collier, Hayward and Blake, be, and hereby is, re-elected Auditor at a fee of seven guineas, and that he be thanked for past services,”

was moved by Dr. R. J. C. HARRIS, and seconded by P. O. RUOFF, Esq., and passed unanimously.

Mr. TITTERINGTON was then called upon to move the *Fifth Resolution*, as follows :—

“That Rule 10 of Section II of the Objects, Constitution and By-laws of the Institute, which permits the commutation of Annual Contributions to Life Contributions, be deleted, with consequential re-numbering of subsequent paragraphs ; but without prejudice to the rights of existing Life Fellows and Life Members.”

After the Mover had explained the purpose and effect of the Resolution, it was seconded by W. E. FILMER, Esq., and passed unanimously.

The Chairman then referred to the Gunning Prize for the Essay on “The Limitations of Natural Theology,” which had been awarded to R. T. LOVELOCK, Esq., A.M.I.E.E. ; but Mr. Lovelock was not present in person to receive the prize.

He then mentioned the subject for the Langhorne Orchard Prize which was being offered for an Essay on “The Causes of Modern Unbelief.”

There being no other business, the Meeting terminated.



*Sir Frederic G. Kenyon,
G.B.E., K.C.B., D.Litt., LL.D., F.B.A.
President, 1946—1952.*

SIR FREDERIC GEORGE KENYON, G.B.E., K.C.B.,
D.Litt., LL.D., F.B.A., F.S.A.

1863–1952.

(*President of the Victoria Institute, 1946–1952.*)

By the passing of Sir Frederic Kenyon on August 23rd, 1952, full of years and honours, not only the Victoria Institute but many another good cause and learned society has lost a valued friend and supporter.

Few men of our time have combined in so distinguished and happy a degree deep and exact scholarship with an understanding of the necessity for making the findings of scholarship available to non-specialists, and personal capacity for making them thus available.

Kenyon went from Winchester to New College, Oxford, in 1882, and after gaining a First Class both in Moderations and *Litteræ Humaniores*, was elected to a Fellowship at Magdalen. In 1889 he became Assistant in the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum—*felix opportunitate*, for it was by his work on the new papyrus treasures which had begun to find their way to the Museum that he first made his name in the world of scholarship. Within some eight years from his appointment he had edited Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens*, the *Mimes* of Herodas, Hyperides' oration *Against Philippides*, and the lyrics of Bacchylides. The production of these *editiones principes* brought lustre not only to Kenyon himself but to the Museum which he served. In 1898 he was promoted to be Deputy Keeper of his Department, and in 1909 he became Director and Principal Librarian of the Museum, a position which he filled with distinction until his retirement in 1930. Even after his retirement he maintained his association with the Museum: he edited for its Trustees the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri, acquired in 1931, and he played an important part in the Museum's acquisition of the Codex Sinaiticus in 1933.

The reference to these Biblical manuscripts reminds us that it was probably his work in this field that brought Kenyon's name most prominently before the Christian public of this and other lands. In 1895 he published *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, a work which presented the apparatus and findings

of Biblical textual criticism to the intelligent reader who had no expert qualifications or aspirations but desired an authoritative account of the subject which he could understand. The work was an immediate success, and was brought up to date from time to time in new editions, the latest revision being that of 1939. For the student of the Greek Bible, Kenyon provided two handbooks in the same field—*The Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (1901; 2nd edn., 1926) and *The Text of the Greek Bible*, a volume in Duckworth's theological series (1937; 2nd edn., 1949). This was his chosen field, too, when he delivered the Schweich Lectures in Biblical Archæology for 1932, *Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible*. Among his other books for the general reader may be mentioned *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome* (1932), *The Story of the Bible* (1936), *The Bible and Archæology* (1940), *The Reading of the Bible* (1944), and *The Bible and Modern Scholarship* (1948). Although he was not primarily an archæologist, his book on *The Bible and Archæology* was a remarkably successful introduction to the subject, representing the position of Biblical archæology as it stood on the eve of World War II. *The Bible and Modern Scholarship*, almost the latest work to come from his pen, was a brief review of the Bishop of Birmingham's volume on *The Rise of Christianity*, urbanely but devastatingly exposing the Bishop's "imbecility of scholarship" and his flouting of all "bibliographical probability".

Kenyon had ample scope for his desire to open the world of learning as widely as possible to the general public during his years as Director of the British Museum, and there are many who can testify to the success of his policy. He lost no opportunity of urging other learned bodies to include such worthy popularization among their aims. The last occasion on which the present writer heard him speak was at the Jubilee Dinner of the Society for Old Testament Study in January, 1950, when he exhorted the members with no little moral fervour to do all in their power to restore a reasonable and intelligent faith in the trustworthiness of Holy Scripture by making the reassuring results of modern Biblical study as widely known as possible.

It was a signal honour to the Victoria Institute when Kenyon, who had already served the British Academy and the Hellenic Society as President, accepted the invitation to become our President in 1946, in succession to the late Sir Charles Marston. He had already been elected a Life Fellow of the Institute (1939)

and a Vice-President (1943), and had read four papers before the Institute—"Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament" (*Journal of Transactions*, 65, 1933), "Ras Shamra, Mari and Atchana" (73, 1941), "Greek Manuscripts and Archæology" (75, 1943), and "The Fourth Gospel" (77, 1945). This last paper was a well-informed defence of the first-century date, apostolic authorship, and historical trustworthiness of St. John's Gospel, in which special emphasis was laid on the significance of the Rylands papyrus fragment of John 18, dated early in the second century.

As President, Sir Frederic addressed the Institute in four successive years from 1947 to 1950. The titles of his Presidential Addresses, published in the appropriate annual volumes of our *Transactions*, were "The Bible and Criticism" (1947), "New Testament Criticism To-day" (1948), "Jesus Christ or Karl Marx" (1949), and "The Institute and Biblical Criticism" (1950). In matters of Biblical criticism Kenyon himself showed how a conservative position can be completely free from obscurantism or mere traditionalism; he welcomed all rational criticism, both literary, historical and textual, while considering that many theologians, especially on the continent, had allowed themselves to go to extremes which tended to bring even sane criticism into disrepute, by following novelty instead of probability as the very guide of life. He repeatedly insisted that the Victoria Institute has a valuable service to perform in the present generation, by "claiming a position in the vanguard of progress" and bringing home to our contemporaries the sound basis on which modern scholarship has placed the authenticity and reliability of the foundation documents of the Christian faith, which record the progressive revelation of God to man, finding its consummation in Jesus Christ. This charge he has bequeathed as a sacred trust to us. But he has done more: by his own example he has shown us how to discharge it.

F. F. B.

903RD ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1. ON MONDAY,
15TH OCTOBER, 1951.

D. J. WISEMAN, Esq., O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C., IN THE CHAIR.

GOD IN HISTORY.

By DR. FRANCIS RUE STEELE.

SYNOPSIS.

Scholars have frequently attempted to trace a pattern through the course of history. Most of them have failed utterly since they either ignored or denied God as the author and controller of every fact and event in the universe. It is possible to understand the true course and purpose of history only as we see all history as the outworking of a perfect, predetermined plan in the mind of a completely sovereign God. And this information may be found in its best and only detailed form in the Scriptures given by Him. Such knowledge mediated from the Inspired Word to the human mind by the Holy Spirit permits man to find his proper place in relation to God and to play his special part in the great pageant of history as a servant and child of God.

DOES the course of history as far as we can trace it suggest any pattern or do events appear to take place haphazardly? If a pattern is at all discernible does it indicate progress or regress? The fact that some pattern at any rate is to be expected from a thorough study of history is ably set forth by Prof. William F. Albright of Johns Hopkins University. In his book *From the Stone Age to Christianity* he says, "It is not enough for the historian merely to accumulate a great mass of facts, no matter how well tested they may be as to their accuracy and how well selected with reference to their cogency and their representative character. Unless long occupation with those facts has impressed on him certain conclusions

as to the pattern which they form and the picture into which they fit, the accumulated mass will never become history.”¹ But what that pattern is constitutes a perplexing yet challenging question which appears to occupy men’s minds very much these days. Since there is a natural tendency to seek answers to present problems in past experience, men today surrounded by uncertainty and fear are anxiously looking back into history for some clue to their present predicament.

Science quite frankly assumes progress as the key to all history. Not unbroken or invariable progress, to be sure, but eventual progress in spite of frequent lapses or wrong turnings. The clearly documented course of technical progress during the past few centuries doubtless encourages this view, and inspires a transfer of the factor of progress from the technical to the biological realm. But when we approach the field of recorded human history the picture is by no means so clear. Those who look back fondly to the “golden age” apparently feel that the world has been getting steadily worse. Others who hopefully expect Utopia seem persuaded that, by and large, things are getting better. Many people, however, believe that the most one can discover from a close examination of history is a succession of cyclical ups and downs with no real progress or regress discernible. But all have failed to see the record of history in its true perspective. And this because most of the data are unknown and the only reliable clue has been ignored.

If by history we mean a record of past events selected and explained, then history *per se* must be limited to less than 5000 years, since we do not possess written records earlier than about 3000 B.C. Data from periods antedating the development of writing must be passed over as relatively inarticulate and ambiguous regarding human spiritual or psychological concepts, and hence irrelevant for our present purposes. Such a limitation is a serious but imperative one if we are to speak in terms of significant development and change in human history, since the psychological nature of man is of far greater importance than either his physical make-up or mechanical abilities. Yet we are, by that fact, strictly limited to the period of recorded history, since it is only through the communication of his thoughts and concepts by means of written records that ancient man is able to provide us with any clear insight into his mental and spiritual being. The

¹ W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1946), p. 48.

arbitrary association of technical with psychical development in human history—common to most scientific disciplines—is based upon the assumption that man's ideas and skills were alike learned one by one as a result of extensive experimentation. What clear evidence there is, however, suggests that psychologically at least man 5000 years ago was just as humane or bestial as he is today; apart, of course, from the influence of the Judæo-Christian religion as it is sometimes called. It is pure speculation which projects the theory beyond the scope of written records and posits a primitive man, totally void of any religious or æsthetic consciousness, groping his way about in a world to which he reacted by sub-human grunts and squeals until at last he reached a civilized state and began to develop his mind. Yet this concept in one guise or another forms the major premise in the theory of history for most people today; hypothetical, perhaps, but an essential prerequisite to the idea of "progress" which serves as a psychological sedative for the troubled thinkers in our present political chaos. Prof. William A. Irwin of the University of Chicago exemplifies this school of thought. In an article entitled "The Orientalist as Historian" he writes, "It is convenient to set the problem immediately in its broadest scope: Will anyone deny that modern life is better than that of our remote ancestors of Palæolithic and long anterior times?" After pointing out that considerable brutality still exists he goes on to say, "But they are not the total, if indeed they are the significant, characteristic of modern man. What of the longing for universal peace founded on right and truth which permeates all levels of society in a way never known before? What of the ever-widening sense of social responsibility which constitutes the unique contribution of Western culture to the total achievement of the ages? . . . qualities which permeate in varying measure the historic period of man's life but which, if available evidence may be trusted, were present only in embryonic forms in *Pithecanthropus*, Neanderthal man, and their descendants for tens of thousands of years? The time is long past when serious scholarship can glorify 'the noble savage'; no one whose opinion is worth considering will assert that civilized life is no better."²

On the other hand, history as the Bible explains it witnesses the divine resolution of conflict between the wilfulness of man and the will of God. A conflict which began by disobedience

² *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 8 (1949), p. 308.

in Eden, bringing a chaos of confusion, and leading to blind wilful experimentation which shall be concluded in divine judgment, restoring the universe to unity in the will of God. No secular document of history, no matter what its source, can reveal more than human attempts to steer the world this way or that with the oar of political institutions while ignoring the Pilot in control at the helm. Patterns derived from such documents can at best depict fluctuations in the present turmoil, but give no hint as to the true course and real purpose behind life much as the countless eddies along the banks of a river swirling in constantly shifting directions fail to indicate the flow of the great stream itself.

Suppose we had chanced upon a pageant being performed in the open air by a great company of actors. It is already in progress when we arrive and for some time we can make neither head nor tail of the plot. We do not know how much has transpired, who the major characters are, or what their relationship to each other is. We must deduce what we can from the isolated incident now being played before us. In these circumstances how is it possible to fathom the meaning of the pageant as a whole? However, if by some document or person we are told who the leading characters are and what the drift of the plot is, we can readily understand the present action, and perhaps gain some clue as to the eventual outcome. Viewed in these terms man stands today in the pageant of life with a role to play. Unless he is willing to accept the information and guidance of the Bible, he can never know what is going on around him, much less how to conduct himself in the part he has to play. The Bible names the principal characters and sketches the plot, giving explicit directions to every human player how he must conduct himself if he would adjust himself harmoniously to the scheme of the Author. Unless we credit the Biblical record of the activity and motives of God, man, and Satan, we cannot understand the enigma of human history. Only a clear recognition of the fact of sin and its resultant corrupting power balanced against the redemptive plan and purpose of God as set forth in the Bible will enable us to judge events aright. The confusion of mind in those who do not accept the Biblical explanation at face value is further witnessed by Prof. Irwin who writes, "Man is an incredible complex of contradictory impulses. He seems to be the most extreme of the animals, at once the most idealistic and the most brutal; the kindest and the most savage. He

aspires to realms of the spirit completely denied to his fellow-creatures, and yet none of them can sink to such depravity as he. Here is the total base for all theories of historic pluralism. And yet mankind is one, as the individual is one. And man's governing impulses may be simplified into a single statement: he wants the better."³ Granted that God's revelation of the true nature of the present predicament of man together with His solution of it alone can provide one with true perspective for and understanding of history both personal and general, this leads us directly to the fundamental question: Is the Bible trustworthy? Here is where the battle with the enemy is joined in earnest; here the most devastating and deceptive attack upon the Scriptures is launched by the "father of lies" and his disciples. They know full well that if the integrity and consequent authority of the Bible can be successfully challenged, the very foundation of Christianity will be swept away, leaving mankind floundering in a maelstrom of conflicting human opinions.

The past two centuries have witnessed increasingly bitter and insidious attacks upon the historical accuracy of the Bible. Open attack and blatant denial, however, have in recent years largely given way to persuasive rationalism and false agreement. All such positions, however, and every variation of them are characterized by a deliberate refusal to accept the Bible reverently and obediently as the inspired inerrant Word of God. Speaking generally, three groups of opponents have ranged themselves against the historic position with regard to Biblical inspiration: forthright opponents who say that the Bible cannot be totally reliable; fifth columnists who say that it is not; and faithless believers who say that it need not be. The first, the forthright opponents, confidently and flatly state that the Bible cannot be totally reliable. It is a human document, they say, and must of necessity partake of that human fallibility. This attitude clearly springs from a prior denial of the existence of God in any true sense. Once the step was taken to limit scientific investigation to the natural realm and to operate upon the principle of natural laws alone there was no place for a supernatural God or, for that matter, for a supernatural revelation, the Bible. This step was not taken, however, as a result of the compelling force of facts, but rather through an arbitrary shift in the basic philosophy underlying scientific investigation. Purely upon the basis of a philosophical premise it was decided that the super-

³ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

natural realm would no longer be admitted as a legitimate sphere of reference; hence no God, and no divine revelation. Accordingly, all we have left is a record of man's attempt to adjust himself to, and master, his environment; in the pursuit of which course he invented first magic and then religion to help him overcome his fear of the unseen and the unknown. This false premise is basic to the works of Toynbee, Sorokin, and Kroeber, to mention a few selected examples of non-Christian philosophies of history. Even after the veneer of superstition has been removed, however, there is still much that is untrustworthy in the Bible, we are told, since it arose from the undeveloped mind of ancient man with his naive and primitive concepts. Not only is such a Bible shorn of the dignity and respect which it once enjoyed; it is also virtually a fraud, since it pretends to speak with an authority which it does not have about things of which it has no knowledge.

However, much of the strength of this attack has been nullified by the results of archæological discoveries during the past half century. Presumed historical inaccuracies were confidently cited as confirmatory evidence for the far more sweeping denials, based for the most part on subjective prejudice, which were intended to destroy completely the spiritual authority of the Bible. Here, in the very arena of historical criticism where the factual assault upon the Bible was made, the tide of battle has turned. Scores of historical events recorded in the Bible have been confirmed, often in minute detail. The names of kings and generals, peoples and nations, all lost to us for centuries—apart from the Biblical record—are now known from contemporaneous monuments and records which exhibit remarkable agreement with the Hebrew text. Furthermore, innumerable details of daily life and social customs found in the Old Testament perfectly reflect the times of the events described as shown by the evidence recovered by archæological excavations. In short, the Bible put to the most rigorous test in the only realm where any scientific discipline can offer legitimate criticisms—political and social history—stands fully accredited. No *fact* found has contradicted the Word of God.⁴

The fifth columnists, in this case as usual, operate from within the ranks. Their number includes many a seminary professor as well as innumerable clergymen. It is not so much impossible

⁴ D. J. Wiseman, "Some Recent Trends in Biblical Archæology," *Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 82 (1950), pp. 1 ff.

for them to believe that the Bible is inerrant and totally reliable as it is inconvenient. Calling themselves Christians, but sounding more like Unitarians or Deists with a vague concept of divine providence, they are at the same time careful to keep one foot firmly on the ground of scientific rationalism in order to permit themselves the privilege of exercising critical judgment upon the validity of all truth, religious as well as secular. They have arrived at this philosophic position at the expense of the two major historic Christian doctrines, which deal with the person of God and the principle of revelation. It was inevitable that if the independence and autonomy of man be emphasized, that emphasis must effect a curtailing of the power and authority of a once sovereign God. The whole issue hangs on this point. If God be God in the fullest sense of the term, man, by contrast or comparison, must, in taking his proper place with reference to God, be a subordinate dependent creature. Final authority and absolute truth must repose in God alone. Therefore, as a direct corollary, not only can there be no absolute standard known to man apart from that communicated to him by God, but also it is incumbent upon God thus to communicate knowledge of Himself and His will to His intelligent creatures; hence the imperative need for a direct divine revelation. On the other hand, if one proceeds upon the basic supposition that man can and must exercise freedom of choice and action independent of supernatural interference or control, it follows that the sovereignty of God is limited, and the pre-eminent authority of the revelation thereby repudiated. Man ceases to listen, and begins to look; he does not receive but rather discovers for himself. However, such searching in matters of philosophy or religion can be carried on—as in the fields of scientific research—only in a spirit of continual scepticism towards current ideas. A healthy scepticism promotes curiosity and stimulates further investigation, which in turn may well result in the discovery of further truth; generally at the expense of contemporary ideas or else by modification of them. The attitude of scepticism is as inherent to this philosophy as it is foreign to the concept of a sovereign God who gave a special Revelation. In the latter case the Bible must be absolutely and objectively true in order to be the Revelation it professes to be. In the former case, although the Bible may contain more useful ideas than any other religious book, it cannot contain absolute truth, and hence cannot speak with absolute authority.

It is interesting to note that Prof. Herbert Butterfield, of Cambridge University, in his recent book *Christianity and History*, betrays this fundamental weakness every time he touches upon the question of sources and authority for Biblical facts and statements. In discussing the development of religious ideas among the Hebrews in his introduction, Butterfield uses such words as "realize," "apprehend," "search," and "discover," to describe the method whereby the Hebrew writers got their ideas. He further states with regard to the control of Providence, "It is better worldly-wisdom, even when we are only looking for a pictorial representation, to think of history as though an intelligence were moving over the story, taking its bearings afresh after everything men do, and making its decisions as it goes along—decisions sometimes unpredictable and carrying our purposes further than we wanted them to go. There is no symbolic representation that will do justice to history save the composer I have already mentioned, who composes the music as we go along, and, when we slip into aberrations, switches his course in order to make the best of everything."⁵ And this remarkable statement is included in a chapter entitled "God in History." It is well-nigh impossible to conceive of a representation less qualified to describe a Creator God and His relationship to His universe than this.

Speaking of the authors of the New Testament books, Butterfield generously grants that "the Gospel narrative gives us something authentic on which to build"⁶; but adds later on with regard to their concern for accuracy in composition: "such men may be so interested in the essential points—and particularly in the moral issues—that they do not greatly concern themselves about the question whether an event happened on Wednesday or on Friday, in Birmingham or in Bristol."⁷

Throughout the whole of his book one detects the idea that exceptional men in past generations gradually moulded the form of their theology or philosophy in accordance with the reaction of their inherent insight or native genius to their experiences and circumstances. These "prophets" who faced up to the moral issues of their day and pondered the enigma of human history, individual as well as corporate, apparently viewed the total problem in the light of a divine Providence brooding

⁵ Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History* (1950), p. 109.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

over the universe, permitting partial chance glimpses of Himself now and then, more or less at random, to those who most earnestly sought such visions. Nowhere in the book is there the slightest hint of a supreme Deity working out a preordained plan, some details of which He deliberately and purposefully divulged to specially chosen men whose duty it was to transmit this revealed information to their fellow creatures. According to the Bible, the initiative in revelation lay with God ; according to Butterfield it was up to men to do the best they could under the circumstances. In the Bible, God declares truth with finality ; Butterfield says that men speculate hopefully. Since human discovery can only provide temporary relative truth, and the Bible is—by this theory—essentially a human document, it is naturally subject to subsequent correction in all matters, theological as well as historical.

A somewhat different explanation is offered by Prof. Albright. He suggests that it was not so much a matter of unconcern or lack of control of necessary information which renders some portions of the Bible inaccessible to scientific criticism or unacceptable as historically verified, but rather that the subjects treated and the ideas expounded are of such nature that they cannot be dissected with the tools of the professional historian. In speaking of the writers of the Gospels and their historical objectivity, he says that they were men who were "overwhelmed by the profound experiences and the extreme tension of mind and body through which they had passed. Men who see the boundary between conventional experience and the transcendental world dissolving before their very eyes are not going to distinguish clearly between things seen in the plane of nature and things seen in the world of the spirit. To speak of the latter as 'hallucinations' is quite misleading, since nothing like them is otherwise known either to historians or to psychologists. Here the historian has no right to deny what he cannot disprove. He has a perfect right to unveil clear examples of charlatanism, of credulity, or of folklore, but in the presence of authentic mysteries his duty is to stop and not to attempt to cross the threshold into a world where he has no right of citizenship."⁸ Albright does not, however, explain how the historian is to distinguish an "authentic mystery" from a case of "credulity" or even of "charlatanism." If this judgment may be successfully exercised,

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 300.

it seems to me that the event would stand justified as historic or non-historic by that very decision. It is the responsibility of a historian in criticising the record of an event to determine whether it actually occurred or not; that is to say, whether it is true history or not. But surely it is not incumbent upon the humble historian to explain how the event could have taken place. In other words, if there is sufficient valid evidence for the destruction of Jericho or the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that event may be considered as verifiable history by the conscientious historian without his feeling any obligation to determine whether natural or so-called supernatural powers were involved. Of course, if the historian has previously determined in his own mind that any event which is not susceptible of explanation upon the grounds of known natural laws must be denoted as spurious or fictional, he will not be so much concerned with criticising the documentary evidence. Instead he will exercise the option to which Prof. Irwin refers when he says that "not uncommonly the Orientalist has no recourse other than to evaluate his sources on the grounds of intrinsic credibility alone."⁹ On these grounds he will reject the historicity of any supernatural event since it will be "intrinsically incredible" to him. With regard to the literal accuracy of the Gospels, Albright writes, "We can never know to just what extent details of the messianic framework of the Gospels are *literally* true. Because of their highly intimate and personal character some of them are set forever beyond the reach of the critical historian, within whose epistemological range they cannot be drawn. In other words, the historian cannot control the details of Jesus' birth and resurrection and thus has no right to pass judgment upon their historicity."¹⁰ Apparently, if the factor of supernaturalism were not involved the historian could criticize the account of the birth of Jesus in exactly the same manner as he would the birth records of any other individual who lived centuries ago. Certainly it is not the "intimate and personal character" of the event which causes a cold-blooded man of science to shy away. But we gain further insight into this strange reluctance of Albright's when we read that "Since, accordingly, there can be no factual judgment and since the historian cannot settle questions which are outside of his jurisdiction, the decision must be left to the Church and to the individual believer, who are historically warranted in

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 299.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 307.

accepting the whole of the messianic framework of the Gospels or in regarding it as partly true literally and as partly true spiritually. . . ."¹¹

I must confess I fail to understand how an event can be partly true literally and partly true spiritually. If, for example, Jesus Christ was born of a virgin that fact is true literally. If, on the other hand, Joseph was His natural father, the Biblical record is false and cannot by the wildest stretch of the imagination be described as spiritually true although literally untrue. In effect, what we appear to have here is a hybrid and unreal sort of category which might be described as "super-history." An event may not have occurred exactly as described and therefore not be literally true yet it need not be labelled fictional or non-historic since it is "spiritually true;" it belongs to "super-history." Needless to say, I cannot conceive of such an irrational and highly imaginative category, nor can I believe that it will be widely employed among historians apart from exceptional circumstances. Should the need arise for a historian to provide himself with an escape from the dilemma arising from passing judgment upon the historicity of a Biblical event whose spiritual truth he desires to retain, but whose historic circumstances—involving the incredible operation of supernatural power—are repugnant to the finer instincts of his scientific background and training, it will be quite convenient to characterize the event as super-historic, and thus retain the spiritual truth without endangering his scientific reputation. So far as truly scientific historical judgment upon a recorded event is concerned, however, a thorough historian will give one of three answers: it is verifiable and therefore true history; it is demonstrably false and therefore not true history; or there is as yet insufficient evidence to decide. To confuse a simple situation by adding a fictitious category like "super-history" is absurd.

The third group, described as the faithless believers, consists of truly Christian people who through innocent fearfulness have been misled by deceitful misrepresentation of the facts about Biblical inspiration. They may not have adopted the so-called new orthodoxy as a result of personal investigation of the theological points involved nor, for the most part, because they were persuaded by alleged facts that the Bible can no

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 308.

longer be considered as literally inspired. But largely through the cunning deceit of a concept which is presented as more intelligent or more mature, they have been told that to hold to verbal inspiration means to confine oneself to a mechanical and unimaginative theory which limits the scope and activity of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, it is suggested that the really important function of the Biblical revelation is to communicate ideas which may be experienced personally, not just words or letters which can be counted and checked impersonally. For, we are told, the chief purpose in the giving of the revelation was to acquaint sinners with the person of the Saviour, not to provide literary data for academic argument. The most serious aspect of this theory is that it is partly true; yet surely we have here a perfect example of the adage, "A half-truth is worse than a whole lie." No one will question the statement that the primary purpose of the giving of the Scriptures was to set forth the plan of God in salvation and proclaim the person and atoning work of the Redeemer. But in a written record this knowledge is inextricably bound up in the words of the text. It is impossible to separate the one from the other. The validity of the ideas is directly proportionate to the integrity of the text. It is not enough that the text be only generally true; it must be literally accurate if the ideas it conveys are to be accepted at face value. On the other hand, significant demonstrable error in a written text automatically casts serious doubt upon the reliability of the meaning of the document; a doubt which, moreover, in the nature of the spiritual truth involved in the Bible is not susceptible to subjective correction or supplementation by finite human beings. If the truth revealed in the Bible be divine eternal truth—which alone is relevant to the message and situation—then the Bible must be an objective witness to God's will, entirely independent of human influence or control. This can only be true, however, if the whole Bible is true and, moreover, entirely true.

Now then, we come to the second proposition offered by those who say that the Bible need not be totally reliable. By way of accommodating themselves to the modern attack upon the historic passages of the Bible, they have modified the generally accepted evangelical orthodox statement with regard to the inspiration of the Bible, so that it runs something like this: "we believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice; but that does not necessarily imply

that it is likewise inerrant in statements of history and science."¹² The manifest absurdity of such a position is immediately apparent. In the first place, it is contrary to the very nature of a personal self-revealing God that He give a revelation of Himself in any but a perfectly reliable and intelligible form. Moreover, it is impossible to separate the spiritual lesson or example from the historical narrative in which it is contained in order to accept the one and reject the other. It is as important to the lesson of supreme faith derived therefrom that Abraham actually climbed Mount Moriah with his son Isaac fully intending to perform a human sacrifice there at God's command, as is the fact of the empty tomb in the garden close by Calvary essential to the truth and power of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In neither case can the spiritual truth be separated from the historic event. If the incident described occurred, we can turn to the spiritual lesson or truth with absolute confidence. If not, the alleged "truth" and the fictitious event are alike obscured by the same fog of doubt.

Furthermore, it is quite wrong for the Christian to apply to the Bible the check of secular history as though the latter deserved priority in respect to authority. It is indeed strange that Christian scholars should discredit clear reasonable historic statements in Scripture upon the basis of isolated and often questionable data in secular records, as though the authors of the latter must be presumed to report truthfully without exception, while Biblical writers can easily be charged with falsification or accidental error. On the contrary, secular history must be seen in the light of Scripture and Scriptural principles if it is to be rightly understood. The Bible alone contains what God has chosen to reveal explicitly to man regarding His purpose and plan in the universe. It is only here that we have specific statements informing us that God raised up a certain king or nation to accomplish a determined purpose. No other document explains that military defeats and catastrophes befell men because they had disobeyed God. Yet without such clues we should be at a loss to explain the true meaning of history. We could simply record the fact that certain events occurred at a given time and place and let it go at that. But with the Bible as a guide to the principles of God's dealings with mankind in that it illustrates the application of these principles in specific

¹² The writer has included considerable material at this point from an article of his in the magazine *HIS* of the American IVF, June 1951.

cases, we can infer from these instances the purposes and motives involved, and use them to interpret subsequent similar events both in world history and in our own lives. Thus we make practical application of the lessons learned from the Biblical account of history. However, if the reliability of the narratives in the Biblical text is called into question or the principle of divine revelation is denied in the name of "science" we are left to our cloudy and limited imagination for answers to the question of the purpose of life and the course of history. We must accept the Bible completely, or else reject it entirely to our everlasting confusion; there is no middle ground. From the very beginning the Bible sets forth one great immutable principle; obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings punishment. This principle is implied in every recorded event and enunciated explicitly in most. The success of the campaign to occupy Canaan found in the tenth chapter of the book of Joshua is credited there to the power of God. Over and over again we read, "the Lord delivered up the Amorites . . . the Lord fought for Israel . . . the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel," etc. Likewise, the destruction of Samaria and the subsequent downfall of Israel is specifically related to the disobedience of God's people, "for the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam . . . until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight" (2 Kings 17:22). The fact that the Israelites occupied Canaan is well attested in history by the break in Canaanite culture and the new super-imposed settlements of the invaders discovered in the mounds of ancient cities dug by modern archæologists. The reason why, and the means by which, the invasion was accomplished, however, are known to us only through the Bible. Moreover, the spiritual principle—favoured obedience and punished disobedience—is illustrated in actual fact by historic instances.

If it were possible to prove, for example, that King Sennacherib reduced Jerusalem in the same ruthless fashion that swept its neighbours under the Assyrian yoke despite the Biblical account to the contrary there would be no point to the recorded promise of divine protection for a repentant king of Judah. Indeed, the whole story would be a hollow mockery, and the testimony of the Bible generally would suffer irreparable damage. Suppose, as some historians would have us believe, a small bedraggled band of Hebrews escaped from Egyptian slavery, and, wandering into Canaan, stumbled upon congenial relatives there and

gradually built up the relatively insignificant and culturally inferior kingdom of Israel more or less by accident. What conceivable meaning could there be to the magnificent and oft-repeated theme "I am the Lord your God who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage . . . to set you in the land that I swore before to your fathers to give unto you" ?

If, on the other hand, God did raise up the Chaldean monarch Nebuchadnezzar to carry Judah into captivity in punishment for their sins ; if indeed He did raise up the Persian king Cyrus later to release the captives and allow them to return to their country and rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem as God had promised, then we have cogent and compelling evidence for the Biblical premise that God is interested in, and in control of, the affairs of men. Moreover, we would be able to trace a coherent historic pattern from the Garden of Eden to the Garden of Gethsemane ; a single consistent plan, disclosed through a gradually unfolding revelation, of divine grace seeking rebellious sinners and effecting reconciliation between God and man on the cross of Calvary where God the Son bore the just punishment of God the Father for the sin of mankind. All history before and after this great event must be seen in relation to it in order to be properly understood. Consequently, the God of creation and Calvary, is at the same time the God of history and of current events, and we can detect evidence of His working even to-day in history, in prophecy, and in our daily lives.

Opponents of the Bible have told us that, on scientific grounds, it simply cannot be totally reliable ; from within the Christian camp comes the declaration that, upon thorough examination, it can be demonstrated that the Bible actually is not totally reliable ; and more and more in Christian circles everywhere to-day we hear the supposedly reassuring word that, after all, it need not be totally—that is, historically—reliable. What shall we say to these things ? Simply this : for all practical purposes the Bible must be in itself totally reliable if it is to speak with authority to human beings about eternal truth, since they are not themselves capable of exercising critical selection in this field. Furthermore, if the Bible really is the Word of God, it not only can be, but by that very token is, totally reliable ; being the special revelation of God by God to mankind. Consequently, the sincere Christian believer can go to the Bible with perfect confidence, knowing that it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17).

DISCUSSION.

The Chairman (Mr. D. J. WISEMAN) said: I know I voice your thoughts when I say that we have been listening to a most timely and thought-provoking paper. It is an honour to have with us an American scholar, for the Victoria Institute owes much to the continued support of its many loyal Fellows, Members and Associates in that country. It is interesting to recall that the last American archæologist to address us was, I believe, Professor Melvin G. Kyle who was then returning from his explorations in the Sodom (Dead Sea) area with Mr. William F. Albright in 1927. We have surpassed this achievement by having Professor Steele, a colleague of Professor Albright, to address us before he leaves for Nippur (Iraq) where he will be epigraphist for the third season and carry out his duties as Annual Professor of the American School of Archæology in Baghdad. Dr. Steele speaks as one who is well versed in literature contemporary with the earliest Biblical records.

I like the analysis of the answers which a thorough, and therefore truly scientific, historian can make when applying historical method to assaying the Biblical written history. It takes true Christian courage and humility for any scientist to say "I do not know; there is yet insufficient evidence to decide." For this reason I am grateful that Dr. Steele has emphasized the weakness of the "science" of Biblical archæology, which is largely due to a lack of concentration of evidence upon any one Biblical point. The result of failing to realize this weakness has been that some earnest Christians have, I believe, erred in the same way as some eager critics of the Bible in quoting as facts what in reality are but hypotheses, and in making these the basis of detailed arguments to support their case, and through it, their faith. By this I do not mean that there are not very many points where Holy Writ is remarkably and emphatically confirmed by archæological studies. This is to be expected where God has revealed Himself in a time and place which comes within the limited realm of knowledge yet entered by the human mind. With Dr. Steele I would say that the authority

of the Bible and its historical reliability ultimately rest outside the area of mere historical investigation.

Mr. GORDON BARNES said : Any piece of original research, whether historical, scientific, linguistic, or any other, implies certain presuppositions ; and the validity of the conclusions to which that research gives rise depends, to a very large extent, upon the validity of those presuppositions. Thus, the historian presupposes that history is a continuous process, and that events are explicable in terms of earlier events. Furthermore, he makes certain assumptions about the particular kind of relation between events ; e.g., if he is an economic historian, he seeks an explanation in terms of wealth, mineral resources, balance of trade, standard of living, etc. ; if he is interested in political history, he interprets history in terms of political factions, balance of power, national sovereignty, etc. ; if his interests lie in sociology, he conceives of causes lying in tribal customs, culture, civilizations, etc.

All of these interpretations of history may be valid as partial explanations, but whether they are or not depends upon whether the basic presuppositions are valid. A present-day problem in physics may illustrate this point. It is well known that there are two different interpretations of light, both valid as partial interpretations, the wave theory, and the corpuscular theory ; but when these theories are used to explain the phenomenon of diffraction a difficulty arises. On the basis of the wave theory, a ray of light must be regarded as taking one path through the diffraction grating, while, on the basis of the corpuscular theory, it must be viewed as taking another course. There are thus two explanations of diffraction dependent upon two different presuppositions, but these two explanations are mutually inconsistent because neither of the presuppositions is a true concept of the nature of light. Presumably, if and when the truth is known about the nature of light, it will then be possible to frame a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon of diffraction.

Now, historians are busy producing many partial explanations of history, based upon various presuppositions, but if any of those presuppositions are inconsistent with the ultimate truth of history, false (and possibly inconsistent) interpretations will result.

In the Scriptures we find, divinely revealed, the ultimate truth

concerning history. Christ said, "I am the Truth," and all human intellectual disciplines will achieve their true aim only in so far as they bear the correct relationship to the Person of Christ. History is no exception. As Creator, He is the Originator of history; as Redeemer, He is the Centre of history; and, as King of kings, He is the Consummation of history. The Old Testament consistently points forward to the death of Christ; the New Testament naturally flows from it.

We, as Christians, not only know that God is controlling all history, but we also have had revealed to us the plan to which He is working. "For God has allowed us to know the secret of His Plan, and it is this: He purposes in His sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in Heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfilment in Him." (Ephesians 1: 9-10, *Letters to Young Churches. A Translation of the New Testament Epistles*, by J. B. Phillips, Geoffrey Bles, 1947.)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT wrote: I have enjoyed Dr. Steele's paper. There are probably three main reasons why people find difficulty in accepting the entire accuracy of the Bible, even when they accept Dr. Steele's logical argument that as a revelation from God it ought to be wholly accurate.

1. They cannot believe that a high truth about God could be given suddenly, but feel bound to hold that spiritual ideas must grow gradually by a hit-and-miss process. Consequently they rewrite the Bible revelation in terms of an evolution of religious thought. But in the physical and mental spheres the indications are that great things have come in suddenly and not only by the process of evolution. J. G. Bennett in his book *What are we living for?* writes: "It is assumed that our science and technology are in every respect an advance upon anything which existed in the remote past. If this were true, it would be difficult to account for some of the achievements of prehistoric man, such as the domestication of animals and plants. At some time in the early history of mankind, this extraordinary technological achievement was realized. We depend very largely for our existence upon agricultural achievements the origin of which goes back beyond the dawn of history. With

all the progress of biological science, we have scarcely succeeded in domesticating a single animal or a single plant not known to our early ancestors. It is true that through breeding we have made great improvements, but all our accomplishments in this respect are not impressive when compared with those of what we are pleased to call 'primitive' man" (pp. 104f.)

In the mental sphere, too, great poets and painters appear suddenly. The art of the early cave paintings is as fine as anything today. Homer and Shakespeare were not the climax of a gradually improving series of poets. Hence, purely by analogy we may reason that in the spiritual realm great truths will be given suddenly and that they will appear early in the history of mankind as well as later.

2. There is a certain bias against miracles. This is again a product of our scientific age. Today, however, the rejection of miracles is less reasonable than it was. The advancing frontiers of science, and the fuller investigations of the reach of the mind, lend greater credibility to some of the Biblical records of miracles. This does not mean that we can prove that the miracles really happened, but we can no longer assert confidently that miracles are impossible. This subject has been dealt with before in this Institute, and will be dealt with again.

3. The existence of difficulties in the Bible is a great stumbling-block. Dr. Steele has rightly pointed out that a number of these difficulties have been cleared up as further evidence has come to light. It is only reasonable to point out that there are equally serious difficulties and apparent contradictions in God's other great revelation, the created universe. But no scientist will accept the fact that these difficulties and contradictions are real, in the sense that they cannot ultimately be harmonized.

There is one point in the paper on page 13, where Dr. Steele speaks about checking Biblical history by secular records. I think he has safeguarded his statements sufficiently, but those of us who believe the historical accuracy of the Bible cannot ignore secular records, even when they create difficulties for us, as they do at present over the date of the Exodus. We must try to distinguish between known historical facts, and deductions that

are drawn from those facts, and this applies to the Bible facts as well as to the facts discovered by archæology. If the records in the Bible are true, they cannot in the last resort be out of harmony with any other truth. Therefore the student of the Bible will welcome all truth, from whatever source it comes.

Dr. R. E. D. CLARK wrote: The subject of this paper is not discussed at all until we are very near to its end. For the rest, we are told repeatedly that the Bible is reliable. One such statement would have been enough. There might then have been room for the author to develop his thesis.

As it stands the thesis hardly seems convincing. God chose a people for Himself and dealt with them as a father deals with his children. This, surely, is the teaching of the Old Testament. But does the Bible bid us jump from here to the conclusion that God deals with all men as He dealt with His own people? Surely not. Yet without even arguing the case, the Lecturer assumes that this is so and he even goes further than this; for he seems to say (though ambiguously) that the principles which governed God's dealings with Israel are those which God uses in His dealings with us "in our daily lives." Such teaching, if intended without qualification is profoundly unscriptural. In dealing with Israel God rewarded godliness with earthly prosperity. That is not the promise God offers to Christians.

Some of the criticisms directed against Herbert Butterfield seem unfair. If Butterfield errs in one direction, could not an equally good case be made for saying that the Lecturer errs in the other? The reiterated theme that "in the Bible God declared truth with finality" is true, but it is also a half truth, and it is Butterfield who supplies the missing half. For God's revelations cannot be understood by all men—even the spiritually minded can only understand them partially. Words like "apprehend," "search," etc., are appropriate words with which to describe the process by which saints in all ages have seen the light.

The Lecturer is most critical of Butterfield's picture of an Almighty Intelligence who, "when we slip into aberrations, switches His course in order to make the best of everything." But Butterfield is not the first to have seen God's hand in history operating in this

way. Is not Butterfield expressing the thoughts of St. Paul in Romans? Is it not the matchless way in which God "switches His course in order to make the best of everything" that calls forth the Apostle's exultant cry: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!"?

Mr. KNOPP wrote: I should like, if I may, to welcome wholeheartedly the paper by Dr. Steele. Several statements therein are deserving of special attention and wide publicity.

The elimination of the supernatural realm, and of God Himself, as a legitimate hypothesis was due not to the compelling force of facts, but to an arbitrary shift in the basis of philosophy—in one word, to prejudice.

The tide of battle in the field of historical criticism has indeed turned. In scores of instances the critics' shout of triumph has proved premature. But, so far from acknowledging this, the predominant school of thought searches ever more feverishly for fresh openings for attack—to be driven also from these as knowledge accumulates.

The protest against exalting statements unearthed in secular records above Biblical history is especially timely. We know how dictators of our own time can falsify and have falsified history, and we have plenty of evidence to show that their brothers of the ancient world were equally guilty.

I welcome most of all the last part of the paper, in which the Author stands for the orthodox view of verbal inspiration, and protests against the loose view that the Bible, not being a scientific textbook, need not be reliable in matters of science or of fact. That the *words* of the Bible are inspired is fundamental to Christianity. The Apostle Paul bases an argument on the number of a noun in Scripture (Gal. 3: 16). But we can have no higher authority than our Lord Himself, who in one place lays great stress on the tense of a verb (Matt. 22: 32), and in another said, "The Scripture cannot be broken." There is no hint of any unreliability or the least imperfection, though he inveighed against the accretions, alterations and interpretations of the Jews. In His great contest with Satan His whole defence consists of words written in Scripture. No

believer in verbal inspiration has ever treated the words of Scripture with greater respect than Jesus did.

That the Bible is reliable where it touches matters of fact or of science is also fundamental. The reliability does not, of course, extend to the various interpretations by the Church or by men in different ages. The late Professor McNeile Dixon said, in his famous Gifford Lectures, "It is better to forget what Science said yesterday if you are to believe what she says to-day." But men cannot say this of Scripture. We may climb the foothills of truth, but the lofty peaks remain for ever impregnable to man unaided. He who formed the peaks, and who knows the "balancings of the clouds" (Job 37 : 16) miraculously inspired men to write the Scriptures. Men are slowly discovering that He also preserved them from error.

Lt. Col. L. MERSON DAVIES wrote : I heartily agree with Dr. Steele. As he says, if the Bible's historic statements are not true, then its theology falls to the ground. More than any other religion, Christianity is based upon *historic facts*, from Creation to Calvary and the empty tomb. If these are not really *historic facts*, then the Gospel of Redemption loses its basis, and we have merely a code of ethics backed by fables.

It was to meet attacks upon Bible history at their source, that I early took up the study of geology ; and now, as a D.Sc. in the same, I criticize the doctrine of organic evolution so drastically, on a basis of fossil *facts*, that the B.B.C. (who had asked me to broadcast, as a "scientist of repute") would not, after seeing my script, allow me even 15 minutes to state those *admittedly true* facts. Yet they now allow Dr. Julian Huxley (who has no status in geology) to broadcast fact-obscuring representations in favour of evolution, for six periods of 45 minutes each—or for 18 times as long.

No wonder that the public, which is never allowed to hear both sides, does not realize that the supposed scientific case for rejecting Scripture is "science falsely so called" from the start. And, as Dr. Steele insists, archæology no more opposes Scripture than palæontology does. Sceptics used to declare that writing was unknown in Moses' day ; but we now realise, as Sayce said, that great libraries existed long before Moses was born. The very

existence of the Hittites was also formerly denied ; but it is now known that they were a great and powerful people, just as Scripture indicates. For "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet. 1 : 25) ; and it will be preserved by its Author despite all attacks by its enemies (Ps. 12 : 6-7).

Mr. SAGGS wrote : 1. Dr. Steele makes it clear that he is primarily concerned with the *course* of history : as he says " a record of past events selected and explained." This view—successive events—is appropriate to his purpose of relating these events to the field of natural science where human progress is most easily demonstrated and of making certain deductions ; but the subject *God in History* challenges us to a wider definition of history itself.

2. History is a record of human thought and action ; it is the essence of innumerable biographies ; and, as such, in the final issue, defies expression. The historian must of necessity narrate, but the events which he indicates successively may well have occurred simultaneously—as a group, not as a series. No one event is the direct offspring of another ; there are many causes which multiply and inter-relate as time goes on until the cross-section of the whole of human society at this moment is so infinitely complex in its actions and causes of action as to surpass comprehension. Indeed, of new history the most is lost without recovery for it lies in the lives of countless millions who are forgotten by man, though not by God. The true historian, then, aims at a representation of *action* which is *solid* (height, length and breadth) ; he is not content with pure narrative, which is linear. How can the wars or achievements of this or that great man, of this or that nation, be more than a single thread of progress through an immensity of experience ?

3. Is God really in history so defined ? It cannot be otherwise. " In Him we live and move and have our being." God's foreknowledge has made Him the omniscient Historian to whom the future becomes a past—to whom the lives of men are as a tale that is told—and, having foreseen the free-will actions of men, He has appointed the day of the ultimate consummation of all such action when the perfect will shall be realized.

4. A human philosophy of history seeks to establish principles on which more perfect human action may be based, and Dr. Steele

has rightly indicated that such a conception is doomed to successive failures and ultimate annihilation.

5. We question Dr. Steele's limitation of recorded history to written documents. To begin with, written records are notoriously unreliable. Carlyle points out that "History has been written with quipo-threads, with feather pictures and wampum belts; still oftener with earth mounds and monumental store-heaps, whether as pyramid or cairn; for the Celt and the Copt, the Red Man as well as the White, lives between two eternities, and warring against oblivion, he would fain unite himself in clear conscious relation, as in dim unconscious relation he is already united, with the whole Future and the whole Past."

6. Is there not in every human artifact, could we but see it, a revelation of God's eternal principle of how man's fuller nature works, of the appreciation (however dim) of God Himself, yet, ultimately, of the deliberate reversion to sin (cf. Romans I)? Whether it is the fiercely distorted African idol of to-day, or the grace of an Aphrodite of 2,000 years ago—these are expressions of history—they are records of thoughts. Whether the artist (the *historian*) is a member of a primitive or a civilized society or not, his conception of life is revealed in his work, clearly, perhaps, in the former, very obscurely in the latter.

7. Dr. Steele's paper challenges the Christian scholar in every field. These are days when the interpretation of the arts (in particular) lays increasing emphasis on the psychological aspects of human expression and experience. The critic can penetrate little beyond the conscious mind. The Christian's task surely is to demonstrate the ultimate truth of human nature and human emotion as revealed in God's Word.

8. Dare we suggest that a work still to be done by the Christian archaeologist, the Christian historian, the Christian philosopher, the Christian economist, the Christian lawyer, and so forth, is to study every example of his subject given in Holy Writ to determine those principles of behaviour and action which God has seen fit to stress? It may well be that such studies would reveal certain divine laws in the light of which secular history could be more clearly narrated, more clearly related, and more clearly interpreted. History,

in fact, would be seen in the light of divine truth. In a word, history is God.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

In reply to Dr. Clark, it was my intent to point out that, for the most part, God deals with all men upon the common basis of rewarding obedience and punishing disobedience. The significant exception is that in the mercy and grace of God "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103: 10). Nonetheless, although the Israelites, having more knowledge of God's will, were charged with greater responsibility, all men will be held accountable before God for their response to His will as they knew it.

I do not agree that such words as "search" and "discover" are appropriate to describe the means whereby men of old *received* the revelation God gave them by His initiative.

Finally, it is inconceivable to me how anyone can believe that Paul thought of God as "switching His course to make the best of everything." There is no greater apologist in the Bible for an absolutely Sovereign God than Paul, who declares that He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1: 11). (Note also Acts 2: 23.)

In reply to Mr. Saggs, the limitation of recorded history (see paragraph 5) to that period and those areas where written records exist was done purposely, since it is impossible to know the mind of man or the will of God in ancient times in the absence of documentation. Mr. Saggs appears to imply this fact in the following paragraph where he admits that such knowledge is revealed "very obscurely" in human artefacts. We can deduce from anepigraphic evidence principles and truths similar to those set forth explicitly in God's written revelation; but without the latter such deductions, lacking essential control, would be valueless.

904TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY,
26TH NOVEMBER, 1951.

A. H. BOULTON, ESQ., LL.B., IN THE CHAIR.

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

By REV. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT, M.A.
(*Being the Schofield Prize Essay, 1950.*)

SYNOPSIS.

A miracle may be defined as "an unusual action that cannot be accounted for by natural laws alone." Modern philosophical thought is not interested in miracle. Immanentist philosophers (*e.g.*, Whitehead and Tennant) tie God up too closely to the universe for Him to break in with sudden acts of power. Brightman postulates "The Given," against which God must work by "normal" means. Some modern theological thought (*e.g.*, the Modern Churchmen's Union) discounts miracle, but Alan Richardson and H. H. Farmer accept the fact that Christ worked miracles. C. S. Lewis and Sherwood Taylor argue constructively in favour of miracles. Most stress the importance of beginning with the Person of Christ, and some have started directly with the Resurrection and Virgin Birth.

Modern knowledge of the indeterminacy at the basis of physics is not really relevant to miracles. A helpful approach is by way of spiritual healings. Suggestion, hypnosis, and Rhine's P.K. experiments cannot fully explain all healings. P.K. effects may account for some modern miracles (*e.g.*, Spiritualistic phenomena) and offer a partial analogy of some Biblical miracles, though not of all (*e.g.*, the Resurrection). But the essence of miracle is that it contains something ultimately inexplicable.

THE well-known saying, "The age of miracles is past," is a reminder that we live in a scientific age. In the minds of most people who use it there is the implication that the reason why miracles no longer happen is that in point of fact they never have happened. What was once regarded as a miracle can now be given a satisfactory explanation, either through the introduction of new laws that were unknown at the time when the alleged miracle occurred, or through faulty observation on the part of the one who reported the miracle. The frontiers of

science have been pushed further and further forward, so that now it is commonly believed that ultimately every event is capable of a rational interpretation. Even an alleged miracle of the present day will ultimately be found to be an operation of the law of material cause and effect.

This is a popular view of miracle. It is the object of this essay to examine this view, and in particular to see whether more precise modern thought and knowledge support the idea that no miracles have occurred, or can occur at the present day, and that all alleged miracles in the past cannot rightly be classed as miracles at all.

A DEFINITION OF "MIRACLES."

A precise definition of "Miracle" will itself throw some light on the nature of the problem before us. The following would appear to be sufficiently accurate both in what it contains and in what it omits: "*A miracle is an unusual action that cannot be accounted for by natural laws alone.*"

Let us notice what this definition omits and what it contains.

1. It does not say "*known natural laws.*" Thus it excludes any occurrence that might appear completely inexplicable to one generation, yet that can be partially or fully understood by later generations. An example would be the so-called St. Elmo's Fire, an electrical discharge that at times appears as a tufted bluish light on the masts of ships, and elsewhere. Pliny in his *Natural History* records that the sailors invoked these lights as the visible appearance of Castor and Pollux, while Mediterranean fishermen in Christian times regarded them similarly as the sign of the protecting presence of St. Elmo. But the modern knowledge of electricity has lifted this phenomenon entirely out of the realm of the supernatural.

2. Returning to the definition, we notice that it contains the word "*unusual.*" It is perhaps a disputable point whether this word should be used or not, but its omission would extend the scope of this essay beyond what common opinion would consider to be its scope. If it were omitted, it would introduce all those events of daily life that we take for granted, even though we cannot account for them by natural laws alone.

An illustration may make this clearer, even though it concerns a situation that could not actually arise. Let us suppose that a man and wife are shipwrecked on some completely barren island, where nothing grows at all. The wrecked ship, however,

is loaded with an enormous quantity of tinned food, on which they are able to live for a number of years. If they have a child, he will grow up without any experience of plant growth. In process of time he discovers on the ship a packet of seeds. When he plants them, he sees a miracle. Something happens on the island that has never happened before. The living seeds grow into living plants.

This is the miracle of life, which, because of its constant repetition, is no longer counted as a miracle. Yet the origin of life, and the germ of life in each seed and cell, cannot be accounted for by natural laws. The search for the secret of life has continued in vain for many years now, but one cannot say that it will never be discovered. A few months ago a Russian scientist claimed to have created life, but until the details of the experiment are published, and the experiment repeated by other workers, most people will remain sceptical, in view of the unsubstantiated claims that have been made from time to time in the past.

If the origin of life should be discovered, and thus taken out of the sphere of what might be termed "miraculous," the present trend of opinion suggests that it might be found in the viruses. This and other theories were discussed and criticised by Dr. R. J. C. Harris in his paper before the Victoria Institute in 1949 on "The Origin of Life."

But even if the viruses should prove to be the bridge between inanimate and animate matter, the problem of the ultimate origin of the material universe still remains beyond the range of accountability by natural laws. From the purely scientific standpoint it seems as though this unbridged gap must always remain. A scientist is unable to start with Nothing, and from it produce Something. Even if, like Fred Hoyle in his broadcast talks and book, *The Nature of the Universe*, he postulates a continuous creation, with hydrogen atoms emerging continually, and life spontaneously appearing wherever conditions in the universe permit, the problem of ultimate origin is not necessarily solved. Moreover the theory of continuous creation is no more than a theory, and Hoyle's view has been strongly criticised by Professor Dingle both in a review of his book in *Nature* and over the radio.

It would be beside the point here to discuss the philosophical approach to the doctrine of Continuous Creation, as it is expressed, for example, by Dr. W. R. Matthews in *Studies in*

Christian Philosophy and Professor E. S. Brightman in *A Philosophy of Religion*, since neither of these philosophers is concerned with any explanation of the origin of matter in non-miraculous terms. The same is true of Eastern and mystical views which maintain the eternity of the universe and hold that the Why and the Wherefore are incomprehensible to man.

This digression has been necessary as a reminder that in one sense we live in a world of perpetual miracle, and at present it appears unlikely that the increase of knowledge will do much to dispel this miracle. But miracle in this wide sense is obviously beyond the scope of this essay. It is therefore necessary to add the limiting adjective "unusual" to the definition.

3. The final word in the definition is "alone." This is again an important qualification of the expression "that cannot be accounted for by natural laws." A number of the miracles in the Bible, for example, can be accounted for perfectly easily by natural laws. The crossing of the Jordan and the fall of the walls of Jericho, recorded in Joshua 3 and 6, are a perfect example of this. Professor Garstang's excavations on the site of the old Jericho showed that the walls of the city had suddenly collapsed in a manner that suggests an earthquake. In 1927 an earth tremor caused a subsidence that blocked the Jordan at El Damieh some 16 miles upstream from Jericho, so that the flow was interrupted for nearly 24 hours. (Garstang, *Joshua—Judges*, pp. 136 f.). It is characteristic of earthquakes for there to be several shocks over a short period of time. If then in Joshua's day one earthquake shock made the waters of Jordan "rise up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam" (Joshua 3: 16) so that the people could cross near Jericho, it is not surprising if a more severe shock threw down the walls of Jericho shortly afterwards.

These two events, though perfectly explicable by natural laws, may none the less be regarded as miracles, in that both occurred at the precise moment when they were needed, and, according to the Biblical record, at the precise moment when God had previously declared that they would occur. The miracle is thus one of synchronisation. A most striking attempt to account for the plagues of Egypt and the miraculous events of the Exodus by volcanic and seismic disturbances, that by divine providence synchronised with the needs of the Israelites, is in Canon Phythian-Adams' book, *The Call of Israel* (pp. 135 f.). In an even more speculative book, *Worlds in Collision*, Dr. I.

Velikovsky attempts to account for Joshua's Long Day by the approach of what is now the planet Venus into the earth's orbit. In recent times many people have believed that the unexpected calm at the time of the evacuation of Dunkirk was a similar miracle of synchronisation.

4. It may seem strange that the definition makes no reference to God, but reflection shows that most believers in miracles down the ages have refused to assert that only God can be the author of them. It has been held that there are other supernatural agencies who, by divine permission, though not necessarily by direct divine authorisation, can work miracles for purposes of their own. Pharaoh's magicians could compete up to a point with the miracles that Moses and Aaron worked by divine power (Exodus 7). Even if it is held that these men were no more than clever conjurers, we have the authority of Jesus Christ Himself for holding that false Messiahs and false prophets would appear, and would show great signs and wonders that would be so significant as almost to deceive the elect people of God (Matthew 24: 24). St. Paul speaks to the same effect in 2 Thessalonians 2: 9, 10; and in Revelation 13: 14 the visionary evil beast has power to work deceptive miracles. Similarly, if we turn to non-Christian sources, students of the occult make a distinction between white magic and black magic.

It would therefore be misleading to include the Name of God in a definition of Miracle. At the same time it is important to emphasise that a miracle must have a personal agent behind it. A haphazard event of a queer character would not qualify to be called a miracle. Hence in the definition it has seemed preferable to speak of "an unusual *action*" rather than of "an unusual *event*."

This detailed exposition of the definition has fulfilled the useful purpose of clearing some of the ground, and of clarifying the approach to the subject.

The title of this essay indicates that there are two aspects of the subject to be considered. It draws a distinction between modern thought and modern knowledge. The former concerns the philosophical and semi-philosophical approach, while the latter concerns the actual evidence that is alleged to support the occurrence of miracle. In practice the two cannot be kept in watertight compartments, since philosophical ideas cannot ignore concrete facts. Yet, in general, "thought" and "knowledge" represent two different forms of approach.

MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT.

It will perhaps be best to begin with the emphasis upon thought, since the majority of mankind are guided in their attitude to miracle by their philosophy of life. On the one side there is David Hume, with his belief that a miracle is the most improbable of all events, so that it is always more probable that the witnesses were lying or mistaken than that a miracle actually occurred. On the other side there are those who have, for one reason or another, such a firm belief in the thinness of the veil between the natural and the supernatural, that they credulously accept any story of divine, angelic, or spirit intervention in the course of earthly affairs.

Hume's attitude reflects the deistic outlook, which was so dazzled by the reign of natural law in the universe, that the transcendent God was bowed out of contact with the machine that He had created. Religion was a matter of reason, and had no need of miracles to attest its authority.

Theistic philosophers of the present day tend towards an immanentist view of God, and one would therefore expect them to have a more open mind towards the question of miracle. But one cannot see that the question interests them, apart from those who write as specifically Christian philosophers, and those who, like P. D. Ouspensky, represent a more unusual type of philosophic outlook.

It is, however, worth seeing how miracles could find a place in one or two of the philosophies of the present day.

The theological scheme of Dr. A. N. Whitehead, for example, is not easy to grasp, but it is definitely a theology of immanence, and God Himself is an evolving deity. Thus in his book *Process and Reality* Whitehead writes: "When we make a distinction of reason, and consider God in the abstraction of a primordial actuality, we must ascribe to him neither fulness of feeling, nor consciousness" (p. 486). And again: "The consequent nature of God is conscious; and it is the realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature, and through the transformation of his wisdom" (p. 488). Again in his book, *Religion in the Making*, he says: "The power by which God sustains the world is the power of Himself as the ideal. He adds Himself to the actual ground from which every creative act takes its rise. The world lives by its incarnation of God in itself. . . . He is not the world, but the valuation of the world. . . . In the actual world, he confronts what is actual in it with what is possible for it" (pp. 156, 159).

It would seem that Whitehead has made God and the world so mutually dependent that one cannot conceive of what one might call a decisively independent act of God in the world.

Dr. F. R. Tennant, in his *Philosophical Theology*, lays great emphasis upon the appearance of purpose in the universe, which he holds makes it reasonable to postulate an intelligent Creator. Tennant, however, finds it necessary to believe that "God without a world, or a Real other, is not God but an abstraction" (Vol. II, p. 168). God therefore was bound to create, and in creating He limited Himself by delegating a certain spontaneity of action to His creatures.

From this it can be seen that Tennant's view is not immanentist to the same extent as Whitehead's, but he again appears to have tangled together God and the process of nature in a way that would logically compel him to reject the idea of miracle. A God who is compelled to create can hardly rise above His creation.

One further philosopher may be quoted as representative of those who hold to a finite, or finite-infinite, God, in distinction to the orthodox Christian belief in God who is infinite. This is Professor E. S. Brightman, who feels that his position is necessary to account particularly for the existence of evil. Over against God, who is eternal, there stands eternally what Brightman called The Given, though The Given itself has no other origin than God's eternal being. This Given is both God's instrument of expression, and also an obstacle to the complete and perfect expression of God's æsthetic and moral purposes. On page 187 of Brightman's *Philosophy of Religion* there is a quotation that is extremely relevant to any discussion on Miracle. Brightman writes: "In some situations The Given, with its purposeless processes, constitutes so great an obstacle to divine willing that the utmost endeavours of God lead to a blind alley and temporary defeat. At this point, God's control means that no defeat or frustration is final; that the will of God, partially thwarted by obstacles in the chaotic Given, finds new avenues of advance, and forever moves on in the cosmic creation of new values."

If these philosophers may be taken as representative of the general run of modern philosophical thought, we can see that, where God is admitted at all, He is admitted only on terms that render miracle virtually impossible.

MODERN THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT.

It would obviously be unfair to limit modern thought to those

philosophers who tend to hold aloof from a more precise theological position. What then is the present attitude of Christian theologians to miracle ?

Those who give the fullest authority to the Biblical records, whether they are Protestant or Roman Catholic theologians, naturally have maintained the traditional Christian view of the genuineness of the miracles of the Bible. In addition the Roman Catholics accept other post-Biblical and modern miracles, of which Protestants are sceptical. A topical example is the enforcement of the doctrine of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary as a cardinal dogma of the faith. Modern miracles of healing are in a different category, and will be considered later.

At the opposite extreme is the Modern Churchmen's Union, whose members find miracles a stumbling block, and who feel free to reject the miracles of the Virgin Birth and the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is difficult to assess how far scientific prejudgement enters into their estimate of the evidence. That is one of the problems of miracle : we all of us find it easier or harder to accept the Biblical records according to presuppositions that we have formed on other grounds.

At the same time one feels that some Modern Churchmen are not ready to be convinced of the fact of miracle. Where it is possible to accept a late date for a document, or to suppose that there is an interpolation in it, they will do so unhesitatingly in order to avoid accepting a miracle. This was one of the strongest criticisms made against Bishop Barnes's book *The Rise of Christianity*. On the other hand Emil Brunner, whom one could not class with the Modern Churchmen's Union, finds himself unable to accept the Biblical evidence for the Virgin Birth, as he points out in his book *The Mediator*.

An intermediate position is taken by Alan Richardson in two books, *The Miracle Stories of the Gospels* and *Christian Apologetics*.

He is concerned primarily with the miracles of Jesus, and points out that the only historical evidence that we possess is that Jesus did work miracles. "The evidence that Jesus worked miracles is just as strong, and is of precisely the same quality and texture, as that He taught that God is Father and that His disciples should forgive one another" (*Christian Apologetics*, p. 170). These are strong words, but Canon Richardson qualifies them by pointing out that they do not form an argument that can compel unbelievers to accept the historicity of the miracles.

Moreover belief in the historicity of miracles alone might be held independently of Christian faith. A student of psychical research might be convinced by modern parallels to the miracles of Jesus, and yet fail to hold the faith of the apostolic Church about them. "For the apostolic Church the significance of the miracles of Jesus was that they were the signs of His divine mission, foretold by the prophets of old . . . the miracles of Jesus were, for those who had eyes to see, signs that enabled them to penetrate the mystery of His person" (*Christian Apologetics*, p. 172).

This thought is worked out more fully in Canon Richardson's other book already mentioned. Yet here he points out that we are not bound to accept all the details of each miracle story in the Gospels. "It is by faith that we know that Jesus worked the mighty works of the power of God; but, having reached this point through the grace of God, it is by the exercise of our critical intelligence and our historical imagination that we try to determine the nature and circumstances of these works in their historical setting and in the implications which they were perceived to involve for the faith of the earliest Christian disciples" (*The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels*, pp. 129, 130).

This blending of faith and agnosticism is also seen in H. H. Farmer's book *The World and God*, with its sub-title, "A study of prayer, providence and miracle in Christian experience." Dr. Farmer holds that the Christian must not be tempted to define miracle in terms of a suspension of natural laws, but must see miracle as an awed realisation of the working of God. "The question of how much, or how little, of the miraculous element in the gospel stories we accept is not of the greatest moment, provided only that the decision springs not from pseudo-scientific dogmatism, but from the continuous endeavour to grasp by every means at our disposal, the mind of Christ" (p. 269).

The position then of Canon Richardson and Dr. Farmer may be taken as typical of much modern theological thought, which accepts the general principle of miracles in the Gospel story, but refuses to be tied down to the acceptance of any single event in the form in which the narrator apparently believed it to have happened.

A more robust approach is found in C. S. Lewis's book *Miracles*, called modestly "A Preliminary Study." Lewis refuses to heed Dr. Farmer's warning about the definition of miracle, but boldly plunges into a logical defence of the traditional

Christian ideas. He points out the inadequacy of Naturalism as an explanation of the universe and all things in it.

Once God is admitted, miracles become theoretically possible. But are not miracles contrary to the natural laws that God Himself has ordained? So-called Natural laws are only our classification of observed events, just as, for example, rules for writing Latin verse are deductions drawn from the great Latin authors. A small mind might regard these rules of verse as hard-and-fast, yet to our amazement on rare occasions we find that Virgil breaks them, though always for a very good reason.

One need not be afraid that in admitting God and miracles one is opening the door to a nonsensical universe. Miracles are not mere conjuring tricks, but have a certain propriety about them. Lewis then proceeds to discuss the Gospel miracles and their appropriateness, beginning with the supreme miracle of the Incarnation, and from there proceeding to the miracles ascribed to the One who was thus incarnate. Lewis finds the literal acceptance of Christ's miracles to be quite reasonable as he takes and considers them one by one.

If C. S. Lewis writes from a theological standpoint, he is supported by a scientist, Dr. F. Sherwood Taylor, in his study of the relations of Science and Religion, entitled *The Fourfold Vision*. The theme of the book is naturally wider than that of Lewis, but in his discussion of Law and probability he follows a very similar line. He emphasises that "the evidence for every scientific law is based on observations which cannot include all cases" (p. 45), and he rightly points out that "the only evidence that can be brought against the miraculous is that historically it *did* not occur, not that theoretically it *could* not occur" (p. 44). As an example he quotes the belief in the Virgin Conception of Jesus Christ, and exposes the hollowness of the reasoning which says that Christ could not have been born of a Virgin, since such an event is a biological impossibility; and he concludes: "Scientists say 'I see no evidence for parthenogenesis in man, *therefore* it does not occur, *therefore* any evidence in its favour is false.' The same circular reasoning has in the past led to denial of the reality of globe-lightning and of anæsthesia by hypnosis, both now experimentally proven" (p. 49).

Whilst Dr. Sherwood Taylor's conclusions are necessarily negative, since he is concerned here to show that science cannot disprove the occurrence of miracles, it is clear that he himself does accept the authenticity of the Biblical miracles.

From this discussion of some modern theological and scientific views it has become clear that much depends upon one's general attitude to Jesus Christ. Even if one approaches the whole matter of miracle on a broad front, and admits the possibility of miracles, the next step is to ask the old question: "What think ye of Christ?" If He is God incarnate, then one would expect His birth and His death, with its sequel, to be unique, and one would expect mighty works of all kinds to show themselves in Him. If He is a great Teacher sent from God, then again one would expect certain mighty works, though one might well hesitate at accepting the so-called Nature miracles, and hesitate over the Virgin Birth and the bodily Resurrection.

There have been attempts to start from another point of view, and to try to prove the historical truth of the Virgin Birth and of the Resurrection. The latter has proved more readily defensible than the former. The most famous modern book on the truth of the bodily Resurrection is Frank Morison's *Who Moved the Stone?* The book is all the more convincing in that it was apparently planned in the first place as a refutation of the Resurrection, or at least as a minimising of it. But the examination of the evidence produced this striking book, which showed the complete inadequacy of all natural attempts to account for the confessedly empty tomb. Morison deals trenchantly with such modern explanations as that of Dr. Kirsopp Lake and Dr. Gardner Smith, that the women mistook the tomb in the half-light, and misinterpreted the words of a gardener, who told them "He is not here," and who offered to show them the real tomb, with the words, "Come, see the place where they laid Him!" Even if the women had mistaken the tomb, there were plenty of others, both friends and enemies, to go to the real tomb later.

There is no doubt that the evidence for the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ is extremely strong, though space does not permit the setting out of the arguments here. It is however, not so easy to argue for the historicity of the Virgin Birth, though the obviously independent testimony of Matthew and Luke would normally be regarded as adequate for any fact that was non-miraculous.

One of the most scholarly investigations of it in recent times is that by J. Gresham Machen in *The Virgin Birth of Christ*. Dr. Machen gives a long and detailed examination of the Biblical evidence, and gives solid reasons for rejecting the usual objections

to the accounts in Matthew and Luke on the ground both of textual variants and of apparent discrepancies between the two infancy narratives.

Others, from a scientific standpoint, have approached the subject along the lines of natural parthenogenesis. Dr. Sherwood Taylor, in his book already referred to, *The Fourfold Vision* (pp. 47 f.), points out that two biologists, Reimann and Miller, have caused an unfertilised human ovum to commence development by mechanical stimulation in human blood-serum containing a trace of ethyl acetate. Similarly another worker, G. Pincus, caused rabbit ova to begin to develop by cooling them, and then transplanted them to the uterus of another rabbit, where one female actually came to maturity. Sherwood Taylor and others have even suggested that parthenogenesis may occur spontaneously in human beings.

Those who rely on arguments of this kind have overlooked a most important fact about sex-determination. To quote from Dr. Kenneth Walker, *The Physiology of Sex* (pp. 21, 22): "In mammals generally . . . the male forms two varieties of gametes or spermatozoa, that have been termed X-bearing and Y-bearing. The female, on the other hand, furnishes only one type of ovum, which can be termed X-bearing. These uniform egg cells are capable of being fertilized by either kind of spermatozoa; an X-bearing spermatozoon so as to form XX, a female, or by a Y-bearing spermatozoon so as to form XY, a male." In other words, unless a Y chromosome fertilises the ovum, the result will be a female. Therefore if an ovum can begin to develop through parthenogenesis, it is bound to become a female since it contains only the X determinant. This fact in relation to the Virginal conception is discussed by Dr. E. C. Messenger in Vol. II of his book *Two in One Flesh* (pp. 90 f.).

Thus we are bound to say that such knowledge as we have of parthenogenesis only serves to intensify the need for a miracle if Jesus Christ was truly born of a virgin. This after all has always been the faith of the Christian Church. It has never been supposed that the fact of parthenogenesis made Jesus Christ divine. But Christians have felt that this manner of His coming into world was congruent with His deity.

MODERN KNOWLEDGE.

So far the main part of this essay has been concerned with modern thought. In so far as it is possible to separate the two,

it is now necessary to consider whether there are any well-attested facts, known to-day, that throw light on the probability or improbability of miracles.

An obvious fact which demands consideration in any modern discussion of miracles is the principle of indeterminacy that underlies modern physics. Whatever theoretical conclusions may be drawn from it, Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy would appear to be a fact. Heisenberg was concerned to point out that we cannot by the nature of our methods measure simultaneously both the velocity and the position of an atomic particle.

Two conclusions have been drawn from this. The one says that there is a real uncertainty or arbitrariness at the heart of things, and theologians have jumped at this, both as supporting free-will against materialistic determinism ; and also as indicating a method whereby miracle can be introduced into the ordered scheme of the universe.

Others believe that the uncertainty is due only to the inadequacy of our present methods of measurement, and that the movements of atomic particles will ultimately prove to be determinate.

Some of the factors involved were dealt with in a paper before this Institute in 1948 by Dr. F. T. Farmer on "Physical Science and Miracle." A lecture by Professor Max Born and an essay by Professor Albert Einstein, reproduced in No. 17 of the *Penguin Science News*, also debate the points at issue.

Does it really matter, for the purpose of our investigation of miracle, which view of Heisenberg's principle is adopted? It would hardly seem so. The random movement of an electron would not be sufficient to cause a miracle, and, while physicists may be unable to predict the movement of one atomic particle, they would certainly deny that they could not predict the movement of atoms in the mass. As Dr. Farmer says in a slightly different connection in his paper already referred to (p. 63): "It is doubtful, indeed, whether an influence by the mind upon electrons within the fine limits which physical indeterminism allows, could account for any of the large scale movements of our bodies which occur."

It has been necessary to begin with this basis of modern physics, even though it would appear to contribute nothing of value to the argument, since it is mentioned so often in connection with free-will and determinism, and also in the discussions of the influence of immaterial mind upon matter.

A more helpful line of discussion is the fact of so-called Spiritual Healing. Healings have always ranked high amongst alleged miracles. A large proportion of the miracles in the Gospels and the early Church were healings, and such healings have occurred spasmodically down the ages.

The Church of Rome has continually claimed miracles of healing through her saints, relics, and holy places. Protestant claims were less frequent, though such men as George Fox undoubtedly possessed powers of direct healing. But in recent times there has been a surprising revival both of interest in the subject and in actual cases. Since the last war each year has seen the publication of one or two books on the subject.

Some of these have been frankly startling. In particular there have been three by Starr Daily, the two most relevant being entitled *Recovery* and *Release*, and also by Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light*. These all come from America, and record healings of every kind, some of which appear to be far beyond the power of suggestion to accomplish. Mrs. Sanford, for example, records the restoration of a baby who had been dead for half an hour (p. 97), and the complete recovery of a man who was dying, and whose "heart had swollen until it filled almost the whole chest . . . every valve had burst and was leaking like a sieve" (p. 101).

In our own country there is a quiet work going on at such places as Milton Abbas, while the Rev. F. L. Wyman at York has written two small books, *Commission to Heal* and *The Divine Physician*, in which he mentions cures that have come about through prayer circles with which he is linked.

That body of Christians that are grouped under the general title of Pentecostalists have practised the laying on of hands for healing for many years now, and they too can show definite results.

Roman Catholics encourage regular pilgrimages of sick people to Lourdes. Here too cures occur, but no cure is claimed as miraculous unless there is a detailed medical history of the case. The number of cures each year that are reckoned by the Roman Catholic investigators to be above the powers of nature to effect, amount to between five and twelve.

Many people who know nothing of the doctrines of Christian Science respect its claims to heal; while healing services are now a feature of Spiritualism, and such mediums as Harry Edwards are reported in the spiritualist press almost every week as responsible for miraculous cures.

With this apparent wealth of evidence, one would expect to be able to find some factors common to them all, that might help in assessing the precise nature of the healings. But immediately there is a difficulty. Very few of the cures are accompanied by case histories of a type that a doctor would regard as adequate. It is extremely easy for a layman to be misled over the exact nature of a disease, and of the likelihood of a sudden turn for the better in the natural course of events. Moreover one rarely reads the sequel to the cures. Many diseases can ease up remarkably for a period, only to relapse later.

In this connection *Psychic News* (Jan. 15, 1949) published some investigations of cures claimed by Harry Edwards, some six months previously. In Edinburgh "not all the patients had made noticeable progress, but in the majority there was improvement, with a new hopefulness and a deep sense of gratitude for benefit received." At Ilford a sufferer from disseminated sclerosis says, "It would be wrong to say I was cured by Mr. Edwards but I am definitely very much better . . . I receive weekly healing treatment at ——— Spiritualist Church, which helps me a great deal."

When one has eliminated these doubtful cases, there still remain others, both amongst spiritualists and elsewhere, that go beyond what most doctors would regard as normal. Some healers, such as F. L. Wyman, work in close co-operation with the local doctors, and one of these writes the foreword, and contributes some case notes to Mr. Wyman's two books.

Assuming then that "there is something in it," is it possible to find any common factor in the different healings? Here again one finds difficulties. Some, such as Mrs. Agnes Sanford, make considerable use of the laying on of hands. She and her patients frequently feel a sensation of power flowing through her hands like an electric current. She is herself a Christian, but she does not confine her healings to Christians.

Mr. Wyman commonly makes use of anointing with oil, following the injunction of James 5: 14, 15. He does not feel it right to anoint any who are not Christians, and he seeks to make them spiritually right with God before he prays for their healing.

The cures at Lourdes may occur at any time during the pilgrim's visit, but generally during some service at the Grotto there. The cures are ascribed to the intervention of the Virgin Mary.

Christian Scientists obtain their cures through the assertion of

the non-reality of matter. Matter, pain, and evil, are illusions of the mortal mind, and the realisation of the illusion, for oneself or for others, is the way of freedom from its supposed effects.

Healing mediums generally claim to be guided by spirits, who can detect the disease and prescribe for its treatment, but Harry Edwards appears from the reports and pictures to rely on manipulations without being in a state of trance. Presumably he holds that some spirit guide is working through his touch.

Where is the common factor here? From what does the healing issue? Is it in the healer, who acts as a channel for a healing flow of divine life? Is it in the patient, in whom new forces are generated in response to faith? Or is there some force in the process used?

The fact that some people appear to have a specific gift of healing would suggest that there is some virtue in the healer. Yet these healers cannot heal everyone, which would suggest that the healing power lies in the response of faith, which is stimulated by the expectancy aroused by some well-known healer or method that has healed others. Yet even when there is a healer and a spirit of faith, there may be no healing; which would suggest that one cannot leave out of account some Power over and above that in the healer and the patient, namely God Himself. Why He should heal some and not others must remain a mystery.

The New Testament itself suggests these same sources of spiritual healing. Jesus knew that power had gone out of Him when the woman touched Him in the crowd and was healed (Mark 5: 30). In Nazareth He could do no mighty work because of the people's unbelief (Mark 5: 5, 6). And at Miletus Trophimus had to be left behind ill (2 Tim. 4: 20), although Paul had the power to work miracles of various kinds, and Trophimus presumably knew this.

Some light may be thrown upon the power to work miracles of healing by the modern knowledge of the effects of suggestion and hypnotism, and also by the investigations of what is often called the PSI factor in man.

Suggestion and hypnotism show the powerful effect of the mind upon the body. The suggestion, to be effective, must pierce the barriers erected by the conscious mind, and be accepted by the unconscious or subconscious, which has so powerful a control of man's actions. Hence the suggestion can best be made when the consciousness is less active, as at the moment of falling asleep, or when it has been deliberately suppressed

through the act of hypnotism. In the deep state of hypnosis the mind can play all sorts of tricks on the body, producing heat blisters when touched with cold metal, and doing more fantastic things that have been exploited by stage hypnotists.

There is no doubt that hypnotism and suggestion can be used for physical cures, but they have certain limitations. They can be used helpfully in functional troubles, where the disease is largely the outcome of a mental attitude. But the danger here is that, by suppressing one manifestation of the root trouble, a substitute may appear. Moreover there is a tendency for a belief that is accepted through suggestion to lose its hold after a time.

It would be reasonable to suppose that some of the miraculous cures that are claimed are the result of an accepted suggestion. The expectation aroused by the presence of a noted healer, the atmosphere generated, perhaps, by repeated hymns, or again the constant repetition of some formula of assertion, provide the proper frame of mind for the necessary suggestion to pierce the resistance of the conscious.

This is no reflection upon the integrity of the healer or upon the reality of the cure. And if the healer is able at the same time to supply spiritual strength to the patient, it is likely that the deep cause of the trouble may also be adjusted.

This is regarding the cure from the point of view of reactions within the patient. But the investigations of the PSI faculty in man may throw some light on the flowing of power from the healer. The standard book on the subject now is J. B. Rhine's *The Reach of the Mind*, in which Dr. Rhine describes his careful experiments at Duke University.

It may suffice to say here that the opinion of almost everyone who has studied the evidence is that Dr. Rhine and his fellow-workers have proved the direct communication of mind with mind through telepathy or clairvoyance, and also the influence of mind upon matter. It is this latter fact that is of importance for the study of miracle. Dr. Rhine's experiments have shown that when dice are thrown mechanically, it is possible to influence the predominance of high or low numbers by willing accordingly. Statistically the fall of the dice shows results that are above the chance factor. This effect is known as psycho-kinetic, or P.K. for short.

Now although Rhine's results in P.K. are comparatively small, they do indicate some influence of mind on matter that one may

suppose could at times occur in an intensified form, thus producing what would normally be called a miracle. It may be that, in cases of healing, the healer is able to produce in the patient that result that the patient is unable to produce in himself. His mind is able to pour power into the seat of the disease, and set in motion the forces of healing.

All this may seem to have brought so-called miraculous cures down to a much more mundane plane. If the cures can be ascribed either to the mind of the patient or to the mind of the healer, are they miraculous at all in the sense in which we have defined miracle ?

Two things must be said. In the first place no one has yet discovered the laws of the working of the PSI faculty. One day a subject may give correctly the order of 15 cards in an unseen pack. Next day his rate of scoring may be equal to chance or only slightly above. He cannot tell how he succeeded in the first place or failed in the second. As Rhine says on page 151 of *The Reach of the Mind*, "PSI is an incredibly elusive function." Why do some manifest it more than others ? And if healing is a P.K. effect, why are there so few healers, and why cannot everyone cultivate the gift ? And why cannot one and the same healer cure all diseases or at least all sufferers with similar diseases ? Are there in fact any natural laws that will apply to the operation of the PSI faculty in healing ?

The second thing to be said is that a demonstration of the influence of mind over matter should not be taken as only showing the influence of human mind over matter. Rhine's work has made materialism less likely as an explanation of the universe, and consequently has made the theistic view of the universe more likely. Obviously these experiments have not proved the existence of God, but, granted that God exists, they have made it reasonable to assert that as the Supreme Mind He can still operate directly upon matter. It is, for example, perfectly reasonable to believe that in answer to prayer God will influence those physical causes that make for rain or for fine weather, as the Old Testament prophets believed. The sneers of sceptics against the observance of days of prayer for temporal blessings as "unscientific," can no longer be justified.

Similarly one cannot be certain that all spiritual healings can be simply dismissed as due to the operation of forces naturally inherent in all human minds. Healing gifts in the first place may well be special gifts from God, even if they are intensified

forms of a P.K. force that is dormant in the majority. These gifts may be misused in the interests of an erroneous system of belief, just as any natural gifts can be.

From the other aspect, no one can at present fix the limits within which an accepted suggestion can operate for healing. But the acceptance of a suggestion strong enough to effect an unusual healing may itself be due to the miraculous working of God upon the inner mind.

Probably most people to-day find little difficulty in accepting most of the healing miracles of the Bible. This is one of the results of modern knowledge. We may speak of suggestion or of P.K. force as the agent of healing, but this is not much more than giving names to things that we do not understand and may never understand. All we can say is that Jesus Christ and His disciples had gifts of healing that they believed to be gifts of God over and above natural gifts. Their gifts were deliberately used, and were not spasmodic occurrences. We are not obliged to rule out the use of simple suggestion as the explanation of some cures, since one supposes that God naturally uses the simplest means to effect His purposes. But other cures, such as the giving of sight to one born blind, would seem to demand a power beyond the capacity of the natural mind of man. We also notice that, in contrast to the majority of modern spiritual healings, the cures in the Bible were practically instantaneous.

The case for the authenticity of other types of miracle still largely rests upon one's presuppositions as to whether God is likely to have worked as the records state. The most that modern investigators can do is to show that the influence of mind over matter, if it is regarded as proved by Rhine's experiments, makes such miracles as the floating axe head in 2 Kings 6: 6 a little more credible for those who wish to explain "how it was done." Whether the mind in question was the mind of Elisha, or whether it was the Supreme Mind working through Elisha, the effect produced is analogous to so-called P.K., though its effect is so much greater than anything ever effected by P.K. under experimental conditions as to make the analogy almost ludicrous.

This reference to "P.K. under experimental conditions" indicates that there may be P.K. under other conditions also. Some experimenters, including Dr. Rhine, believe that the time has now come to investigate more carefully some of the spontaneous cases that might be classified as P.K. This has in fact been part of the work of the Society for Psychical Research

during the 70 years of its existence. The difficulty is, however, that in investigating spontaneous cases that cannot be repeated under controlled conditions, so much depends upon the subjective element. What did the witnesses actually observe, and how much did they construct unconsciously? The personal bias of the investigator also must be taken into account.

There have been two papers before the Victoria Institute in recent years which show the relevance of psychical research to our subject. In 1947 W. E. Leslie wrote on "Psychical Research in the Light of Recent Developments," dealing more particularly with telepathy and clairvoyance. In 1948 I wrote on "The Bearing of Psychical Research upon the Interpretation of the Bible," and discussed certain modern parallels with some of the miracles of the Bible. Thus I mentioned particularly evidence for fire-walking and for levitation. Investigators vary in the extent to which they are convinced by the evidence. But fire-walking, if genuine, would take its place with other practices where the body seems temporarily immune from the normal effects of physical injury, as with certain dervishes who, under trance, as many travellers have testified, can cut and stab themselves without inflicting any serious wound.

Levitation is particularly interesting. Dr. E. J. Dingwall, a far from credulous investigator, gives the evidence in his book *Some Human Oddities*, for the levitation of Joseph of Copertino and others during times of spiritual ecstasy or fervent prayer. It appears to have been uncontrollable, and indeed at times a cause of embarrassment. There appears to be no evidence for similar levitations during Christian prayer to-day, but it is of course claimed by Yogis as a fact, and there is the famous, though still disputed, case of the medium, D. D. Home, who is alleged to have floated out of one window and in at another. The case has been discussed by Dr. Dingwall and others. If levitation is proved, it affords a partial parallel to such a miracle as Christ's walking on the sea.

How far can one use the physical manifestations of spiritualism as evidence for miracles? A sane opinion could probably be that there "is something in them," but that it is impossible at present to say how much. Only those who have studied the investigation of physical mediums know how difficult it is to devise adequate controls. Members of the Magic Circle have from time to time staged faked séances in which they have

reproduced the astounding phenomena of the séance. A particularly striking demonstration was made before members of the Press in 1948, and was featured in *Everybody's Weekly* on October 9th, 1948.

On the other hand the evidence for poltergeists is fairly strong. Harry Price's *Poltergeist over England* is a recent book on the subject. His two books on Borley Rectory are also relevant. For poltergeists the simplest theories seem to lie in a choice between malicious spirits or an unconscious force put out by someone in the house—in other words, an exaggerated P.K. effect again. This same force might also be exerted by such physical mediums as Rudi Schneider, who was willing to submit to cast-iron control, yet when he went into his trance, objects were moved in different parts of the room, as Harry Price testifies in his book *Search for Truth* (p. 142).

Hence one may make a modified use of mediumistic phenomena. Such evidence as there is in support of them would indicate that there is something that influences matter independently of material contact. But it is not certain whether that "something" is a latent force of the medium's mind, or some spirit, good or evil. It does, however, tell in favour of the likelihood of miracles rather than against them.

This may seem to be a feeble conclusion. But it is the type of conclusion to which we have been driven all along. It is in fact an inevitable conclusion if a miracle is a miracle at all. For the essence of miracle is that it is not a conjuring trick, whose methods can be learned and reproduced at will.

The most that modern thought and knowledge have shown is that it is likely that there is an order of being behind the visible order of things, and that from time to time a link-up between the two orders produces something that we call miracle.

The late P. D. Ouspensky, who has written so much about the fourth dimension, entitled his recent book *In Search of the Miraculous*. In actual fact there is little that is miraculous in it, except for the occasion when he and his master, Gurdjieff, carried on conversations purely by telepathy. But a conclusion to which he comes on page 265 is particularly apposite: "No phenomena of a higher order, that is transcending the category of ordinary things observable every day, or phenomena which are sometimes called 'metaphysical,' can be observed or investigated by *ordinary means*, in an ordinary state of consciousness, like physical phenomena."

This is a fact that the investigator of miracle must admit. If an event is a miracle, there will necessarily be something about it that eludes his observation, even if he sees the miracle happening before his eyes. He may ascribe it to God, or to some spirit, or to latent powers of mind ; but in each case it is due to something unknown, that transcends the regular laws that operate in the visible universe.

When he is confronted with some alleged miracle of the past, such as the miracles of the Bible, the most that he can do is to investigate the recorded evidence of the witnesses, or to assess the likelihood of the occurrence in its total setting.

Thus one can begin with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and decide from the historical evidence that it is more probable that it did occur than that it did not. If it did occur, one must emphasise that it is a miracle of such an astounding character that no analogy of P.K. or suggestion can possibly even begin to account for it, since it involved a restoration of a body that had been dead for three days, and its transformation at the same time into a new order of existence.

Then one can link the Resurrection with the whole context of the Gospel revelation of Jesus Christ, and conclude that His Resurrection is more consistent with His Person, His life, and His teaching, than any other culmination to His earthly ministry. From these one is led more readily to the credibility of the other miracles that are recorded of Him ; and from these to the likelihood of other miracles during the revelatory history that led up to Him in Old Testament times, and during the period when His first disciples went out to preach in the world.

CONCLUSION.

Modern thought and knowledge have not proved the fact of miracle, but they have certainly not disproved it. In so far as they have indicated a non-material order behind phenomena, they have removed certain barriers that materialism had set up. But in the last resort the acceptance of an event as a miracle involves an act of faith ; it need not, however, be an act of credulity.

DISCUSSION.

The Chairman (Mr. A. H. BOULTON) said : I am sure that I am expressing the feelings of all who have heard the reading of this paper in saying how grateful we are to Mr. Stafford Wright for the

very thoughtful essay which he has presented. Since it was my privilege not very many months ago to present to the Institute my own thoughts on this same subject, it is not my intention to take up your time now, but rather to open the meeting for other speakers to make their contributions.

It is, however, perhaps worth while to mention something which Mr. Stafford Wright commented upon to me in conversation just before this meeting began. It is this: Although his approach to the subject and mine were very different in their method and viewpoint, there has been a remarkable correspondence between our two papers not only in the conclusions we have suggested but also in the facts to which we have referred and even the books we have quoted. This is particularly so with reference to the more recent discoveries and happenings. It suggests, which I believe to be the fact, that there is a real change taking place in the climate of opinion on this most interesting and challenging subject.

I believe this to be a true and important development, and one which may lead eventually to a complete change in the relation, so often assumed to be hostile, between science and religion. Victorian materialism is outworn, and cannot be sustained in the face of actual happenings testified to by contemporary witnesses, and there is very much more readiness for the limitations of our knowledge to be freely admitted.

I believe that we who accept the truth of the Christian faith may legitimately take courage at this change of direction in contemporary thinking.

Dr. J. E. STOKES said: Many of the miracles of a physical nature recorded in the New Testament are miracles of healing and, therefore, regarded from the scientific point of view, would come under the science of biology. Arguing by analogy from the spiritual to the physical and *vice versa*, any physical interpretation of them is likely to be exceedingly complex. There are many examples in modern biology where old and comparatively simple theories of common phenomena have had to be replaced by exceedingly complex explanations (e.g., propagation of the nerve-impulse and muscular contraction).

Assuming the usual view of the human being as composed of body,

mind and spirit, a number of conclusions follow. We know how complex the "fruits of the spirit" as enumerated by St. Paul are, and yet if these fruits are to be exhibited or enjoyed by us on earth, there must be in our bodies some mechanism which is equally complex and through which the fruits may be exhibited. We have such a mechanism in the human brain, every cubic centimetre of which, at a rough estimate, contains as many telephone connections as the London Regional system. Our hospitals are full of cases of bodily illness, our asylums of cases of mental illness and our churches should be full of people who have some realization of their spiritual illnesses. It is perhaps not realized that few, if any, illnesses are confined to one level. Most illnesses affect all three levels in varying degrees. As a practising physician one is all too conscious of one's inability to sort out these tangles, but our Lord was not subject to this limitation. All these facts have an important bearing on the healing miracles of our Lord; and it is an interesting exercise to sort out those in which He healed almost at first sight from those in which He required an act of faith first, or commenced by forgiveness of sins. In at least one instance He began by enquiring into the medical history of the case.

In considering modern miracles of healing either in the various Guilds or Healing Ministries of the Church, or at Lourdes or elsewhere, I would like to see more evidence of an evaluation of these points.

Rev. C. T. COOK called attention to the distinction between what may be called nature miracles and providential miracles, illustrating the latter by instances from the lives of Hudson Taylor and George Müller, and instances of preservation which could be traced to special prayer. All these fall within the category of miracle.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Dr. R. E. D. CLARK wrote: Mr. Wright's paper is one of great value, for which all those associated with the Victoria Institute will be grateful for some time to come. There are only two comments that I would like to make. In the first place I think we should be a little cautious in arguing that the progeny of a human virgin birth would necessarily be a female in the normal course of events. The

mechanism that determines sex is as Mr. Wright states, but this is not the whole of the story. If it were, sex reversal would hardly be possible, yet we have all heard of cocks that lay eggs! A case of sex reversal in the human species is on record.

Secondly I feel that Mr. Wright dismisses the evidence from the Heisenberg principle a little too cavalierly. As C. S. Lewis argues so well, the point is not that large-scale events resulting from events within the limits imposed by the uncertainty principle would be miracles, but rather that the uncertainty principle has shown us that our evidence for determinism in nature is not ultimately convincing. If we cannot prove that *any* events are determined by laws of nature (other than statistical laws), what right have we to say that science is incompatible with belief in miracle?

Mr. E. H. BETTS wrote: "A miracle may be defined 'as an unusual action that cannot be accounted for by natural laws alone.'"

What does our Author mean by "accounted for by natural laws"? He *should* only mean that the event in question is in conformity with the usual run of events. For the "laws" of nature, so called, are nothing more or less, at bottom, than observed regularities and recurrences in the course of "nature." Men know nothing, just nothing, about the compelling causes of these regularities—apart from revelation. The "laws of nature" are merely statements in formal and possibly mathematical shape of the results of observations—multitudinous observations it may be, but still only such; for science is shut up to observation. This the French Encyclopædists and again the scientists of the Victorian age ignored or forgot. Consequently they foisted not merely on the man in the street but on practically the whole world of thought the false notion that a law of science was a fixed and unalterable fiat requiring and compelling the observance of the regularity and its continual and everlasting recurrence in unchangeability. That this assumption is totally invalid is now well-recognized by scientific philosophers—by men, indeed, of such diverse outlook as Hume, Whewell, Keynes and C. D. Broad. Inductive science, from its very nature, dependent as it is on observation, can give wide generality but cannot give universality or unexceptionability.

There is therefore plenty of standing room for the well-attested miracles or "unusual actions." Their *logical* validity can be

categorically asserted. We do assert it. And accordingly we receive all the miracles of the Christian revelation unhesitatingly and with deep thankfulness. The difference between "miracles" and "laws of nature" is purely and simply a matter of evidence. Both alike are observed phenomena. To faith, too, both alike are the outcome of the spoken word of God. We press this view on the Modern Churchmen's Union. Rev. J. Stafford Wright in his very complete and clear paper has, we feel, adopted it in his approving citations from Dr. Sherwood Taylor and Mr. C. S. Lewis. We trust he will pardon the additional stress sought for it in this comment.

If modern research confirms, as the paper tends to indicate, well and good. It cannot invalidate.

Mr. TITTERINGTON wrote: May I suggest that much of the difficulty which is so often felt and expressed about miracle is because we adopt too limited a frame of reference? It is very natural for us to regard everything from the standpoint of our own observation and experience, which is perforce restricted in the main to the visible and the material. Even within this sphere our knowledge is limited. There is light we cannot see, and there is sound we cannot hear, because our eyes and ears are not constructed to see and hear them. Further, there are probably properties of matter of which we can know nothing, even of their existence, because our senses are not capable of observing them: if we had no sense of smell, how should we ever guess that such a thing ever existed?

But "the things which are seen are temporal; the things which are not seen are eternal." That is to say, that beyond all that our senses can apprehend, there is a whole world of existence of which, by natural means, we have, and can have, no cognizance. We are apt to regard these as two distinct and separate realms. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that there is one great realm of Creation, of which the visible and tangible is only a part. God's modes of action are not limited to those which are normally observable in the processes of nature. It need not surprise us at all if He sometimes brings to bear in the material realm forces which are not those with which we are familiar. Sometimes He operates through the medium of natural forces (as He probably did at the

fall of Jericho); at other times He may act more directly, and independently of natural forces. We must make room in our thinking for the operation of the supernatural. It is not that natural law is suspended, or even overridden; but rather that a wider law comes into operation.

Dr. LESLIE WEATHERHEAD wrote: I prefer to think of miracles as normal activities on a higher spiritual plane of being than that with which we are familiar; the break-through of the energies of the kingdom of heaven. I have worked this out more fully in my recent book, *Psychology, Religion and Healing*.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I should like to thank those who by their contributions have supplemented what I said in my paper. Few call for further comment.

It is extremely difficult to give a watertight definition of a miracle. A miracle, although observed as a phenomenon, cannot be tracked back by the steps of cause and effect within the normal terms of reference of the natural sciences; though it can be accounted for by anyone who widens his terms of reference to include God and unseen spiritual beings. This perhaps makes my definition clearer in the light of what has been said by Mr. Betts.

I hesitate to join issue with Dr. Clark on scientific matters, but I cannot entirely agree with him on sex reversal and parthenogenesis. The example of cocks and hens is not a true parallel, since in birds the female carries the sex determinant. I can find records of hens becoming cocks, when their ovaries have been destroyed through disease, but I cannot, in the limited books that I have available, find examples of cocks that have become hens under normal conditions, without injection of the female hormone.

In human beings I doubt whether "sex reversal" is the correct term, but again I must be subject to correction. The records seem to me to indicate that from time to time there are certain cases of doubtful sexuality, where the person for a time lives as e.g., a female, but is later found to possess more of the physical characters of a male. In such cases there has presumably been the XY formation from the beginning. It would seem that the basic sex distinction depends upon the XX and XY factors, but that the

development of "maleness" and "femaleness" depends upon the functioning of organisers and secretions in the body. One could develop the argument from the results of parthenogenesis in the hive bee, where the result is always the production of a drone (male).

I certainly missed the point of the use that can be made of Heisenberg's Principle, but would still point out that not all physicists apparently accept this as an ultimate indeterminacy.

One speaker at the meeting, who has not sent in a written comment, drew attention to miracles of providence, and of spiritual regeneration. I think that I ought to have taken more notice of these, but the former is in the nature of miracles of synchronization referred to on page 30, and, while the latter are convincing for the Christian, their observable results can frequently be accounted for in part by those who have studied the workings of the human mind. A full paper on the supernatural and natural elements in Christian conversion would be of the greatest interest.

905TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY,
10TH DECEMBER, 1951.

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

*MODERN NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP AND
PSYCHOLOGY IN REGARD TO THE MIRACLES OF
HEALING*

BY REV. JOHN CROWLESMITH.

SYNOPSIS.

Statement of the present work being done on "Spiritual Healing" subjects. Relation of the Medical Profession to the Church. Examination of the findings of representative Christian Scholars on the Healing Miracles. Application of these findings to the psychiatric need as revealed in loneliness, fear and guilt.

The author expresses his thanks to the Oxford University Press, the S.P.C.K. and Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, for permission to quote from the books mentioned which they respectively publish.

AMONGST the many advances of the Christian spirit to-day is the new approach that is being made to the mind-body relationship. Whilst theologians, philosophers and psychologists have been discussing this and advancing various academic theories, much practical work has been done quite recently which merits attention. The problem has been tackled both from the side of religion and medicine. It is of what has actually been done and of the foundation principles on which that achievement is based, that this paper speaks.

Let us begin with administration and practical affairs. There is no doubt that healing was regarded by the early Church as an integral part of its ministry to the world. Of the incidence of our Lord's healing miracles we shall speak later on, but that the healing of disease was regarded by Him as important, and indeed central to His mission, no one can doubt who reads the Gospels. Whatever modern thought may make of them, the healing miracles cannot be elided from the Synoptics without tearing them to pieces. Acts makes it clear that in the Apostolic Age the gift of healing was continued and actively possessed.

A comparatively recent study of the Ante-Nicene Church¹ shows that it went on for at least three centuries. Irenaeus, Tertullian, Justin Martyr and Origen are some of the great names that can be quoted in defence of this.

But by the end of the third century a definite change had begun. Theological controversies, often on barren subjects, increased in the Church: worldliness and the grasping of political power developed at the expense of the spiritualities. The conversion of Constantine in A.D. 325 was a piece of statesmanship rather than of religion. From that moment the Church became more a movement allied with the State than a living thrust of the human spirit towards God. Inevitably, slowly, the gift of healing died out. Augustine, in the closing years of the 4th century, complains that though miracles did happen, yet they were sporadic and rather unusual. By Cuthbert's time (A.D. 635-687), though holy water and oil were used to cure sickness, the procedure was distinctly tinged with magic, having come a long way from the Gospels and Apostolic Church.

By the Middle Ages the stream of the Church's healing ministry had to all intents and purposes gone underground. There was an occasional revival in the work of St. Francis and the early Franciscans, but it is noteworthy that not even in the case of St. Catherine of Genoa, who spent much of her life ministering to the sick in the hospitals, was any continuous emphasis put on direct healing by prayer and sacrament. In the 17th century in England, George Fox, as H. J. Cadbury has shown us,² performed acts of bodily healing, whilst in Ireland Valentine Greatrakes, "the stroker," as he was called, began to cure scrofula and other diseases by the laying on of hands. This practice had been usually confined to the two Royal Houses of England and France, and continued to be practised by the kings of England till the Hanoverians refused to sanction it any longer. With their refusal, apart from a few very occasional manifestations in John Wesley's early ministry, healing as part of the ministry of religion died out.

It is in our own day that the emphasis upon what has come to be known as "spiritual healing" has been revived in the Church. Leaving on one side the phenomena of Lourdes, the eccentric and non-Christian philosophy of Christian Science, and the practices of spiritualist "healers," recent years have

¹ Evelyn Frost, *Christian Healing*. (London, Mowbray, 1940.)

² H. J. Cadbury, *George Fox's Book of Miracles*. (London, C.U.P., 1948.)

seen a new approach on the part of Protestantism to the problems of disease. Many reputable societies have grown up within the Church, such as the Guild of Health, the Guild of St. Raphael, the Guild of Pastoral Psychology and the Divine Healing Mission. In 1937, at the instigation of the Rev. Leslie D. Weatherhead, the Methodist Conference appointed a Committee to investigate the whole field of spiritual healing. From this has sprung a Society which groups clergy and doctors together for study and prayer. The Guild of Health was started at the turn of the century in 1905, whilst in 1944 came the Churches' Council of Healing, an organisation which, like so many fruitful things in our modern Christian set-up, owes its origin to Archbishop Temple, and which now, under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Coventry, has representatives upon it from every great Christian Communion in Britain, except Roman Catholicism. All this growing movement works with the doctors, not against them, as witness the fact that the British Medical Association has appointed official representatives to sit on the Churches' Council. Medical, psychological and psychiatric skill are regarded as part of the gift and ministry of the living God Himself, but are supplemented by the offices of religion, prayer and intercession for the sick, the use of the sacraments, laying on of hands and anointing with oil. It is believed that a living religion, with the real spiritual experience that it implies, means health not disease. A quiet mind stayed on God reinforces the *vis medicatrix naturae*.

From the medical and psychological side it can be said that the modern movement back to recognition of non-bodily forces at work in healing really began with Mesmer, 1733-1815. His doctrine of animal magnetism was inevitably discredited, but it is from him that the new currents of thought had their source. Through Braid and Lloyd Tuckey in England, Esdaile in India, Charcôt and Bernheim in France, they passed on to Coué and his practice of suggestion ("every day in every way I am getting better and better"). Then came the epoch-making discoveries of Freud in relation to the unconscious, the schools of Adler and Jung, and the "Purposive" school of McDougall. All of these set the mind in the centre of the psyche and opened up a new conception of the relationship between unconscious mental forces and the human body. It was seen that much illness both organic and functional, if it did not have its origin in the mind, was at least vitally affected by it. A new medical approach

developed to the problem of suffering, modern psychiatry was born, and the incidence of neurotic illness recognised. Here and there, the older materialism fought rearguard actions, notably in the Behaviourist school of John B. Watson, which ignores all factors like freedom of the will, the imagination as a source of emotion, or the influences of emotion upon the body, and sets up in their stead conditioned stimuli and the unconscious drives of instinct and habit. But in general, the tide of medical practice has been against it. Man is seen to-day as an entity made up of a threefold nature, body, mind and spirit. A diseased soul or a disordered mind may upset the body. Illness and its cure are not entirely dependent on the knife, the bottle or syringe. When the mind can no longer deal with a conflict it projects it, at times, on to the body, as in various skin rashes and stomach troubles, and when the spirit is out of touch with God, Who is its natural environment, the whole personality is thrown out of order.

In May, 1947, the first official contact was established between the medical profession as a whole and the Churches' Council of Healing. The Ethical Committee of the British Medical Association invited the Council to send a deputation to meet them at their headquarters. The upshot of the discussions was a statement prepared by a Sub-Committee of the Ethical Committee of the BMA in conjunction with the Medical Committee of the C.C.H., which was printed and is available to all doctors. It declares that there is no professional or ethical reason why doctors should not co-operate with the clergy in a joint approach to the problems of sickness, each profession working within its own sphere. Parson, doctor and surgeon are finding a new common interest, sympathy and understanding in their ministry to the sick. In the beginning, priest and medicine man were one. Now, after centuries of separation and mutual misapprehension, they are coming together again. Whilst on one side medicine has been tending to become more and more scientific, until, in classification and specialisation there has been a tendency to lose sight of the individual as a whole, on the other religion has again awakened to its ancient convictions regarding the healing power of God. Lord Inman, as the Chairman of Charing Cross Hospital, has testified to this. He writes :³ "There is no earthly explanation of some of the things I have seen happen inside the walls of a hospital. They tell of a power

³ *Christ in the Modern Hospital* (quoted in report of CCH, 1946-7, p. 13).

that is greater than human. And that power is God." In this new joint approach lies a fresh significant adventure of the Christian spirit to-day which is full of hope for the future of mankind. Such is a brief statement of recent events in the field of Christian healing. It is time to consider the foundation principles underlying this history.

Modern scholars have paid much attention to the healing ministry of our Lord. Works like those of L. W. Grensted,⁴ Micklem,⁵ Richardson,⁶ G. G. Dawson⁷ and Leslie Weatherhead,⁸ have all considered them in detail, and attempted to appraise them in the light of the contemporary situation in theological and psychological thinking. Certain assumptions may be said to be common to all schools of Christian thought in this field: (1) The will of God for men is seen as health and happiness, not disease. A distinction is drawn by Weatherhead between the primary and secondary will of God in this matter, which is acutely pertinent. The *primary* will of God is that man should be healthy, perfectly integrated and balanced. "The primary will of God, His ideal intention, is perfect bodily health. Anything less . . . is a temporary victory of evil."⁹ But if at the same time, as in the case of St. Paul, or of "Trophimus who was left at Miletus sick,"¹⁰ healing does not follow, then it is the secondary will of God that man should so deal with his suffering as to make it an occasion for spiritual victory. (2) Sickness often arises from causes outside of the person who is ill. We are all bound up together in the bundle of life and cannot enjoy the advantages of the family without at the same time enduring its disadvantages and limitations. Disease and pain are real and not imaginary, as they are conceived to be in Christian Science. (3) There is a great difference between theological and psychological faith. The latter may be, and often is, nothing more nor less than a varying threshold of suggestibility. An ignorant man with a low threshold, easily susceptible to outside influences, may respond and be healed, whereas a highly educated person who is just as devout a Christian, may fail to receive the

⁴ L. W. Grensted, *Psychology and God* (Longmans). Bampton Lectures.

⁵ E. R. Micklem, *Miracles and the New Psychology* (O.U.P.).

⁶ A. Richardson, *The Miracle Stories of the Gospels* (S.C.M. Press).

⁷ G. G. Dawson, *Healing, Pagan and Christian* (S.P.C.K.).

⁸ L. D. Weatherhead, *Psychology, Religion and Healing* (Hodder and Stoughton).

⁹ Op. cit., p. 461.

¹⁰ 2 Tim. 4: 20.

suggestions because of his high threshold. Theological faith is not faith in healing but faith in the living God as revealed by Christ, is independent of suggestion, and lifts the personality out of its depression to a new height of real fellowship with the Divine. It is that communion of the spirit with God which provides the medium through which healing comes. (4) Jesus apparently never emphasized the healing of the body. He never even *claimed* to be a healer. He always declared that the most important thing to do was to bring the sick person into living fellowship with God. (5) The outstanding purpose of the healing miracles was redemptive. They were meant to bring forgiveness to the sinful disordered spirit. There were many mysterious magicians and wonder-workers passing along the roads of the first century Græco-Roman world, but Jesus always refused to be put into that class. He would not work a "sign."¹¹ The roots of disease for Him were not in material causes, but in man's evil will. Sickness belonged to the kingdom of Satan. His word to the paralytic borne of four, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee,"¹² go to the root of His thinking and practice. God, He said, is the perfect Father of all men. Unless a soul is saved bodily health means very little. Therefore His healing miracles had a moral reference, and the bodily cures may be said to be a sequence or by-product of the healing of the spirit. (6) Most important of all, in the healing recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, it is God who is directly at work in His Son Jesus Christ. Attempts have been made to interpret Jesus in this respect as a scientist before science, and a psychologist before psychology. It is said that His healings are susceptible of psychological and natural explanations, falling wholly within this sphere. His miracles were extensions of natural law, known to Him, but not to us or the men of His time. Such explanations break on the rock of the New Testament. Here is not a list of treatments to be paralleled in a Harley Street consulting room, but the Divine Healer at work, "very God of very God" ministering to the needy personalities of men and women. Only once in human history has a perfect personality appeared, One in whom body, mind and spirit have been completely integrated. Only once, therefore, has there been an entirely uninterrupted channel through which the healing Grace of God could flow. This

¹¹ Luke 11 : 29.

¹² Mark 2 : 5.

worked through the laws of the universe, but at the same time could extend and transcend them in the world of faith and love.

Says Alan Richardson, "The miracle stories form an essential and inseparable part of the Gospel-tradition."¹³ H. G. Wood points out that the evidence for many of the particular incidents recorded of the ministry of healing in that tradition is particularly good.¹⁴ Other Biblical scholars take the same view. The cures were not merely of neurotic or functional diseases. Organic troubles came within their scope as well. The Form Critics speak of a "miraculous technique," but there were cases in which Jesus never touched or came into personal contact with the sufferer at all. He healed by a word. Here we are not in the world of Hellenistic magic but in that of the Bible, in which we are in direct contact with God's creative power and activity. There have been several papers read recently before the Institute concerned with the question of the miracles, so the present writer may perhaps be excused a detailed discussion of the definition of miracle. Indeed, E. R. Micklem¹⁵ deprecates discussing in this particular context as to whether or not a "miracle" in a more restricted sense can happen. He says that such an enquiry is not relevant to a study of the healing miracles. But the miracle stories, as Richardson points out,¹⁶ are part of the Evangel itself. If they are stripped from the Gospels not only does the narrative fall to pieces, but the Jesus who emerges in what is left is certainly not the Jesus in whom the disciples believed. So some definition of "miracle" is necessary, if "miracles" are not to be explained away in a non-Biblical fashion. May we take as satisfactory that given by Dr. Leslie Weatherhead in his latest book: "A miracle is a law-abiding event by which God accomplishes His redemptive purposes through the release of energies which belong to a plane of being higher than any with which we are normally familiar" ?¹⁷ History and theology are inextricably mingled in the Gospels. We have an interpretation of the facts as well as the facts themselves. To the Synoptic writers (to confine ourselves only to them), Christ is "the power of God unto salvation,"¹⁸ and the things He did were just the revelation of that power in action. A psychological or even

¹³ Op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁴ Peake's Commentary, p. 663.

¹⁵ Op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁶ Op. cit., p. 126.

¹⁷ Op. cit., p. 47.

¹⁸ Romans 1: 16.

mythological explanation of miracle may be sufficient for those who stop short of the full Christian belief in Christ as God manifest in the flesh. But to those who see and worship Him as the Evangelists did, such theories fall far short of reality. Weatherhead's definition makes it clear that in what is known as "miracle" God is directly at work, that Divine energies are directly released, and that yet the cosmos remains an ordered system not at the mercy of arbitrary will on the one side or the merely marvellous on the other.

We propose to give examples of the way in which three Christian scholars who are aware of the historical, theological and psychological background of the whole subject of non-physical healing through the centuries, have dealt with the miracles of healing. They are taken from three authoritative and influential books, E. R. Micklem's *Miracles and the New Psychology* (published in 1922), G. G. Dawson's *Healing, Pagan and Christian* (published in 1935), and Leslie D. Weatherhead's great new work *Psychology, Religion and Healing*, of 1951. Between them they are typical of the modern Christian yet truly scientific attitude to the questions involved.

1. E. R. Micklem's book is indispensable and was a landmark in these particular studies. Throughout he is sympathetic to the psychological and pathological point of view. He is furnished with an adequate psychological apparatus and in addition possesses the requisite New Testament scholarship. He accepts the tremendous suggestive power of our Lord's personality, and says that this factor more than any other single fact, played a decisive and prominent part in His cures. Jesus understood the depths of human character and motive to an unparalleled degree. He had intense sympathy and unrivalled authority, all of which increased the emotional *rapport* between Him and His patients. Further, as Gustave le Bon has shown us,¹⁹ the suggestibility of individuals tends to be heightened in a crowd. Many of our Lord's cures were accomplished before believing and admiring groups. There is no evidence that either He or His disciples practised anything approaching to what a modern psychologist would call "collective hypnosis," but nevertheless, the crowd must have affected the situation. The reports of the healing of "multitudes" therefore do not present any particular psychological difficulties. This of course fits in with the present-day development of group therapy and has a direct connexion with

¹⁹ *The Crowd*. (London, Ernest Benn, 1930.)

the psychology and indeed the healing influences of Christian worship.

Micklem does not believe that the cures effected by Jesus were only of hysterical cases. This is in line with his emphasis upon suggestion. Is it possible for psychiatry to deal with organic as well as functional disease? So little is really known as to where the body begins or the mind ends that it is difficult to answer this question accurately, but he is disinclined to banish organic cures from our Lord's ministry.

It is indeed true that we have scant information about the nature of the diseases that were cured, and further, there is a distinct difference of approach manifested by the Synoptic Gospels on the one side and the Fourth Gospel on the other. "In the Synoptics," he says, "it is urged with reiterated insistence that miracle is only possible if there is an antecedent faith, while in John it is the miracle that induces the faith."²⁰ Matthew, Mark and Luke represent Jesus as working "miracles" almost reluctantly, certainly refusing to regard them as in any way a proof of His Divinity, while John makes Him work "signs" with an evidential purpose. John's attitude on faith in this connexion is much more in line with modern Christian interpretations. Any act of spiritual healing which throws the onus on to the patient is not only false religion but bad psychology. It makes the sufferer feel that everything depends on his having the right kind of faith, so that if he is not healed, he is apt to pass into a state of depression and religious apathy from which it is difficult to arouse him.

The influence of current beliefs on healing in the time of our Lord is very obvious. The Jews believed that disease was due to sin,²¹ though there are indications that "the belief in the connexion of sin and disease was not universally accepted."²² Micklem says that "the direct evidence is indeed limited, but, so far as it goes, it points to the fact that our Lord at no time taught definitely the doctrine of the relation between sin and physical disaster, but on the other hand did 'really combat' that doctrine."^{22a} This is true, yet it does not invalidate the redemptive purpose of the miracles of healing. There is no warrant for assuming that our Lord attributed the origin of disease either

²⁰ Op. cit., p. 26.

²¹ Cf. Lev. 26; Deut. 28: 15 ff.

²² Op. cit., p. 31.

^{22a} Op. cit., p. 33.

to sin in general or to sins, though certain cases of disease may have been so individually, as witness the paralytic boy recorded by St. Mark.²³ Further, the prevailing acceptance of demon possession as a fact did undoubtedly affect the situation. Jesus, he infers, was a man of His time, with the inevitable limitations of mental outlook that the Incarnation brought in its train.

After a careful enquiry into each healing miracle, the following conclusions are advanced.

(a) There is no certainty that any cure worked by Jesus "has its parallel in the annals of modern healing by psychotherapy."²⁴ Diagnosis in the Gospels is so vague and unreliable (what was meant by "leprosy" is a case in point), that precision is impossible. Yet it may be said that "the particulars of the miracles of healing upon which most reliance can be placed are not themselves incompatible with the view that such healing was accomplished through the agency of ascertainable psychological laws."²⁵

(b) Scientific psychology must take into account the influence of prayer for the sick. It obeys its own laws and works according to its own method. The two instances of our Lord healing at a distance (the Syro-Phoenician's daughter²⁶ and the Centurion's servant²⁷) suggest this. This again is true in the light of present day experience. The present writer has been for over twelve years the Secretary of the Methodist Church Spiritual Healing Committee, and has in his files a collection of instances of cure through prayer, all of which have been carefully scrutinised and checked. The experience of people in all the Churches who are to-day undertaking the work of intercession for the sick can no longer be dismissed as fiction, wishful thinking or even as coincidence.

(c) The speed with which the Gospel cures were accomplished distinguishes them from present psychiatry.

(d) Our Lord's cures were by no means due merely to suggestion or psychological method. They were of a permanent and enduring character, restoring the whole personality of the sufferer: suggestion on the contrary is

²³ Mark 2: 1-12.

²⁴ Op. cit., p. 130.

²⁵ Op. cit., p. 130.

²⁶ Mark 7: 24-30; Matt. 15: 21-8.

²⁷ Matt. 8: 5-13; Luke 7: 1-10.

usually of a temporary nature, the sufferer having to return, not once nor twice, for a "refill."

(e) Jesus cured by bringing the sufferers into living contact with God and thus restoring their confidence not only in Him, but in the universe at large. It is in this context that the constant emphasis on faith in healing must be understood. "This 'confidence' is not the result of mere uncritical 'suggestibility' . . . it is confidence in a person; and the person is 'God,' 'the Father'—a name to which Jesus gave a wealth of meaning hitherto undreamed of; a meaning which included the attributes of sovereign power and unlimited love."²⁸

It is apparent that in this most influential and pioneer study the psychological emphasis is paramount. Micklem set in being a trend of thinking which has permeated much of the modern spiritual healing movement. A certain healthy revulsion against it is now becoming apparent, a return being made to religion instead of psychology, but there is no doubting the valuable or stimulating nature of his discussion.

2. We turn now to another book that had a strong influence in the attempt to re-invisage the Church's healing power in the light of 20th century knowledge and conditions, namely, G. G. Dawson's *Healing, Pagan and Christian*. This set the subject in the light of pagan and non-Christian custom, tracing the development of healing back to its earliest dawn. It also dealt with medical and professional healing, whereas Micklem had only been concerned with a study of the New Testament miracles.

Some time ago a doctor said to the present writer, "Some of us pray like parsons, others of us work like doctors." That dichotomy, so prevalent still in certain quarters, is negatived all through Dawson's pages. It is entirely false. Far too much suffering and far too many deaths are still caused by disregard of the doctor. But still, too, many hopeless cases get up from bed and cheat the undertaker. Dawson makes it plain that if we are to account for all the facts thrust upon us by daily experience, we cannot stop at physical or psychological healing. Sometimes the free and transcendent spirit breaks through, smashes physical conditions, and triumphs over the flesh. Dawson divides our Lord's cures into three classes: (1) those primarily psychological, (2) those telepathical, and (3) those

²⁸ Op. cit., p. 133.

which transcend altogether the operation of any known or hypothetical processes, only explicable by the direct action of God on the human psyche.²⁹ Under (1) he gives as instances, the raising of Jairus's daughter,³⁰ the giving of sight to the blind man at Bethsaida,³¹ the cure of blind Bartimæus,³² and the healing of the cripple at Bethesda.³³ In every one of these he suggests there is a definite psychological technique. In view of our account above of Micklem's work on this there is no need to follow his discussion any further. It is when he comes to speak of classes (2) and (3) that he introduces fresh material. It is true that cures at a distance have not been unknown, he says, but usually there has been, as in clairvoyance or cryptæsthesia, some contact, however slight, between healer and patient. Charms and talismans were extensively used in the time of Christ, were blessed by the magician, and passed on to the patients who received them with faith and hope. Contrariwise, there are many cases on record in the annals of witchcraft in which deaths have been brought about by distant suggestion. But in the instances of the Syro-phœnician's daughter and the centurion's servant, there is no hint of any such contact. The patients concerned apparently did not even know that an appeal on their behalf had been made to Christ, or that it was successful. Dawson suggests that "the mother might well have been in some sort of telepathic rapport with her daughter, and the centurion with his servant."^{33a} "Spiritual laws transcend time and space, and telepathic rapport might have been sufficient with Christ as the Healer."³⁴

This is interesting in view of the work now going on in America on the *psi* phenomena. But it goes beyond it to some such theory as that of Jung on the collective unconscious. Is the Pauline phrase "in Christ" but the expression in the spiritual sphere of a fact already known in the psychological? Deep down in the primitive levels of the unconscious, is the Christian linked with Christ, as the individual is with racial memories and experience? We need further theological and

²⁹ See his whole chapter on "Jesus Christ and Healing," p. 112 ff., to which the above paragraphs are indebted.

³⁰ Mark 5 : 21-24, 35-43 ; Matt. 9 : 18 f. 23-36 ; Luke 8 : 40-42, 49-56.

³¹ Mark 8 : 22-26.

³² Mark 19 : 46-52.

³³ John 5 : 2 ff.

^{33a} Op. cit., p. 120.

³⁴ Ibid.

psychological investigation into this matter. Dawson has opened a door here through which we need to pass to see what lies beyond.

In class 3 the only instance he adduces is the healing of the ear of the High Priest's servant when Peter struck it off in the garden of Gethsemane.³⁵ There are critical difficulties about this story. It is doubtful if the view that Luke wrote his Gospel with a medical emphasis is correct or that he used a technical medical terminology. H. J. Cadbury has suggested that there is nothing particularly technical about Luke's vocabulary. His language may be more literary than the other Evangelists but it is not more medical.³⁶ How much scientific criticism of cases he records may be attributed to Luke is open to much question. Here, apparently, if the story is accepted, we are in a region where the writ of psychological process or natural law does not run. Says Dawson, "it must be remembered that Luke only says, 'Jesus touched his ear and healed him.'" This miracle is surely related to the accounts of the raising from the dead of Lazarus³⁷ and the widow of Nain's son.³⁸ God is not imprisoned within His universe, immanent as He undoubtedly is within it. He acts directly upon it as surely we can act upon that part of it that we can affect. Since the greater includes the less, it is difficult to believe that the human will can accomplish that which the Divine Will cannot. We know really so little of what we mean by "natural laws." They are only names we give to observed phenomena and the way in which they apparently work. We cannot prove that cases such as the healing of Malchus's ear, if the literary foundations can be substantiated, are violations of law. Before we do so, we must have mapped out the final frontiers of the universe, a task from which even modern science may well shrink.

Dawson agrees that Christ's healing work was redemptive. He points out that healing in itself has no moral or spiritual value. It was the holy love of God for man that came through in the healing miracles. The sufferer was linked up with "the eternal purpose of salvation," in which the motive was compassion and sympathy, not mere power.³⁹

³⁵ Luke 22. 50.

³⁶ Cf. H. J. Cadbury, *Harvard Theological Studies*, vi, i (quoted in Merkleman).

³⁷ Cf. John 11: 38-44.

³⁸ Luke 7: 11-18.

³⁹ Op. cit., pp. 134 ff

3. In Dr. Weatherhead's *Psychology, Religion and Healing*, we have the latest investigation by a Christian scholar into spiritual healing. He agrees that there is no evidence in the Gospels that "the cure of physically-caused illness" is excluded,⁴⁰ and dismisses most emphatically any idea that the healing miracles were performed to draw attention to the Divinity of Christ. But at the same time "the miracles of Jesus are no more in the same category as modern treatments than the parables of Jesus are in the same category as other stories, and for the same reason. The miracles compel amazement and admiration, but properly regarded they evoke faith and worship, and it was mainly for this reason they were handed down."⁴¹

The Healing Miracles are classified by Weatherhead into a scheme which to a certain extent agrees with that of Dawson, though obviously quite independent of it. First, we have "the cures which involve the mechanism of suggestion," then, those "which involve a more complicated technique," and finally, "cures which involve the influence of a psychic 'atmosphere,' or 'the faith' of people other than the patient."⁴² He leaves out the healing of Malchus's ear, but apart from that, all the healings are included in the lists. He gives a detailed and most valuable study of each recorded case for which our readers must be referred to the book itself, and, as a result, comes to certain conclusions. He agrees that the "mental mechanisms" our Lord used can sometimes be "identified through our modern psychological knowledge," yet at the same time protests strongly that the healing miracles are in their essential qualities much more than clever psychological treatments. Much of Christ's healing work, he thinks, is "unique." Only as the Church lives its life on the same disciplined plane as He did will it be able to recover the healing ministry lost for so many centuries.⁴³

He has a fascinating chapter on "Guilt as Causative of Illness,"⁴⁴ in the course of which it becomes apparent that this great authority also interprets the Healing Miracles as redemptive in purpose. He quotes the story of the paralytic to show how our Lord's healing brought an immediate cure of physical symptoms through the removal of guilt and the sense of forgiveness that such removal brings. "The proper conception of God's

⁴⁰ Op. cit., p. 39.

⁴¹ Op. cit., p. 49.

⁴² Op. cit., pp. 51, 52.

⁴³ Op. cit., p. 78.

⁴⁴ Op. cit., pp. 320 ff.

forgiveness . . . is not the cancelling of all the effects of sin, but the restoration of a relationship." As is succinctly pointed out, this has a connection not only with the doctrine of the Atonement, but also, and more important, with the way in which that doctrine should be interpreted to-day. No man "transfers his guilt to Christ," but Christ does transfer His Grace to man. This is the divine outgoing in love, sympathy and compassion, which is so manifest as the heart of the healing power of Jesus.

Another point brought out is that healing is mediated through the Christian Community. "Success in healing is not expected from the solitary individual, however saintly, but . . . the powers of the Kingdom are manifested through the fellowship of the whole Church."⁴⁵ It is through the discipline of the ecclesia that individuals are conditioned into healers. Not until the life of the present-day Church is lived at a much higher level will the healing power of God be set free to-day as it should be.

One further point: Dr. Weatherhead defines faith throughout in a theological and not purely psychological sense. To quote his definition, which we find particularly satisfying, "Christian faith is the response of the whole man, thinking, feeling and willing, to the impact of God in Christ, by which man comes into a conscious, personal relation with God."⁴⁶ Here we have guarded the necessity for the integration of the whole personality through its being lifted into a conscious communion with God. So long as this is emphasised and placed in the centre, the door is shut fast against all magical conceptions of healing on the one side, or purely psychological explainings-away on the other.

It should be said that these few excerpts have failed to do justice to a massively learned book which for years to come is likely to be the standard work on the subject.

To sum up, the three scholars whose writings we have examined agree, in the main, on the following conclusions:—

1. The evidence for the actual historicity of our Lord's healing miracles is good and cannot be shaken unless the whole superstructure of the Gospels is to be endangered.

2. That the real explanation of them is to be found in Christ Himself, in His unique personality, uniquely integrated, and in the breaking through of God's original power in Him. It is not

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 429.

to be found in psychology, though psychological explanations of certain acts of healing may be accepted.

3. That "faith" in healing is faith not in healing but in the living God, the lifting of the whole psyche into fellowship with Him. All infer a difference *in esse* between theological and psychological faith. As Weatherhead puts it, it is possible "to have faith without healing and healing without faith."

4. The purpose of the healing miracles was redemptive, the restoring of the broken fellowship of the sufferer with God. Christian healing, they all suggest, is spiritually conditioned. All that mattered to Jesus in healing was that a man's inner state should keep him in harmony with God. It may be said that it is precisely because this is forgotten that we get so much eccentricity in this field. The belief that God has cured something previously deemed incurable may engender such a sense of being specially chosen by Him, that the egoism which is at the root of many disorders is accentuated rather than diminished. Then character defects replace previous physical symptoms. All this can be avoided if the emphasis on redemption and communion is sustained.

5. That a psychological "technique" was at times deliberately used by our Lord. His healings are not violations of natural law, for, even where they pass beyond technique, they are determined by God's knowledge of His own universe.

6. That healing is often set in the midst of the Community of the Church. Its effectiveness is determined by the disciplined level of the community life.

7. They all agree that there is evidence that our Lord's cures dealt with organic as well as psychogenic cases.

It is as well to say that the New Testament makes it clear that not all sufferers were healed. Weatherhead suggests⁴⁷ that it may be that Jesus did not cure all who were brought to Him, and it may be that in certain cases He saw a patient more than once. Micklem does not agree with this.⁴⁸ But whether or not this is true, it remains evident that healing took place under certain conditions and laws, at the meaning of which we are only just beginning to guess.

It remains to examine the way in which the above conclusions or principles, as perhaps they may be deemed, fit into the current

⁴⁷ Op. cit., in a footnote on p. 81.

⁴⁸ Op. cit., p. 131.

psychological situation as revealed by present-day psychiatry. Three factors amongst others operate so often in many a "nervous breakdown" to-day, guilt, loneliness, and fear.

All schools of psychological thought agree that guilt, both conscious and unconscious, is one of the ever present factors in the human situation at the present time. Freud has much to say about the superego, the moral standard imposed upon the personality through fear, as contrasted with the ego ideal, the aim and object that the self freely chooses of its own accord. He points out how the id, the repository of the primitive a-moral savage in man, opposes the superego. The battle between the superego and the id so often sets up the guilt which lies behind many a remote illness. Jung talks about guilt, though from a different angle. A man may be so smitten with fear of his unconscious forces, that they have a repressive effect on his personality. When in the attempt to extend personality the unconscious becomes conscious, a heavy burden is often placed upon the psyche. There is a contrast of sharp opposites and a feeling of inner division, too often resulting in guilt.⁴⁹ He has much to say about the value of confession in this connexion. Karen Horney points out how the unconscious guilt may often lead to suffering as self-punishment,⁵⁰ analogous to Freud's "death instinct," while a recent work on inferiority suggests that "feelings of minus value" often originate in a sense of guilt.⁵¹ Often, all psychiatrists agree, this unconscious guilt is a frequent cause of psychogenic illness. Some time ago (the actors in this drama are now both dead so it may be mentioned), a man was sent to the present writer who every June suffered from a painful skin rash that for weeks incapacitated him from work. It had not yielded to patient and skilful medical care. It was found that one June years before, when he had been a young man, he had seduced a girl. No "consequences" had followed. Neither had said anything to his or her people. They had parted and not seen each other often afterwards and had finally drifted away from friendship altogether. But, brought up strictly as he had been, the guilt set up had gone into the unconscious. Every June, about the time of the

⁴⁹ Cf. Schaer, *Religion and the Cure of Souls in Jung's Psychology* (London, Routledge, 1951), pp. 99, 123.

⁵⁰ Karen Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth* (London, Routledge, 1951), pp. 230 ff.

⁵¹ Oliver Brachfield, *Inferiority Feelings* (London, Routledge, 1951), p. 98.

seduction, the dermatitis set itself up. When he saw the connexion, lived through the experience again, and passing from psychology to religion, on his knees accepted the forgiveness of God, the trouble cleared up, and, for several years after, June passed without the disease breaking out. It is the message of redemption in Christ that alone can speak adequately to the experience of guilt. Healing must redeem the soul before it can deal with the body or even the mind. The deep sources of the spirit, where man makes contact with the living God, must be reached and affected. Redemption, forgiveness, restore the relationship of the soul with God. The consequences of sin may remain in body, mind or soul, either separately or together, but their nature is changed and their effect on the personality is altered.⁵²

Loneliness is another factor in the psychogenic field to-day with which modern conditions often make it very difficult to cope. The growth of the complexity of the universe has, as we all know, dwarfed the significance of the individual man. At the heart of many a neurosis lies an intense loneliness. The neurotic feels that no one has ever passed his way before or suffered as he has suffered. He stands in a place of desolation where no voice answers when he calls and no hand touches his own. So many people in our modern civilization have been deprived of love. As little children they knew neither affection, good will, nor appreciation, and nothing as they have grown up into adult life ever makes up to them for the loss. The present writer has seen over 2,000 cases of marriage break down in the course of the years. Well over half of these, 65 per cent., are the children of broken homes. People deprived of love as children grow up to be unable to make a proper heterosexual adjustment. Too often, their unconscious is motivated by hate. Behind the façade of aggression, one finds a little frightened child peering out at life. Here again is a fruitful cause of much illness. Some of it is just an appeal for love, an attempt to get from an obscure place in the wings to the centre of the stage. Self-immolation, too, plays its part, whilst hate and hostility set up toxins in the blood. Many cases of sexual difficulty that have come under the writer's notice trace back to the deprivation of love and the intense inner loneliness that it brings. Here again the healing of the Christian message may play a decisive part.

⁵² Cf. Weatherhead, *op. cit.*, p 241 ff., especially for the influence of this on the Doctrine of the Atonement.

“Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.” During the writer’s ministry in a London Church a girl, sick and ill, at the end of her resources, stood one wintry Sunday evening for a long time on Hammersmith Bridge, debating whether or not she should throw herself into the river. With a shrug she finally turned away and obeying some impulse slipped into the warmth of the back pew of an old London Church. She has told the writer what happened to her that night. She felt as though a great Tender Presence came into her life, transforming her whole being. She is not an imaginative person. Further, that “Presence” has remained with her for years since then. Her whole health and outlook upon life has improved and remained so. It is Jesus who speaks to the individual in our masses of population. Each life was worth His healing and dying when He was on earth. It is so still. There is no more integrating factor in personality than an individual consciousness of the love of God.⁵³

Finally, there is fear as another dominating factor in the psychological situation. Anxiety neuroses are on the increase and produce many physical troubles. Conversion hysteria may be behind blindness or paralysis. So-called “neurasthenia” may be due to the fact that the patient is using up so much psychic energy in unconscious repression that he has little left with which to face the practical duties of life. According to Freud fear may stem from the Oedipus conflict, according to Adler from insufficient satisfaction of the will to power, while Pfister derives it from some damming of the impulse to love. It can be caused by an excess as well as by a deficiency of love, from claims of love which arise and cannot be met. Injuries to self-love are conspicuous as causes of fear. In a great majority of investigations into fear, search into motives reveals inhibitions of love, and amongst these dammings of self-love play a considerable part.⁵⁴ Once again, the healing work of Christ speaks to the situation. No one needs to be reminded how often the message “Fear not” peals through the Gospels. But “faith” as contact with a living Person, the healing of the group life in which that “faith” is so often set, and the deep peace which a real experience of God brings, minister to this sadness as no

⁵³ Cf. Hadfield, *Psychology and Mental Health* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1950), pp. 124 ff; Suttie, *Origins of Love and Hate* (London, Kegan Paul 1935), Chap. 6.

⁵⁴ Cf. Pfister, *Christianity and Fear* (London, 1948), pp. 41 ff.

other factor in modern life does. It is at this point that the intercession of people united in love for God and their fellow-men can often play an effective part, as has already been said. The time has gone by when the connexion between intercession for the sick and cures of their sickness can be dismissed as always due to coincidence on the one side or faulty diagnosis on the other. That prayer does not always achieve a cure or that we do not understand how it works, is no argument against it. Do scientists always understand the processes with which they deal? A great deal of research is needed into this subject, but that prayer is valid in this connexion is supported now by such a wealth of evidence that must be taken into account. Not least is it useful in banishing the fear that lies at the root of so much illness.

Thus the conclusions of New Testament scholarship on the healing miracles of our Lord are seen to meet the needs of the psychological situation as revealed by psychiatry to-day. There is need for the revival of the ancient Christian ministry of healing allied with all the resources of modern medical knowledge and skill. In the new alliance that is slowly being forged between the Church and medicine lies a great hope for the enduring welfare of humanity at large.

DISCUSSION.

The Chairman (Dr. WHITE) said: We are grateful to Mr. Crowlesmith for his paper, particularly in view of the increasing interest shown recently in the subject of Divine Healing.

Mr. Crowlesmith makes an important point when he states that "the healing miracles cannot be elided from the Synoptics without tearing them to pieces." A rejection of the miraculous element in the Gospel records must logically lead to a rejection of belief in the Resurrection.

Our author points out the distinction between faith in healing and faith in the living God. The history of various methods of healing compels us to admit that healing has occurred in an apparently miraculous way apart from faith in God. Hypnotism and powerful authoritative suggestion have brought about healing. Such methods of healing, however, whilst they may cure psychogenic or possibly even organic diseases, do not enrich the personality. Where faith in God is present, the resultant healing brings enrichment. The

sufferer is made whole, healed in spirit as well as in body, and brought into closer fellowship with God.

Mr. Crowlesmith refers to the prevailing belief in demon possession in the time of our Lord. This opens up a large subject. There appears to be some evidence for the existence of demon possession in these days. Some of the phenomena described by missionaries in the Far East are very suggestive of demon possession. In my own practice I have met with at least two cases where the patient appeared to be possessed and directed by an alien evil spirit. In both cases the patient had attended spiritualist séances, and had indulged in automatic writing with the planchette. It seems to me to be unsound to suppose that Jesus was limited by the beliefs of His time when He professed to cast out demons, or that belief in demon possession was nothing more than a superstition now outworn.

I am very interested in the reference to Jung's theory of the collective unconscious in relation to certain Christian doctrines. I agree with Mr. Crowlesmith that there is room for further investigation along these lines. Jung's own theory needs clarification. For example, does his theory refer only to common inherited mental characteristics, or does it imply some such concept as Emerson's "Over Soul" or Plato's realm of Ideas?

In his references to the psychology of guilt, both in relation to the doctrine of the Atonement, and in relation to the production of psychogenic illness, Mr. Crowlesmith touches on very delicate and debateable ground. Certain statements in the New Testament seem to suggest that in a sense our guilt was transferred to Christ on the Cross; e.g., "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree," and "He was made sin for us who knew no sin." This, however, is a theological subject which I do not propose to pursue.

On the psychological side, the problem of guilt has not, in my opinion, been satisfactorily solved. I do not find in psychology a satisfactory explanation either of its cause or of its cure. Christian doctrine contains answers to both these questions in its declarations concerning man's spiritual relationship to God.

We have had, in this paper, an interesting summary of the bearing of modern psychology on the miracles of healing. It has surely made it evident to us that there remain many problems, theological, medical and psychological, to be solved in connection with the

miracles of healing recorded in the New Testament, and in relation to the phenomena of faith-healing occurring today.

Mr. B. C. MARTIN said : I would like to say how much I have appreciated this paper. There is one matter, however, which I think calls for clarification, and that is the relation of the Will of God to disease. On line 14 of page 59 there is a statement which I feel is too wide, viz. : "The will of God for men is seen as health and happiness, not disease." That may be true in that limited sphere of disease which is the result of some psychological maladjustment. But what of that larger sphere where the mind plays little or any part, e.g., contracting pneumonia through exposure, catching scarlet-fever from a patient, or succumbing to influenza during an epidemic ? Quite clearly these illnesses cannot *always* rightly be attributable to the mental or spiritual state of a person. They are to a large extent the physical effect of a physical cause, and can we say that this is not the will of God ? The laws of health are God's laws and if these are broken, as they often are, inadvertently or even inevitably, will not the result, viz., disease, usually follow ; and is not therefore such disease, in a sense, God's will ? The question cannot be disposed of by distinguishing between God's primary and secondary wills, as if all disease proceeded from an evil source, and was sometimes *permitted* by God, and permitted only.

Actually, there are instances in Scripture where it appears that God brought (not merely permitted) physical suffering upon individuals for disciplinary purposes, e.g., the leprosy of Gehazi (2 Kings 5 : 27) and the chastening of the Lord mentioned in 1 Cor. 11 : 29-32 ("For this cause many are weak and sickly among you").

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION.

Mr. E. H. BETTS wrote : The only regrettable feature of this paper is its exaggeration of the importance of healing in Christian revelation and early practice.

It is not *unqualifiedly* true to say that "Acts makes it clear that in the Apostolic age the gift of healing was continued and actively possessed." What is made clear is that it was in rapid diminishment after having played its proper part in the inauguration of the Christian faith. The Apostle Paul, himself too ill to proceed on his missionary journey from Pisidian Antioch, found no miraculous

healing to enable him to complete his plans, but preached in the Galatian cities under the testing disabilities of a grievous sickness (Gal. 4 : 13, 15). He left Trophimus at Miletus—sick. He needed the cloak for bodily warmth like any ordinary person.

All the miracles recorded in the Gospel of John, are called "signs" (*sēmeia*). Not only so: they are commented on by the Apostle John himself as being evidential (John 20 : 30-31). Further, the early "works of power" wrought by the witnesses of Jesus are stated to be God's own confirmatory attestation of their spoken word. There is no escaping the note of evidentiality in the Christian miracles.

Moreover, not only were believers called upon, often, to *endure* sickness and other hardships, but amongst the greatest triumphs of faith we find it recorded, "All these *died* in faith, not having received the promises." This endurance and continuance in faith tends to be overshadowed by emphasis on healing. And surely any pressing of miracles of healing which tends to side-track the Christian from this pathway of God-honouring faith is mischievous.

Neither is there one scrap of evidence that early Christian miracle-workers were concerned in the least with "the recognition of non-bodily forces at work in healing" or with the recognition—and much less the use—of auto-suggestion or of such conceptions as the "unconscious."

The healing which *is* recorded in Scripture (over and above that which, in its main purpose, was evidential) is intimately interlocked with moral considerations—self-judgment, repentance, humility and return to faith. What accompanies the "prayer of faith" which "shall save the sick" is confession of wrong (Jas. 5 : 14-16).

Faith brings God in—His will, *His* power (apart from all study of what may be instrumental means) and His healing, if He see fit, by whatever means. The unsatisfactory feature of most modern movements of healing is the fading out of God and the focusing of attention on the means. Conscience too is seldom brought in. Faith never acts so. Faith rests in God Himself.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

In relation to what Mr. Martin has to say, I believe the statement that "the primary will of God is never disease" stands true. It

depends on one's estimate of the character of God. No earthly loving father would ever deliberately will disease for his child. Neither can I conceive of our Heavenly Father doing so. To me the argument is as simple as that.

Much disease is not the result of individual wrongdoing but rather the fault of the community. The individual is caught in the web of the body politic. God does not will the results of the social wrongdoing. They follow as inevitable consequences, apart from His will. He has made a world in which these things happen because it is the only way in which personality is ever to grow. Under these conditions His secondary will is that we should accept the consequences and seek to change and transform the social sin from which they spring. I believe the distinction between primary and secondary wills in this connexion is entirely valid.

In reply to Mr. Betts, I do not believe the paper exaggerates the importance of healing in the early Church or in Christian revelation at all. Confessedly, it is only one aspect of the Gospel message, but if it is taken as symbolic of the healing and forgiveness of the whole personality—body, mind and spirit—it is entirely supported by the Gospels.

I am in entire agreement with Dr. White's comment.

The Rev. S. Runsie Craig Memorial, 1952

In accordance with the terms of the Trust the Council have selected for the 1952 Memorial the Paper on "Religion and the Gospel" read before the Institute on January 21st, 1952, by Rev. Jakób Jocz, Ph.D., as being strongly confirmatory of the Christian Faith.

906TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY,
21ST JANUARY, 1952.

REV. C. T. COOK IN THE CHAIR.

RELIGION AND THE GOSPEL.

By THE REV. JAKÓB JO CZ, Ph.D.

SYNOPSIS.

The object of this paper is threefold :—

(1) It aims at an analysis of religion. The writer is aware that no simple definition is satisfactory. He therefore offers a description rather than a definition. He contends, however, that all religious forces have a common denominator and can be reduced to a few basic principles.

(2) It aims at a short analysis of the Gospel. The material for such an analysis is not religion but the Canon of the Bible.

The Bible reveals a clash between religion and the Gospel. That clash reaches a climax in the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Taking therefore the Cross as a focal point, the Gospel appears to be the *opposite* of religion, not of false religion but of all religion. Seen in this light, religion reveals itself as man's word *about* God—whereas the Gospel is God's word *to* man.

(3) It aims at a juxtaposition of religion and the Gospel. The result is an indissoluble tension. The author holds this to be the position of the Christian believer. Some may seek a compromise, others may seek a clear-cut division, but such efforts are the result of a misunderstanding. Christian anthropology demands such a tension and the Christian faith presupposes it. The outcome of the tension between religion and the Gospel is faith in Jesus Christ.

THE subject is not merely of academic interest. It touches upon the essence of the Gospel. It is of importance both to the preacher at home and the missionary in the field. Every Christian worker knows that religion is the most formidable

defence he encounters in his task as an Evangelist. But it is seldom recognized that religion is always the most bitter opponent to the Gospel.

Christian preaching never takes place in a vacuum. From the beginning Christianity entered the field as a rival religion. It became involved with other religious systems and has evolved features, symbols and a terminology similar to other religions. Christianity as a historic entity is a religion. It has assimilated much of the pagan world and is exposed to the influences and trends of history. It is thus by no means a pure system, but rather an amalgam from a variety of sources. Whether we like it or not, Christianity is an eclectic system with a preponderance of Judaic and Greek elements. But it is the main purpose of this essay to show that there is an indissoluble tension between Christianity as a religion and the Gospel as derived from the New Testament. The tension between Christianity and Gospel, or religion and Gospel, is not accidental but genetic. This was the discovery made at the Reformation. Failure to recognize the difference between religion and Gospel has resulted in unfortunate aberrations in Christian theology. It is here that we come upon the basic error of the Roman Church.

The writer is indebted to Prof. Johannes Witte for his insistence that religion and Gospel are not to be equated. Unfortunately, his book *Die Christus-Botschaft und die Religionen* is almost unknown to English readers.

At this juncture we must, however, make it clear that we do not conceive it possible to separate empirically religion from the Gospel. The tension is an inescapable tension which we carry within us. It is part of our human limitation that absolutes are not possible in this world. All perfectionist and sectarian movements in the Church from the Donatists to the Quakers sprang from a failure to recognize this humiliating truth.

Our task is thus not to denounce religion but to encounter it frankly. If we encounter it as Christians we shall become aware of its fierce opposition to the Gospel. The function of theology may be directed towards a synthesis or else towards a humble acknowledgement of the fact. It is our contention that a clear recognition of the fundamental difference between religion and Gospel is of vital importance to the Church.

I. RELIGION.

We are now faced with the task of defining religion. Here we enter upon much contested ground. The term "religion"

covers a wide range of phenomena ; it therefore cannot easily be reduced to a simple statement. No definition will ever do justice to all its manifestations.

Religion being one of the subjects where objectivity is impossible, all we can do is express a private opinion. It is obvious that views on the subject entirely depend upon a personal attitude and philosophical predilection. Happily, in our case, the subjective approach need not prejudice the value of our conclusions. The decisive factor is the measure one applies in the course of the investigation. Here the measure is not the views of an individual but an independent and outside value. Our task is to confront religion and Gospel. What we say about religion is said in the light of the Gospel. It is from underneath the Cross that we shall pass judgment upon this absorbing phenomenon.

The subjective nature of religion helps us to decide as to the method of our investigation. It is obvious to us that religion belongs to the realm of psychology. This is a new and recent idea. Since Kant, religion was held to belong to the sphere of logic. It was thought to have its foundation in pure Reason and to be explained by the Kantian Categories. This was the basis upon which Jacob Friedrich Fries built his philosophy. When Rudolf Otto wrote his *Philosophy of Religion* in 1909, he still worked on this principle. But his book *The Idea of the Holy* is already a departure from the rule. Here the analysis of the numinous is a study which properly belongs to psychology. Thus, William James's approach has carried the day, though we need not necessarily agree with his Psychological Empiricism.

To us, religion is a psychological phenomenon which can be studied like every other human experience. For this the gift of intuition is invaluable. It has been said: *pectus facit theologum* ; we suggest that intuition makes a psychologist. It is the gift of intuition which helps us to link our purely subjective experience to that of other people. Thus by way of induction we are able to form an opinion of a more general nature.

(a) *The universality of religion.*

It is usual to give to religion a strictly confined meaning. We often speak of people as religious or non-religious. What we mean to say is that these people belong or do not belong to an organized religious group. But in fact religion has a much wider application. In our view all men are religious whether they like it or not. By this we do not merely mean to say that all normal

human beings are endowed with a faculty which makes religion possible, but that religion is a basic factor in the whole complex of human life. This may not necessarily manifest itself in the conventional forms of religion, but find expression in many other ways. We hold that all higher activities of the soul are ultimately of a religious nature. There is a religious element in all true philosophy, even in atheistic philosophy, as there is in art and music. We will find it easier to appreciate this statement with the help of the idea of the numinous. The awareness of the numinous, the mysterious, the ineffable is at the root of all artistic creation. Nobody is really an artist without that experience. The same applies to the art of philosophy. Kant knew something of the *mysterium tremendum* as is evident from his famous utterance about the starry sky and the moral law. The same applies to science. Newton knew of it when he likened himself to the little boy playing on the sea-shore with pretty shells "whilst the great ocean of Truth lay all undiscovered" before him.

Religion is universal, because it expresses a universal need. John Dewey saw aright: "Religion is a universal tendency in human nature" because it gives expression to a universal impulse. That impulse is a desire for protection from the Unknown, and for harmony with the universe.

(b) *The psychology of religion.*

Emil Brunner has tried to differentiate between religion and religion. He denies "a common denominator" underlying all religious systems (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 237). This traditional view we find difficult to accept. Whether we explain religion in the context of community life, *i.e.*, as a social phenomenon as Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) does; whether we ascribe to it metaphysical significance; or whether we accept Ludwig Feuerbach's view of a purely psychological process is only of small importance to our case. We are convinced that there is a common denominator which makes it possible to reduce all forms of religion to a few main principles. Thus reduced, the basic element underlying all religion is the need for security in an unstable and ever changing world. Here we readily support Schleiermacher's famous definition that a sense of dependence (*Abhängigkeitsgefühl*) is the essence of all religion. We would add, however, that such a sense of dependence is not an *immediate* religious experience, but the result of an intricate process. The same applies to Hegel's definition that religion is a reconciliation of the finite with the

infinite. Both these statements in the last resort amount to the same thing.

Man's need of protection is at the heart of all religion. It is a need which penetrates his consciousness and decisively influences his personality. Because the need of protection (= survival) is a primary need, religion is and remains a basic need. To establish this we will now take recourse to Prof. Otto's study of the numinous.

No one will doubt that the experience of the numinous is basically a religious experience. Face to face with the numinous, the mysterious, the inexplicable, man undergoes an emotional reaction which, whatever form of expression it may take, results in the religious "shudder". Organized religion does little else than to recapture that experience or prolong it. The experience itself depends upon a sudden awareness of the overwhelming weight of the outside world. No human creature endowed with normal senses can resist its impact. It bursts upon us through every pore of our skin and every nerve of our body. It comes upon us as threatening and terrifying infinitude. Its immensity, its indifference to the human lot, its brutal force, we cannot face with indifference. The struggle for existence is a struggle with forces unknown and uncontrollable even to civilized man. This is the meaning of superstition. The powers which move the universe remain nameless and mysterious even to the modern scientist. There is profound wisdom in Oswald Spengler's observation that man has an irresistible urge to give names to all that surrounds him. By so doing he means to reduce the mystery of the nameless and to gain power over it. Perhaps this is the meaning of Jacob's request for the name of the man who wrestled with him at the brook of Jabbok (Gen. 32 : 29) ? We are prepared to accept Lecky's remark that "terror is everywhere the beginning of religion" (W. E. H. Lecky, *History of Rationalism in Europe*, I, 17). But Lecky only corroborates the saying of Lucretius : *primus in orbe deos fecit timor*.

We have now reached a crucial point : what is the reality behind the religious experience ? Is it related to a power outside man or is it a purely subjective experience ? Or else, is it something of both ?

As is well known, Ludwig Feuerbach saw in religion nothing else than a projection of the human ego. We mention his name because he has made a lasting mark upon modern thought. The same applies to Auguste Comte, who viewed religion as a means of deifying mankind. Jacob Friedrich Fries takes a more orthodox

view. He comes near to Hegel's definition when he describes the religious emotion which forms the basis of faith as "the instinctive sensation of the Eternal in the Finite" (quoted by Otto, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 32). This is a view widely, if not universally, held in the Church. It has become axiomatic to regard all religious manifestations as evidence of the supranatural. Even an independent thinker like Emil Brunner accepts the view. We have been brought up to believe that in the religious phenomenon man comes face to face with the Ultimate. Modes and methods may vary, but in the end all religion pursues the same goal—the encounter between God and man. This is a view the writer intends to contradict. An analysis of religion has led him to the following conclusions :

(1) The religious experience of which the numinous is a basic element springs from an urge to name, *i.e.*, to explain the mystery of life and the universe. This is the driving force behind all cosmology from the most primitive to the most scientific. The same urge is the father of all philosophy. This is the reason why religion and philosophy are inseparable. Here we may legitimately draw attention to Kant's ingenious discovery of the Categories which forms the basis of Pure Reason. "Every reasoning being" says Otto, in an effort to explain the Kantian point of view, "has in himself mathematical as well as metaphysical knowledge, which he continuously if unconsciously applies" (*op. cit.*, 58). That knowledge Kant conceives as *a priori* knowledge not derived from empirical experience. Man has not only the need but also the capacity to reason. He has a "feeling for truth" or intuition which Fries calls "*Ahnung*" and Otto "insight," which helps him to become a reasoning being. His humanity requires an answer to the mystery of existence. But the question of the validity of human reasoning in relation to reality remains unsolved. Whatever we may think of Kant's epistemology we cannot accept his metaphysical conclusion, for it makes nonsense of the Christian meaning of revelation. If man has *a priori* metaphysical knowledge then revelation is unnecessary. Kant suffers from an internal contradiction. If "that which we know with certainty is not the laws of extramental realities as they are in themselves (*i.e.*, the laws of noumena), but only the laws of the impressions which the mind receives from these realities, or the laws of phenomena" (R. P. Phillips, *Modern Thomistic Philosophy*, II, 5: cf. also Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 52), then our *a priori* "metaphysical knowledge" is of no value. It leaves the main problem whether "intelligibility

is consubstantial with being" (cf. Jacques Maritain, *Redeeming the Time*, p. 192) unanswered. In this case realist philosophy is deprived of its basis. It is here that we touch upon the weakest point in Thomistic and related thinking. There is a vast difference between man trying to name God and God naming Himself. Religion ultimately is a Promethean attempt to name God. Here we whole-heartedly agree with Johannes Witte: man, whether through religion or philosophy, can only recognize the fact of God (cf. Rom. 1 : 19), but has no means or grounds to say anything about Him; this he must leave to God Himself.

(2) Religion expresses a need to come to terms with the powers behind the universe. Man feels insecure and threatened by the Unknown unless he has found a means of propitiation. The desire to propitiate springs from a sense of incompleteness on the one hand and guilt on the other. To this we would add the awareness of separateness, loneliness and helplessness. Such feeling is overcome by a devious and complicated route; either æsthetically by an experience of harmony; or sacramentally by the employment of magic; or else mystically by an emotional experience of identification and union.

Whatever we may think of his books, Ralph Waldo Trine has given expression to a deep-seated religious need. Here St. Augustine's famous words spring to one's mind: "Thou hast created us unto Thyself, and our heart finds no rest until it rests in Thee." This too is a human need craving satisfaction. Conventional religion is one of the forms whereby it manifests itself. But basically, the other forms are *also* of a religious character. They all express the same craving. But whenever religion pretends to be more than the expression of a need, it leads to deception and therefore to idolatry. Of all forms of deception religious deception is the most subtle, for here man entrenches himself for his last fight. The deception is nothing less than self-deception; whereas man pretends to reconcile himself with God, in actual fact he only reconciles himself with himself. We are not surprised that Ralph Waldo Trine with his characteristic American enthusiasm failed to make the discovery.

(3) The third element in religion is the most subtle of all. It comes from an urge for self-assertion. This is a basic human need; life would be impossible without it. Just because it is the need of all men, all men are religious. It has been often recognized that religion is a subtle form of selfishness. The selfishness of the conventionally religious is only too obvious, though one would hesitate to go as far as Winwood Reade, who

said that "a sincerely religious man is often an exceedingly bad man" (*The Martyrdom of Man* [1933], 428). Selfishness springs from the law of self-preservation and in religion it takes a very subtle form. The religious man tries to take hold of God and use him for his own ends. Not God, but himself, is in the centre; and everything else is subservient to his needs.

At this point we come upon an interesting feature in our analysis. Religion does not only consist of an experience of the numinous. To become a religious experience proper, the numinous must be transformed into something else. The shudder of the numinous has a threatening effect. To become religion it must lose its "crazy and bewildering note" (Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 18). Hostility must be translated into friendship and the unknown into the known. Only thus can religion attain its end. For the ultimate aim of religion is personal triumph over the world outside. This comes about by a complicated psychological process; intellectually by means of rationalization (philosophy); emotionally by means of the æsthetic or mystic experience; or else sacramentally by means of magic (cf. Maritain, *op. cit.*, p. 211). Whatever the route the result is the same—a sense of victory over the great Unknown. Emil Brunner, who dwells on this point (*op. cit.*, pp. 41, 258 f.), fails to draw ultimate conclusions. It was left to Karl Barth to construct his theology by taking into full account the true nature of the religious phenomenon.

(c) *Anthropology.*

We have now reached the most crucial point in our discussion. Even on the assumption that the analysis offered above is a correct estimate of the religious phenomenon, there still remains the possibility that religion is more than a subjective psychological process. If we believe that God is the creator of man with all his faculties, then religion too is "implanted in mankind by the author of life," and represents, as Prof. Gowen says, "a biological necessity" (H. H. Gowen, *A History of Religion*, p. 1). It is a human faculty by means of which we reach out from earth to heaven and transcend our own limitation in time and space. All mysticism and every form of natural religion is based on this premiss. It forms the starting point of all metaphysics and is the foundation for Thomistic and kindred philosophies. The principle behind this view is a specific doctrine concerning man. The whole problem is anchored in anthropology. A right estimate of religion depends on our answer to the question concerning man's relation to eternity.

Immortality of the soul has become an axiomatic truth to most Christian thinkers. This is taken for granted to such an extent that only seldom do theologians take the trouble to substantiate it with argument. Here we come upon evidence of the deep penetration of Greek thinking in Christian theology. It would take us too far to search the genesis of this development, but a few outstanding facts must be mentioned.

Dean Inge rightly asserts that one cannot understand Platonist cosmology "unless we accept the tripartite psychology which makes man consist of spirit, soul and body." But he insists that the same is "at the root of St. Paul's religion" (*op. cit.*, p. 263). At first this appears a fair statement. The Apostle seems to be speaking of the soul in a similar connection. But on closer investigation we soon discover the difference. This becomes evident not only in the sharp distinction St. Paul makes between ἡ ψυχὴ and τὸ πνεῦμα, but also between πνεῦμα in reference to God and πνεῦμα in reference to man. Nowhere does he confuse the human spirit with the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit indwells man *only* as a guest. Immortality, ἀθανασία, is thus not an inherent quality of human nature, but a gift conferred upon man and inseparable from faith in Jesus Christ. God only is immortal (1 Tim. 6 : 16) ; man's soul is not immortal ; for eternal life, man entirely depends upon God. The Bible knows nothing of the immortality of the soul, though it knows a good deal about life after death. But *that* life is never conceived apart from God, the source of all life. Man, as he is, is but dust and ashes. This is already signified by the remarkable passage in Genesis that man was hindered from stretching forth his hand and taking of the tree of life. A similar thought is expressed by our Lord in His answer regarding the resurrection : "He is not the God of the dead but of the living" (Mark 12 : 18 ff.). Life and death entirely depend on Him who holds human destiny in His hands. Liberal theology has stressed the *Imago Dei*, but has overlooked the fact that the Bible also knows man to be a fugitive from God, fallen in sin and given to evil.

Christian theology is not committed to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in the Platonic sense. This is now increasingly being recognized. The ancient Church was not unanimous on this score. Tatian, in his *Address to the Greeks*, holds the opposite view : "The soul is not in itself immortal, O Greeks, but mortal. Yet it is possible for it not to die. If, indeed, it knows not the truth it dies" (ch. 13). This is the

Biblical point of view, and especially that of the Johannine Gospel. At another place, Tatian explains that the soul can strive after union with God only when united to the Holy Spirit (*ib.*, ch. 15). Theophilus, who is already giving way to a non-Biblical conception (cf. *Autolytus*, ch. 19), regards man as made of a middle nature "neither wholly mortal, nor altogether immortal, but capable of either" (*ib.*, ch. 24). A somewhat similar view appears in Tertullian, who in opposition to Platonism accepts the corporeality of the soul (cf. *De anima*, ch. 5f.). He carefully distinguishes the human soul as "spirit" from the Spirit of God (cf. *ib.*, ch. 11; also *Adversus Marcionem*, ch. 9). But Tertullian was too deeply steeped in Greek thinking to overcome this enticing doctrine. This we say in spite of his insistence that Jerusalem has nothing to do with Athens and the Church with the Academy (cf. *De praescriptione haereticorum*, ch. 7).

In his *De resurrectione carnis*, immortality is already accepted by implication.

The "old man" who met Justin while the latter was still a Platonist, characteristically enough begins the discussion with the question of the immortality of the soul. In an encounter with a Platonist this is a natural starting-point. As long as Justin held to the Platonic view, the Christian message had little to offer. Eternal life, the goal of the Christian hope, could mean nothing to a man who already participated in immortality by virtue of his humanity. The Christian stranger, probably a Hebrew Christian, rightly argues that the soul created in time belongs to this world of decay and change and thus cannot be immortal: "For those things which exist after (*i.e.*, beside) God or shall at any time exist, these have the nature of decay, and are such as may be blotted out and cease to exist; for God alone is unbegotten and incorruptible, and therefore He is God, but all other things after Him are created and corruptible. For this reason souls both die and are punished. . . ." (*Dial.* ch. 5). Dean Inge, had he been present, would have asked "whether a life destined for eternity could have a beginning in time" (Inge, *op. cit.*, p. 295). This indeed presents a difficulty to the logician, but need not worry the theologian who accepts unconditionally the absolute sovereignty of God. Even Origen, with his addiction to Platonism, is very cautious on the subject of immortality. He speaks in no dogmatic manner and makes it plain that he is putting forward only his private opinion (cf. *De Principiis*, 2, 4f.).

Soul and body are created by God (*Contra Celsum*, 54ff.). Alluding to our Lord's own experience, Origen puts the soul as "something intermediate between the weak flesh and the willing spirit". But Origen, like Tertullian, is too engrossed in Greek thinking. Opposing traducianism on the one hand and creationism on the other, he taught the pre-existence of the soul (cf. *De Princ.* 1, 7, 4). In this case, immortality was the natural correlative; this he argues with conviction (*ib.*, 4, 1, 36). His argument is interesting, for it touches upon what is called in German theology *der Anknüpfungspunkt*: the human soul is capable of partaking of heavenly virtues, and since heavenly virtues are incorruptible and immortal, then the essence of the human soul is also incorruptible and immortal. But what of the soul that refuses to partake of heavenly virtues? To this both Origen and Tertullian reply: the soul by virtue of its origin carries in itself "certain seeds of restoration and renewal"; it cannot fall so low as to become extinguished (cf. Tertullian, *De Anima*, 41). Here even Brunner seems to follow the traditional view of accepting the idea that a "relic" of the *Imago Dei* is still left in man as a reminder of his former state (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 354).

Thanks to Thomas Aquinas, the immortality of the soul has been raised to the importance of a dogma. His argument is purely speculative: no real existence can ever be annihilated; it is not possible for spiritual beings not to exist (*non est potentia ad non esse*), the human soul must therefore be immortal. Aquinas, though denying the soul's pre-existence, arrives at the same conclusion as Origen. The fifth Lateran Council of 1513 has condemned those taking an opposite view. Pius IX condemned the philosopher Anton Günther in 1860 on these grounds. Characteristically enough, Günther, who was described by a Protestant writer as "a solitary thinker and sufferer" (Karl v. Hase, *Handbook to Controversy with Rome*, II, 463), strove all his life for a Christian philosophy purged of pagan elements.

For Christian theology, the issue is of vital importance. The choice is between Platonism, Realism, and Thomism on the one hand, and the Bible on the other. Here Brunner has seen very clearly. The line of division between Idealism in its many forms and the Christian point of view must be drawn without compromise. The doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul makes historical revelation superfluous. This doctrine ultimately ends, as Brunner points out, "in the identity of the human spirit and

the divine spirit, the human reason and the divine reason" (*op. cit.*, p. 353). Once we accept with Plotinus and his devoted disciple Inge that the "rational soul" constitutes a link between time and eternity (cf. Inge, *op. cit.*, 118), Christian revelation can only have a strictly limited and subsidiary meaning. If, however, we take the Biblical view, that soul and body, life and death, are always and at every moment dependent upon God, then the Incarnation appears as a miracle outside all human possibilities. Thus only is the Word spoken to us in Christ *totaliter aliter* from any other word religion can devise. That the Bible has almost nothing to say about immortality and so much about the immortal God deserves our special attention. The question which now arises must be faced in all seriousness: if the Bible is what it claims to be—a Word of God to man—what of the "truth" in other religions? Is the voice of God confined to the Canon or can it be heard elsewhere, as for instance in philosophy, mysticism, nature, history and art?

Here Prof. Witte's views are important. All that Brunner says on the subject is a reiteration, or shall we say affirmation, of Witte's position, though Brunner only casually mentions his name (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 218, n. 1). This is the more surprising, as Brunner is seriously criticized by him (cf. Witte, p. 278f.).

It is interesting to note that Barth, Brunner and Witte are agreed that man's inability to find God by his own effort is not a *primary* inability. There was a time when man could know God. Brunner calls it "primal revelation" or "revelation in creation" (cf. *ib.*, 60, 62, 73, 76f., etc.). They are divided, however, on the question what is left of that primal revelation in man after the Fall. Here Brunner shows remarkable indecision. On the one hand, he admits the demonic character of religion and calls it "the product of man's sinful blindness;" on the other hand, he holds on to the *Imago Dei* conception in spite of his admission of the seriousness of sin (cf. *ib.*, 53, 55, n. 11, 74, 354) and even defends certain aspects of Platonism (*ib.*, 355). This inevitably leads him to accept a progressive conception of revelation (*ib.*, pp. 134, 193, 195, 197, 199 f., etc.), and also a point of contact between Christian revelation and the conceptions and ideas of other religions. Barth and Witte are more consistent. To the question, what is left of "natural" religion in man, Witte answers: a dark foreboding that there is a God; but even this is not universal, as can be seen from Hinduism (*op. cit.*, p. 156). Barth is even more emphatic: there is no

“natural” knowledge of God (cf. *Dogmatik*, I, 2, p. 335); of himself man cannot know God (*ib.*, p. 328). This is no attempt on the part of Barth to deny all that is true, good and beautiful in religion (cf. *ib.*, p. 327). All that he does is to place these values in their right perspective—they are *human* values.

Here Brunner and Barth see eye to eye. To both of them, religion is an idol. Brunner explains to us that religion either “personalizes” God and thus makes Him finite by turning Him into a myth, or else it “dissolves Him into abstract speculation”. Religion is the place where original sin breaks out in all its force and reveals man’s self-seeking as the deepest motive (*op. cit.*, p. 264). This is also Barth’s view. Barth contends that to know the true nature of religion man has to take his place underneath the Cross of Christ. Religion can only be recognized as what it really is from revelation (*Dogmatik*, I, 2, p. 329), and seen from there religion is nothing else but human speech (*ib.*, p. 330).

II. THE GOSPEL.

Having described religion, we now address ourselves to the second task, which is to describe the Gospel. Here it must be noticed that the Gospel cannot be described apart from the Canon. Without the Bible the Gospel is suspended in a vacuum and deteriorates into a myth. The background of the Gospel is the whole Bible—the Old as well as the New Testament. The more we detach the Gospel from the O. T. the less is it anchored in history. But the Gospel removed from history loses its meaning as an unrepeatable act of salvation. Only with the Bible as its background is the Gospel a historic fact.

To elucidate the Gospel we thus turn to the Bible. Here we meet a God who is utterly different from the God of religion.

(a) *The Hidden God (deus absconditus).*

God in the Bible remains a hidden God. There is never an attempt to disclose His mystery. He remains the Unapproachable and the Unknowable. Nobody can see Him and live (Ex. 33 : 20). He never discloses His own Self, only His holy and eternal will. If Dean Inge is right in saying that the cardinal postulate of Platonism is “that the perfectly real must be the perfectly knowable” (*op. cit.*, p. 180), then the opposite is true of the God of the Bible. He remains an ever hidden God and a consuming fire (Is. 45 : 15 ; Deut. 4 : 24 ; Heb. 12 : 29). No

religious attempt can break through beyond the veil ; no mystic ecstasy can remove the barrier ; no philosophical depth can fathom the secret ; no scholastic preciseness can define the Ineffable. The traditional *via negationis et eminentiae* is only a feeble admission of this supreme fact.

The heroes of the Bible never attempt to reveal God ; they humbly acknowledge their ignorance. Moses only saw his "back" (Ex. 33 : 23) ; even the Seraphim in Isaiah's vision covered their faces in the presence of God's majesty (Is. 6 : 2). The Lord of hosts remains for ever the Invisible One who must not be likened to anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth (Second Commandment). The attributes by which God is described in the Bible do not reveal His Self, only His will and purpose. What Inge says about the "God of religion" (cf. *op. cit.*, 218) we strictly confine to the God of the Bible. Dean Inge's confusion springs from the conviction that religion and revelation are coterminous, which they are not. In the Bible we never meet God as He *is*, but only as he is *towards us*. This is recognized by Luther in a remarkable way. In *De servo arbitrio*, 222, he says : "Let God in His majesty and being alone. For as such we cannot have anything to do with Him, nor has He wished that we have anything to do with Him as such. But only in the measure that He is clothed and revealed in His Word, by which He presents Himself to us, do we have anything to do with Him. For the Word is His beauty and glory. The Psalmist praises Him as He is clad in the Word" (cited by Söderblom, p. 53, whose translation I follow). We venture to suggest that had Winwood Reade known this passage, he might have been less severe on Christian theologians. It is Karl Barth's great merit to have emphasized so consistently this almost forgotten aspect of Biblical revelation.

Biblical revelation is the revelation that God is a hidden God (cp. Barth, *ib.*, p. 32). This is the witness of both the Old and New Testaments. Barth never tires of reiterating that by revealing himself God shows himself as the hidden God. "Even in His revelation", says Brunner, "God does not cease to be clothed in mystery" (p. 47).

(b) *The Personal God.*

The God of the Bible is not a concept, an idea or a power, but a person. To speak of Him in terms of moral values is an

assumption foreign to the Canon. The Bible is not concerned with "truths," but with His sovereign and unalterable will. It is not enough to say, as Dean Inge does, that "Greek philosophy never emphasized the personality of God" (*op. cit.*, p. 217). The truth is that the God of the philosopher was never more than an idea, a logical necessity in the attempt to explain existence. Brunner's remarks are here most appropriate: "The God who is discovered through thought is always different from the God who reveals Himself through revelation. The God who is 'proved', just because He has been 'proved', is not the God in whom man 'believes'" (*op. cit.*, p. 43; cf. also *ib.*, pp. 44, 47, 409). The God of the Bible is a person throughout, so much so that anthropomorphisms are freely used to describe Him. Here we wholeheartedly agree with Buber, though his motives are different from our own: "In accordance with his nature the eternal 'Thou' cannot become an 'it'" (M. Buber, *Ich und Du*, p. 129). "I do not believe", says Buber, "in God's self-designation (*Selbstbenennung*) nor in God's self-disclosure (*Selbstbestimmung*) before man . . . I am that I am . . ." For as Buber has rightly seen it, "Man does not receive and he does not receive a 'content,' but a presence, a presence in the form of power. . . ." (*ib.*, p. 127). The Bible does not proffer "ultimate values" in the form of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, to use Dean Inge's vocabulary once again; it speaks of a God who remains strictly personal to the extent of embarrassment. He does not speak to "humanity", He speaks to *man*; and what He says is non-transferable, everyone has to hear it for himself. That is why the Bible is only a witness to the Word of God. The Word of God is not an "it" that can be printed, discussed and explained, but a Person Whom to hear is to obey and to obey is to hear. In Christ Jesus we meet God not on the intellectual, emotional or religious plane, but in the business of living. We meet Him there, too, only inasmuch as these spheres are part of the human life. In other words, we meet God existentially if we meet Him at all. But we meet Him only because He has already consented to meet us in Him who died upon the Cross. That this is the *only* place where God really and in all earnestness meets man is the foundation of the Christian faith. It is for this reason that we are forced to repudiate Söderblom's view. The Gospel is not inclusive, but *exclusive* to the highest degree. This narrowness is imposed upon us by loyalty to Jesus Christ. "Anyone who should happen to be

offended at this 'here only' must first inform us where else Jesus Christ speaks to us" (Barth, *Revelation*, ed. by John Baillie & Hugh Martin [1937], p. 68). It is not enough to baptize the pagan gods and to present them as Christian saints; they have to be uprooted and broken down if man is to surrender to Jesus Christ. Dean Inge asserts "that the knowledge of God can be attained only by the activity of the entire personality" (*op. cit.*, p. 196). But this is not what we mean by an existential meeting with God. To meet God existentially means to meet Him at the most undesirable point of our life, to meet Him inescapably. The god we seek is seldom the same as the God we meet in Jesus Christ; *our* god is usually the god of the mystic or the god of the philosopher. We must never confuse the god of our imagination (St. Paul calls him the god of this world) with the Lord of Hosts. To say with Pringle-Pattison, as Inge does, "the presence of the ideal is the reality of God in us" (*op. cit.*, p. 182), is a circumvention of the Cross and a frivolous denial of the stern reality of sin. The true meaning of revelation can only be determined in the context of these two facts: the fact of the Cross and the fact of sin.

(c) *The Speaking God.*

The Gospel is impossible without the assumption that God really addresses himself to man. He is a speaking God; this is the meaning of the Word becoming flesh. Both Old and New Testaments are witnesses to this astounding fact. The Law's "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not"; the prophets' "thus saith the Lord", Jesus Christ's "verily, verily, I say unto you", never refer to matters other than man's relation to God. Revelation in the Biblical context is a strictly confined conception. Brunner rightly remarks: "For Jesus Christ is mentioned where the *opus proprium Dei* is concerned, His action in revelation and redemption" (*op. cit.*, p. 320). It is most regrettable that the Bible was sometimes used as if it were a text-book for science. It does not teach any "truths", scientific or otherwise; it gives witness to God as Creator, Judge and Saviour. To hear what the Bible says requires no mystical sense, religious zeal or philosophical training. There is only one condition for hearing the Word of God: obedience. Obedience is inseparable from faith: "if anyone willeth to do his will he shall know of the teaching. . . ." (John 7: 17). Here "teaching" has no reference to the voice of our conscience or some mystical

intuition whereby we grasp "truths" beyond discursive reason of which Platonists speak. Christ's "teaching" does not concern absolute values of which we hear so much these days; it is teaching which concerns the true state of man and man's desperate need of salvation (cp. v. 14).

The Word as it comes to us from the Bible is always *verbum externum*, a Word outside us. Not our spirit, but the Holy Spirit of God is its initiator and interpreter. The word of the Bible comes to us by mediation, *i.e.*, *indirectly*. There is no *Anknüpfungspunkt*, within us which makes it possible for us to hear. God Himself, by the operation of His Holy Spirit, as an act of Grace, creates the possibility. Thus Söderblom's difficulty concerning a "super-sensual reality" (cp. *op. cit.*, p. 102) is no difficulty at all. For in the first place, in the light of the Cross, revelation is not a "super-sensual reality", but a historical fact; secondly, revelation does not depend upon human susceptibilities, but is a creative act of God. Hearing the Word of God is the *great event*, as Barth calls it, and it takes place only by a miracle.

The Word of God always relates to man's need for salvation. The Bible does not talk about butterflies and sunsets; it talks about sin and forgiveness. The moment we become involved in "truths" we become impersonal and are side-tracking the issue. Revelation, as we understand it, is not a quicker discovery of universal principles which man would ultimately find out for himself given the time, but the creation of a situation where God is suddenly heard as a speaking God and man in humble obedience listens.

But that the word spoken to *me* in Jesus Christ is a true Word of God remains an act of faith. There must always remain the possibility that I am mistaken. Faith without risk and venture is not faith. "Only eternity can provide an eternal certainty, whereas existence must be content with a fighting certainty" (Kierkegaard, quoted by Lowrie, p. 310). The Word which we hear by faith is not our word, it always remains an *alien* word: "*ponit extra nos . . . in promissione divina, veritatem, quae non potest fallere*" (Luther, quoted by Witte, p. 242). It comes to us as a challenge and a promise. It is an unexpected word and therefore utterly different from anything man can say. It is unparalleled, outside all human divination and without analogy. Neither religion, nor mysticism, nor philosophy can utter it.

(d) The Saving God.

It is a peculiarity of the Bible that the Word of God is tantamount to Salvation. The God of the Bible only speaks to save. Even His Judgment is Salvation. This is remarkably expressed in David's choice (2 Sam. 24 : 14) ; God's silence is the most terrible thing which can happen to man. Not to be judged by God any more is man's greatest punishment.

The Bible in the first instance knows of man not as a seeker of God, but as a fugitive from before His face. Adam and Eve's childish attempt to hide from God " amongst the trees of the garden " (Gen. 3 : 8) is a true picture of man habitually in search of a hiding-place from the justice of God. Francis Thompson's unequalled poem, *The Hound of Heaven*, is a poetical rendering of this basic truth about man.

" I fled Him down the days ;
 I fled Him down the arches of the years ;
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind ; and in the midst of tears
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter."

Herein is revealed Thompson's Christian insight in that the God he speaks of in hot pursuit of man, does it not for the sake of vengeance, but for love. God seeks man not in order to crush, but to save, though He knows,

" How little worthy of My love thou art ! "

The Gospel begins with this astounding fact of God's love in spite of man's unworthiness : " while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us " (Rom. 5 : 8). But while the Cross is a word on behalf of man it is also a word *against* man.

Underneath the Cross man stands condemned in his totality. The Cross is not only judgment upon pagan man, but also upon religious man at his best. This is the amazing discovery Saul of Tarsus made. He made the discovery under a weight of evidence : that Jesus was crucified in the Holy City at the instigation of the priestly hierarchy and with the consent of the pious Pharisees ; that Paul himself had some considerable share in the persecution of the Church of God ; that sincere devotion to his religion made him an enemy of the Cross ; that his people's rejection of the Messiah had come about from a mistaken zeal for God—these were facts too startling to be overlooked. The fact that publicans and sinners entered the Kingdom of God while Scribes and Pharisees remained outside was too surprising

to remain unnoticed. From his own experience Paul knew that only after surrendering his religious position could he become a disciple of Jesus Christ. All the things he once gloried in he had to count as dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord (Phil. 3 : 8). Only after abandoning his own righteousness which is after the Law and having no righteousness of his own could he receive the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Phil. 3 : 9).

But if Judaism with all its lofty ideals and profound spirituality became a hindrance to the acceptance of the Gospel, what of pagan religion with its crude idolatry and false ideals? Here we come upon a great paradox: *the loftier a religion, the greater its moral achievement, the stronger is its opposition to the Gospel.* This is the secret of Israel's fall according to Rom. 9-11. The more man has of spiritual values, the stronger his entrenchment; the surer his position, the greater is his independence and the more firm his resistance. This is indicated by our Lord's words: the first shall be last and the last first. Such is the tragedy of the pious that his religion becomes a snare to him. To overlook this amazing fact is to misunderstand the essence of Pauline theology.

The Gospel makes its stand on behalf of man while standing *against* him. The difference between religion and Gospel is the difference between nature and grace. Nature and grace do not only belong to a different order, but stand in opposition to each other. The natural man is an enemy of God. Aquinas's much quoted sentence, *gratia naturam non tollit, sed perficit*, is an aberration of fact. The Reformers, by breaking away from this premiss, broke away from the whole system of Thomistic theology. The Gospel is the *novum* which does not just *assist* nature to perfection, it clashes with it. The Christian is the bearer of the tension between nature and grace. At no time is nature abolished, at no time is the believer only under grace. Here Luther saw with great clarity; Christians remain both children of God and *homines naturales et impii*. They carry in themselves the tension between Church and world, faith and religion. While living in time and space yet with the promise of eternity there can be no escape from the dialectic of his position.

Here the division between Roman Catholicism and Reformation theology appears in all its significance. Like the Synagogue, the Roman Church knows of no dialectic. The path from earth

to heaven, though narrow, yet is straightforward. The link between time and eternity is warranted by the existence of the Church (Judaism substitutes "Law" for Church). Man works out his own salvation by means of his religious practice. Religion thus stands in the centre of Roman theology. Any stir of religious life is regarded as a sign of spiritual quickening. There is room for extraneous matter as long as it is given a Christian dress. Here religion has its inherent value from whichever source it comes. Every mystic adds to the inexhaustible store of religious experience. Icons, relics, amulets are acceptable aids as long as they promote religion. Visions, dreams, even superstitions can be helpful. There is no antithesis between here and yonder, no tension between nature and grace.

The position of the Protestant Church is different. Here man stands in constant conflict with himself. W. Lowrie, describing the Protestant, speaks of his radical irreligiousness and worldliness. His Christianity puts him in a precarious position: "The Protestant walks on a narrow arête, with a dreadful abyss on either side; it is a dizzy position, where no man can be confident of maintaining his equilibrium" (*op. cit.*, p. 80). His "irreligiousness" springs from the knowledge that God demands complete surrender, religion included; his "worldliness" is rooted in the awareness of an indissoluble connection between him and the world. Protestantism properly understood is the protest of the Protestant *against* himself (cf. Lowrie, p. 50). It means repeatedly saying "no" to oneself while saying "yes" to God. But even this he can only do by grace. Thus, acknowledging the bankruptcy of his whole position, he makes the leap of despair—which is the leap of faith. The Gospel, the Good News, derives its name from the assurance that the leap of faith does not land the believer in a vacuum, but in the arms of Jesus Christ.

III. CONCLUSION.

The juxtaposition of religion and Gospel has revealed not only an essential difference but a dialectical tension. It is now left to us to draw final conclusions.

If Gospel is grace then religion is "works". Religion is man's possibility. It is his instrument whereby he tries to save himself and to establish his position before God. The more successful he is religiously, the greater is his independence, the stronger is his resistance. The most remarkable example of this we find in Judaism. The Synagogue, which shows the highest form of religion,

is also the great opponent to the Gospel. Judaism requires no Salvation, the pious Jew saves *himself* by earning it. Here religion is the most noble attempt man can make, but with it also goes the greatest danger. The religious man constantly overlooks two fundamental facts : the infinite difference between God and man and the true nature of sin. In fact it is part of man's sinful condition which binds him to the abysmal difference between him and his Creator. Anselm's words to Boso are here appropriate : *Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum (Cur Deus Homo, I, 21)*. The point we should like to make is that this does not merely apply to the religious man outside the Church, but to the religious man within the Church as well. Like our fallen humanity we carry religion into our Christian state. It is part of the "infection of nature" which remains with us "that are regenerated" (Article IX) to the end. The same applies to the Bible. The Bible is both the Word of God and the word of Man. Here religion and Gospel are closely intertwined. It contains the story not only of God's merciful reaching out to man, but also the story of man's attempt to build the tower of Babel and to storm heaven. Here God and Baal, the Prophet and the false prophets, the religious multitude and the faithful few are seen in constant contest.

Turning to the New Testament, we find a similar picture. Our Lord's continued struggle with Scribes and Pharisees, High Priests and Sadducees is of the same nature. The Bible presents the spectacle of a lasting feud between God and idols. But we shall mistake the issue if we think that the Bible passes judgment upon false and hypocritical religion. It passes judgment upon religion *itself*; for the Gospel is judgment upon *religion*. The Gospel implies that man not only at his worst, but even at his best needs salvation. Had religion been able to save man, Christ need not have come; had the most perfect religion been able to save man, Christ need not have been born a Jew. Had religion been able to save man by means of a compromise with the Gospel, then the Cross of Christ would stand as a sign of human error but not of human sin. The only conclusion we can legitimately draw is that the Gospel *is* the Gospel because it even finds the religious man in all his need and offers him salvation.

In the last resort religion is the counterfeit of faith. Barth rightly says that religion is infidelity (*Unglauben*), for it is man's faith in himself (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 343).

The Gospel is Good News because it brings salvation to publicans and sinners; but it is even more so Good News because it brings salvation to the religious man, delivering him from his self-righteousness before God.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- H. H. Gowen, *A History of Religion*, S.P.C.K., 1934.
 Walter Lowrie, *Religion and Faith*, 1930.
 W. R. Inge, *God and the Astronomers*, 1933.
 Johannes Witte, *Die Christus-Botschaft und die Religionen*, Göttingen, 1936.
 Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 1926.
 Rudolf Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion*, London, 1931.
 Jacque Maritain, *Redeeming the Time*, 1944.
 N. Söderblom, *The Nature of Revelation*, Engl., 1933.
 Emil Brunner, *Revelation and Religion*, Engl., 1947.
 Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, Vol. I, pp. 304-397.

DISCUSSION.

Rev. C. T. COOK (Chairman) said: Our warmest thanks are due to Dr. Jocz for a paper of absorbing interest from beginning to end. Many of his statements will command the cordial assent of evangelical believers; and some of his other observations will elicit sympathy with his main intention, without necessarily carrying an endorsement of his particular line of argument. On the other hand, there are affirmations delightfully provocative to those upholders of traditional beliefs who have a zest for theological controversy.

From the outset one becomes aware that the thesis presented in this paper reflects the point of view of the "Theology of Crisis," identified with the names of Brunner and Karl Barth, especially the latter. Barthianism, as we know, is a reaction against the confident Humanism which has developed since the Renaissance, a belief in man's moral and spiritual self-sufficiency that has received a mortal blow as a result of two world wars and their aftermath. But we are compelled to ask whether Barth's rebound from Humanism has not carried him too far toward the opposite extreme. Barthianism is not easy to grasp. For one thing it confronts us with an entirely new set of definitions of familiar Biblical terms. Then again, as Dr. G. O. Griffith has pointed out, Barth's dialectic is largely the dialectic of paradox, and many of his assertions seem to be of the nature of shock tactics. His whole attitude is anti-metaphysical. I trust I am not unfair to Dr. Jocz if I say that I have been continually reminded

of these Barthian ideas while reading his paper. Again and again I have found myself challenging his confident affirmations and sweeping aphorisms ; there are not only the questions he poses for us, but certain other questions to which his arguments give rise.

To begin with, we find ourselves challenged in regard to the primary question as to the nature of God (II (a)). Is He self-existent, as traditional Protestant theology maintains ? Or is He, as an acute critic declares Barth believes, a God "wholly absorbed in His manifestations" ? The answer to that problem will determine much of what follows.

Then, what do we understand by Religion ? In his second paragraph Dr. Jocz tells us that "the main purpose of this essay is to show that there is an indissoluble tension between Christianity as a religion, and the Gospel as derived from the New Testament." It is not some particular aspect or perversion of the Christian religion that comes in for condemnation ; he agrees with Prof. Johannes Witte that "religion and Gospel are not to be equated." Further, this is no academic question, for Dr. Jocz says, "it is our contention that a clear recognition of the fundamental difference between religion and Gospel is of vital importance to the Church." I, for one, find it exceedingly difficult to accept that sharp antithesis. Dr. Jocz, on page 80, states that objectivity in religion is impossible ; religion is the product of various elements in the human mind. But can we agree that religion is entirely subjective ? Does man's awareness of the supernal world rest on nothing outside of himself ? For my part I cannot reconcile with many passages in the Bible the view that there is no such thing as a general revelation of God, as distinct from His special revelation of Himself in the Scriptures. On page 85 our friend expresses wholehearted agreement with Johannes Witte, that man, whether through religion or philosophy, can only recognize the *fact* of God, but has no means or grounds to say anything about Him ; this he must leave to God Himself. But is that a correct inference from Roman 1 : 19, 20 ? Paul emphasizes the responsibility of sinful men for "holding down the truth in unrighteousness," but he adds that there is that which may be known of God, "*for God manifested it unto them.*" His "everlasting power and divinity," from the creation of the worlds have been clearly perceived through the things that are made. Further, he uses the

expression "knowing God" as proof that such men are without excuse.

On page 96, we are told that the Cross is not only judgment upon pagan man, but also upon "religious man at his best." Saul of Tarsus is cited as an example of religious man at his best. But is it a fact that every religious man is fighting against God? Are there not many who are responsive to such light as they have? What of Cornelius, who is favourably referred to by Luke as "a devout man and one that feared God, with all his house, who gave much alms to the people and prayed to God alway"? Again, is Israel's fall, as described in Romans 9 to 11, a "tragedy of the pious," as suggested on page 97? Is not the explanation to be found in Romans 10 : 16 in the fact that it was not the piety of Israel but their *unbelief* that caused their downfall? Is it Dr. Jocz' view that religion is invariably "an escape into autonomy, in which man sets up his independence and defends himself against the Gospel"?

One would like to ask questions on other aspects of this thesis. For instance is there no revelation of God in history apart from a man's recognition of it and response to it? Take the Incarnation, the public ministry, the death and Resurrection of our Lord—are not these historic facts a Divine revelation in themselves, whether men accept Christ or not? Then, is the revelation of which our friend speaks to be equated with the Scriptures? Karl Barth seems to suggest that the Scriptures are the Word of God only as an instrument, a medium through which God elects to speak; they only become the Word of God to those who receive the Scriptures as a revelation. Have the Scriptures nothing to say to the unbeliever? I ask this question because of the sentence on page 96, "The God of the Bible only speaks to save."

One would like to inquire further on the subject of human nature. Our friend seems, along with Barth, to deny that the image of God is possessed in any measure by the unregenerate. But is it not the witness of Scripture that the image of God is not lost by the Fall? It is not lost but defaced, and can be renewed by the grace of Christ. Then, too, on page 89 there is the surprising assurance that "the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul makes historical revelation superfluous."

Obviously, there is no opportunity to say all that one would like

to say on these problems. However, Dr. Jocz has my gratitude for a scholarly paper which I have found most profitably stimulating, and not less so because it is difficult to see eye to eye with him on many points.

Mr. B. C. MARTIN said : I have found this paper most illuminating, but I am not quite sure whether I have the Author's correct meaning in the passage relating to the "Immortality of the Soul" on page 87. I do not think "immortality" and "eternal life" should be equated, but if the Author has in fact so equated them, I have no quarrel with the statement : "Immortality is thus not an inherent quality of human nature but a gift conferred upon man." In the Scripture cited (1 Tim. 6 : 16), "the King of kings . . . Who only hath immortality," surely immortality in its *absolute* sense is referred to. God is immortal as to His whole Being and the very fountain of life, whether natural or spiritual. Man, on the other hand, is mortal as to his body but "immortal" as to his spirit. His spirit survives death irrespective of whether or not he has during his lifetime received the gift of eternal life. Any theory of *conditional* immortality inevitably presupposes annihilation if the condition is not fulfilled, which is clearly repugnant to the teaching of Scripture.

"Immortality" in relation to man would seem to mean "not subject to death," "enduring for ever" (which is true of his soul), without anything qualitative in it. "Eternal life," on the other hand, is essentially qualitative.

In this sense the unregenerate are immortal, as is shown in many Scriptures, particularly our Lord's discourse in Luke 16 concerning Dives and Lazarus. In 1 Cor. 15 : 53, St. Paul says "This mortal shall put on immortality," because the mortal *body* is in view. This is the privilege of the believer, that "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies" (Rom 8 : 11).

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. R. T. LOVELOCK wrote : This paper presents both a synthesis and a personal interpretation of the modern "Continental" system of theology, and I would like to thank Dr. Jocz for so clear and consistent a presentation of it; I must confess, however, that I am as unconvinced by this paper as by the writings of Barth and

Brunner. It has been characteristic of the Teutonic mind in the past to concentrate entirely on one aspect of truth, and to present an entirely unbalanced picture by ignoring entirely the many other facets ; the human search for truth is itself a dialectic process, and the goal is only reached by the balancing of many differing factors ; truth is an organic unit, and like all living things, cannot be properly analysed by first taking it to pieces and considering each element by itself. By considering the antithesis between Pharisee and Gospel to the exclusion of many other contributory factors, this presentation has gone as far astray as did the earlier theory of the Tübingen School in considering the same clash of ideologies.

All human life is, and has been, a dialectic process, and if attention is focused entirely on any one aspect of that struggle the resulting picture will be distorted. This was the error of Hegel, and of Marx, and I would suggest that it is also the error of Brunner. The true dialectic which runs through the whole of human history is the primeval struggle between Good and Evil, and it was the steady progress of Good in the continuance of this struggle which formed the basis of the Kingdom (or Rule) of God—the Kingdom which was proclaimed in the Gospel (see Otto, *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*). It is not things in themselves which are good or evil, it is the use made by man which adds moral value to material entities. Kant appreciated this, but it was stated much earlier than his days by Epictetus—“ Where is the good ? In the will. Where is the evil ? In the will. Where is neither of them ? In those things which are independent of the will ” (*Discourses* 2 : 16). Man can turn all things to good or evil by his use of them—marriage and prostitution are carnal examples of this deadly power, and they are used figuratively by God to speak of the same tendency of man to use or abuse his religious faculty. In actual fact, man is so weak that even in the best of us there is much of evil in all that we do, and the existence of some element of evil in all human examples of religion is no demonstration that religion must always be opposed to the Gospel. We might argue, with the second-century gnostics, that, because all men were evil, there was an inherent evil in the flesh which could never yield good—our Lord came to show that this was not so, and that the human body could be used to the praise of God as a thing of good.

Jesus entered into Temple and Synagogue, partook of the religious life of His time, and it would be blasphemy to suggest that in his religion was any element antithetical to the word of God in the Gospel. He demonstrated what religion was intended by God to be, and it was viewing this demonstration which moved St. James to say—"Pure, unsoiled religion in the judgement of God the Father means this: to care for orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself from the stain of the world" (James 1 : 27, Moffatt). Dr. Jocz would tell us that "religion is a subtle form of selfishness," but that is only the imperfect human translation of its aspirations into narrower channels—the Christian life is a communal one in which the good of the family is sought, and it must be remembered that the writer to Hebrews says that the same eschatological outlook was part of the life of our Lord—"Jesus who, in order to reach His own appointed joy, steadily endured the Cross" (Heb. 12 : 2, Moffatt). Even the involved service of the Pharisee was based on the word of God through Moses, and it was only in so far as he had abrogated that Law by purely human accretions that he was condemned by Jesus when He said—"You have repealed the Law of God to suit your own tradition" (Mt. 15 : 6, Moffatt). In fact, St. Paul has told us that the earlier Jewish religion was a "school-master" (pedagogue) sent by God to draw men to the fuller teaching in Jesus (Gal. 3 : 19-29).

Jesus was not only Son of Man—man as God intended him to be—in all his life He demonstrated how man was intended to use his faculties, and among them He showed man a true religion, and one which was in no way antithetical to God. The false element in religion, which has been examined, is man's contribution to a God-intended attitude of life, and the fault should be found with the evil inherent in man which discolours and distorts all that he does. If our attention is fixed on the positive element in the teaching of the Son of Man, we shall see the "all things good" which was the divine intention, and which will be the divine consummation.

Mr. DOUGLAS GEARY wrote: Dr. Jocz is to be congratulated on an excellent paper, and I am sure that all who are connected with preaching the Gospel have, at some time or another, come across the "fierce opposition" of religion (Barth's *Unglauben*) towards the Gospel ("Good News").

I am pleased to see that Dr. Jocz has emphasized the division between Roman Catholicism and Reformation theology, because I feel that by taking these two theologies and comparing them, we can best see the difference between religion and the Gospel. When the fact of this difference is neglected or forgotten, a false conception of Christianity arises. As resulting from this false conception, we have with us the many errors which are so prevalent in the Church today.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

The discussion raised by the paper "Religion and the Gospel" has revolved round three main issues: (1) *theologia naturalis*; (2) religion and false religion; (3) immortality of the soul. We will reply to the questions raised in this order.

(1) The Chairman found it impossible to reconcile "the many passages in the Bible" with the view that there is no such thing as a "general" revelation of God. He appealed to Rom. 1 : 19-20 in support of the usual view that God reveals His "everlasting power and divinity" outside the Canon. It occurs to us that Mr. Cook's view is the result of an unfortunate confusion of terminology. Not even Barth would deny that man, impressed by the spectacle of nature, is forced to conclude the "everlasting power and divinity" of God. But this is not revelation in any sense. This is a guess or a surmise. It is a pretty accurate conclusion with no further consequences. From the Bible we know that "revelation" is never in response to man's curiosity but to his need. It is not an impersonal word providing subject-matter for the intellect. Revelation in the Bible is always a pronouncement of judgment and an offer of grace. This we do not find outside the Canon of Scripture. It ill becomes a Christian theologian to talk about "general" revelation.

(2) Mr. Lovelock raised the question of false and true religion. We regret to have failed completely to impress Mr. Lovelock with our argument. Our respective use of the term "religion" is not just a question of terminology but is intimately tied up with our views on anthropology. To Mr. Lovelock, religion and false religion belong to the context of the dialectic process on the plane of history. Here man is always a *complete* entity, good or bad as the case may

be. Man may hold false religion and then revert to true religion, or *vice versa*. But this is not *our* view about man. To us, man is never a complete whole, but a constantly vacillating being. Truth and falsehood, life and death are in contest within him all the time.

“Religion” to us is not a set of views, true or otherwise, but a characteristic inward attitude which expresses itself in self-assertion before God. Mr. Lovelock’s argument, therefore, that our Lord Himself participated in His people’s “religion” is beside the point.

(3) A much more difficult question was raised by Mr. B. C. Martin. He tries to distinguish between immortality of the soul and eternal life. His argument is that whereas “immortality” is inherent in the human soul, eternal life remains the gift of God to the regenerate. Mr. Martin rejects the theory of “conditional” immortality because it presupposes annihilation which to him is clearly repugnant to the teaching of Scripture.

For ourselves we find it difficult to accept the subtle distinction between “immortality” and eternal life. Mr. Martin’s interpretation of 1 Tim. 6 : 16 as meaning “absolute” immortality is unacceptable to us for the reason that “immortality” in itself is already an absolute. We do sympathize, however, with the view that eternal life is a much more positive conception. It may well be that our difficulty arises from our Greek conceptions regarding immortality and eternity. Here Professor Cullmann’s work, *Christ and Time*, is of great value. Immortality, like eternity, cannot be conceived apart from God. Man apart from God is a mortal creature in *every* respect. Immortality of the soul is a foreign concept. Why should annihilation appear more repugnant to the Scriptures than everlasting suffering to the spirit of Jesus Christ?

But we are aware of the tremendous problems involved and do not feel equal to arrive at a final conclusion. The last word about man’s destiny is not with theology but with God. We conclude with a word of thanks to Mr. Douglas Geary for his encouraging note.

907TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY,
18TH FEBRUARY, 1952.

REV. PROF. E. O. JAMES, M.A., D.LITT., PH.D., D.D., F.S.A.,
IN THE CHAIR.

*THE AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF
RELIGION*

BY THE VERY REV. W. R. MATTHEWS, K.C.V.O., D.D.,
D.LITT., DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S.

SYNOPSIS.

- I. THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION :
its rejection from the side of Philosophy and from the side
of Theology.
- II. THE PROBLEMS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION :
 1. *Phenomenology*. Is there a dialectical development ?
Some reflections on this.
 2. *Epistemology*. The nature of religious knowledge and the
importance of Myth and Symbol.
 3. *Metaphysical*. The " proofs " of Theism. Their general
character.
 4. *Cosmological*. The Relation of God to the World.
- III. CONCLUSION : The special questions which arise and the
contact of the Philosophy of Religion with Theology.
A modest exhortation to Theologians and Philosophers.

I.

ONE who deals with the Philosophy of religion is confronted at the outset with the need to vindicate the real existence of his subject. No one, of course, could doubt that, in one sense, the philosophy of religion has a substantial being, for there are numerous massive volumes in which it is expounded, but, alas, these monuments of learning and ingenuity are no proof that the problems to which they are devoted are genuine problems, or that the purpose of their reflections is capable of fulfilment. After all, the books which have been produced on Astrology, if collected together, would fill a vast library, yet, for the most part, they are the products of illusion and concerned with questions which are either insoluble or unmeaning. Any

contribution which they have made to human knowledge has been fortuitous, the by-product of a futile quest.

A generation ago it would have been unnecessary to begin with an apology for the subject. Then the philosophy of religion held the field as the summit of religious and philosophical thought. It even threatened to push theology itself into the background and claimed to speak the final word on most of the controverted theses of the divine, nor was any philosophy considered to have said anything of permanent value unless it had dealt with the place of religion in the intellectual and spiritual life of man. Today the situation is radically different. From the side both of theology and of philosophy the attack comes, the one repudiating the assistance offered and the other excluding religion from the circle of philosophical topics. Any acquaintance with the history of thought will be sufficient to suggest that the present depreciation of the philosophical approach to religion is nothing more than a passing phase. Within Christianity, for example, there have been, from the beginning, two opposite views of the legitimacy of philosophy for the believer. St. Paul seems to be on both sides of this controversy—at least he provides memorable texts for either party. He has harsh words about “philosophy and vain deceit” and of the “wisdom of this world” which puffs up. But, on the other hand, he claims to speak a wisdom among those that are perfect and to have a *sophia* which unravels the mysteries of the world. In the famous passage in Romans where he asserts that “the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity” he provided the text on which the Scholastic philosophers are never tired of dwelling as the charter of their enterprise to found theology on a rational basis.

This bipolar relation to reason runs like a thread through the whole of Christian thought. The Greek Apologists were concerned to show that Christianity is the divine wisdom and they present it as the true philosophy. “Those who have lived lives with reason,” says Justin Martyr, “are Christians even though they were accounted atheists, such as Socrates and Heraclitus.” But the great Latin Apologist, Tertullian, takes the opposite view with his customary violence. “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” he asks, “What agreement can there be between the Academy and the Church? . . . *Nobis curiositate opus non est post Christum Jesum, nec inquisitione post evange-*

livum" (*De Praescript. Haer.* vii). This is a strain which we hear again even more stridently from Luther when he denounces reason as the "devil's whore." Nor of course is the assault from the side of philosophy a new thing. The sceptical tradition has a long history and it has always denied that there can be any rational account of religion, except in the sense that religion can be shown to be irrational. Hume's scepticism embraced the concepts of religion no less than those of science and, quite consistently, his works on religion are a *Natural History of Religion* and a *Dialogue*, the purpose of which is apparently to show the incapacity of reason to reach any conclusion at all on the ultimate reality. At the present moment both Tertullian and Hume, who have so often been refuted, are very much alive, and one is tempted to wonder if any point of view which has been stated by a sincere mind, either in theology or philosophy, is ever finally left behind. Sooner or later, in a slightly different form, it will be discovered again.

From the theological side the value, or even the possibility, of a philosophy of religion is called in question by the school of Neo-Protestants of which Karl Barth is the chief leader. This is not the place to give any account of Barth's system, which is worked out with immense learning and dialectical skill. It is enough to observe that he starts from the same position as Tertullian and Luther. The fact of revelation supersedes the labours of philosophy. Revelation cannot be submitted to the judgement of human reason; the word of God must not be made subservient to the thought of man. Moreover, so radical is the corruption of human nature that it is incapable of judgement on the truth of God. Revelation comes into history and not out of it. Our only recourse, and our only duty, is to listen to the word of God.

The rejection of all philosophical introduction to theology, which is based by Barth on the Bible, is based by an important group of philosophers on logic. The Logical Positivists are certainly in the tradition of David Hume, but they have gone one step further. Hume never explicitly denied that propositions of a religious kind such as "God exists" have a meaning, but this is precisely what the Logical Positivists deny. All, or at any rate most, of the statements which are made in the sphere of religion are neither true nor false; they are devoid of sense, they are "nonsense" propositions. Here again we may not linger on this topic or discuss the special doctrine of verifica-

tion on which this drastic criticism depends. It is sufficient to observe that the theory is the latest instance of the purely empirical approach to the problem of knowledge and one more evidence of the fact that empiricism, when taken in earnest, leads to an unlimited scepticism.

It is surely a strange thing to find that two tendencies of thought, which start from so widely different premises and are inspired by such opposite motives, should converge, but it is plain that both alike would restrict the area of the reason to very confined limits. On grounds which are as unlike as they could very well be they dismiss the constructive power of thought as illusory and scoff at the efforts of the human mind to know reality. This would be a disastrous conclusion for the study of the philosophy of religion, which is the attempt to understand the subject matter of religion by means of rational enquiry. Nor, I think, could anyone who has any acquaintance with history regard the result as a cheerful one. It would be a depressing thought that all the wealth of intelligence, and all the ardour, which have been devoted to the question "*An Deus sit*" have been either nothing but a piling up of error and sinful pride or might as well have been given to the discussion of whether a Jabberwock is a Boojum.

II

We will not now undertake the long and difficult task of a defensive war on two fronts by a direct refutation of the theological and logical theories which seem to question the possibility of any philosophy of religion. It will be more useful to approach the problem in a positive manner and to give an outline of the form which a modern philosophy of religion must take. I shall, therefore, proceed to state the topics with which, in my view, such an enquiry would be bound to deal and the questions which arise under each. It may be that one result of a survey of the ground will be to show that some at least of the problems deserve to be considered even by those who take a sceptical view of the limitations of human intelligence.

1. The first section of a modern philosophy of religion must be devoted to Phenomenology—that is to an attempt to reach a rational understanding of the object with which we are dealing. Religion, beyond question, exists: it exists, so to speak, in two modes—as a fact of history and as a kind of experience of many

individuals. It has an objective existence in the development of human culture and a subjective existence as a state of mind with which some human beings, if not all, are acquainted. The chief aim of a phenomenological enquiry is to consider the phenomena with a view to discovering what kind of coherence or structure, if any, they manifest as a whole. Though this research is, of course, closely related with the science of comparative religions and with the psychology of religion and must make all possible use of their conclusions, it is not identical with them. It seeks an interpretation of them which will enable us to relate the phenomena with the rest of our experience and perhaps disclose their significance for our understanding of the world. We might compare this section of the philosophy of religion with the philosophy of history. Evidently there could be no philosophy of history which was not based upon the researches of historians, but the philosophy of history is not history.

There is perhaps another analogy: just as the historians are apt to regard the philosophy of history with suspicion, so the students of comparative religion and the psychologists not infrequently suppose that their sciences are capable of dealing with all the problems that arise. The answer to both is the same. There are questions raised by history which history cannot answer and there are questions raised by the scientific investigations of religious phenomena which cannot be answered by the methods of science.

It is hardly necessary to observe that this phenomenological department of the Philosophy of Religion has increased in scope and importance in modern times, owing to the immense growth of our knowledge of the religions of the world. Though the great masters of old times were not ignorant of the existence of other religions than their own—the Scholastic philosophers of the Middle Ages, for example, could never forget the teaching of the false prophet Mohammed or the pagan background of Aristotle—yet they were under no constraint to find any coherent structure or significance in a long historical development which embraced all races of mankind.

At the outset of our phenomenological enquiry we encounter the troublesome question of the definition of religion. It may well seem necessary that, in surveying the phenomena of religion, we should have some criterion, such as would be supplied by a definition, to distinguish religious phenomena from other kinds.

But it is notorious that no definition among the hundreds proposed has met general acceptance and the whole frontier of religion is as vague as were the present frontiers of Central Europe at the end of the war. Certainly this is inconvenient, and it is worse than inconvenient, for it leaves open more than one important question, e.g. that of the relation between religion and magic, but we ought not to be surprised at this situation, for it obtains in all the universal and characteristic modes of human experience. Thus the philistines have found reason for satire in the fact that philosophers are always discussing the nature of philosophy and thereby laying themselves open to the comment that it is no wonder they make so little progress when they are uncertain what they would be at. The truth is, of course, that the nature, the scope and the method of philosophy are the problem of philosophy itself; when we have taken up our stand on them we have already determined our answer to most of the other questions that arise. In the same way, the real nature of religion is the central problem of the philosophy of religion, and when we have solved it, we shall have solved, in principle, all the rest. We must be content, therefore, in the mean time with the reflection that, in a general way, we know a religion when we see it and recognise a religious experience when we have it, just as we know when a man is trying to talk philosophy.

It is not my purpose in this paper to offer any discussion, still less any solution, of the problems, but rather to lay them out in a systematic way and to give a preliminary sketch of the country to be explored. I pass on then to two topics which seem to me to be suggested by the phenomena, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say to topics which enable us to put the problem in a more definite form.

If we ask what we mean by discovering coherence or significance in a large and varied group of phenomena, I think the first answer which will occur to us is that we are looking for some dialectical development in them. By "dialectical" I mean a process that exhibits some intelligible internal principle which enables us to grasp the process as one whole. Thus, a series of phenomena which occurred in a haphazard manner would be the opposite of dialectical, but so too would a series which was explicable wholly by external causation. It is my firm conviction that religion does manifest this dialectical character, but it would obviously be out of place here to enter into the somewhat

complex argument needed to substantiate this conclusion. I will add some remarks upon the importance and the consequences of this point.

One who maintains the dialectical character of religious development is not, of course, committed to the view that all religion is good or true in its measure, nor is he bound to hold that any religion whatever has the potentiality of leading on to the higher and truer stages. It is possible to hold, as in fact I do hold, that the opposing forces of the actual world, which we may include under the name "contingency," have often overwhelmed the dialectical process, distorted it, or held it up, so that of some religions it would be true to say, "It would be better had they never been." It may be, and I believe it is, true that only along one line of development has the process been carried to completion.

It is tempting to deduce more than can properly be inferred from the dialectical development of religion. Thus it has been supposed that, assuming the dialectic could be sustained, we should have an assurance that the whole was not based upon illusion. There is, I think, an element of truth in this contention. It would appear more probable that a long-continued and coherently elaborated experience was an experience of Reality than that it was the age-long explication of a figment, but I do not know that one could prove that the second alternative was logically untenable, any more than one could demonstrate from the coherence of our perceptions the reality of an external world. There is no logical contradiction in the conception of the dialectical development of an illusion. But this is not the most important limitation to the consequences which might be drawn from the dialectical character of religion. How can we show that the completion of the process is itself some form of religion? Might it not be the case that religion, when fulfilled, vanishes into something else? Perhaps after all it is a schoolmaster to lead us, not to Christ, but to Socrates.

This brings us to the second topic which I think falls under the heading of Phenomenology. The possibility that religion may, as a result of the working out of its inner dialectical nature, be absorbed into something else is precisely the issue which has been discussed in many idealist philosophies in connexion with the theory of the Forms of the Spirit or of the Absolute Idea. The relation of these Forms, Art, Religion and Philosophy, to one another has been variously interpreted by these thinkers

and their arguments have a direct bearing on the philosophy of religion. The important question for us is whether religion is a permanent and distinctive form of the Spirit or a temporary and hybrid phase of the Spirit's unfolding. Hegel, perhaps, may be regarded as ambiguous on this, though there seems little doubt that he intended both Art and Religion, the Thesis and Anti-thesis of his final Triad, to find their truth, that is their explicit nature, fulfilled in Philosophy. Croce is definite on the matter ; he holds that Religion is simply imperfect philosophy, philosophy working with images rather than concepts and, therefore, an unstable combination of Art and Philosophy. This controversy, which may seem at times to be conducted on a plane of such high abstraction that it can have little relevance to actuality, is really concerned with the whole problem of the future of religion, for, if we accepted Croce's view, we should be committed to the conclusion that religious phenomena, and the religious experience, are not rooted in the nature of mind or spirit and therefore may be expected to fade away as the thought which is incarnate in humanity becomes more and more self-conscious. Evidently this would have serious consequences for the Philosophy of Religion and it is not surprising that many writers on the subject have dealt with the question at length. It happens that three eminent philosophers who have recently been called from this mortal scene have expressed themselves on this topic. R. G. Collingwood was, I think, with many reservations, in agreement with Croce, while A. E. Taylor and W. E. de Burgh held, on the contrary, that religion stands as an independent Form. The thesis which I am prepared to defend is as follows :— It is not certain that the triadic structure of the dialectic is true ; there may be, for example, other Forms, such as morality, which should be included ; but admitting for the sake of the argument, that the three Forms of the Spirit are Art, Religion and Philosophy, I should maintain that Religion, in its ideal development, could be conceived as including the other two far more easily than either of them could be conceived as including religion.

2. We are thus naturally led to the second great group of problems with which a modern philosophy of religion may have to deal—those relating to Epistemology. The Phenomenological enquiry has already brought us to the verge of this territory, because we cannot pursue the question of the relation between religion and philosophy without asking ourselves whether they

do not differ precisely in respect of the kind of knowledge which they seek. Though there seems to be little ground for Croce's view that religion is always nothing but an explanation of the world expressed in images, since it leaves out very much which is evidently essential in religion as it exists and has existed, we must I think agree that religion, in all its phases, has a cognitive element. The knowledge which religion claims is certainly not of that apodeictic character which philosophers have sometimes, perhaps extravagantly, supposed they possessed. It believes; but belief, whatever else it may be, is a kind of knowing. The more spiritual religions have often summed up the highest blessedness by the phrase "to know God." No one who understands what he is talking about would imagine that knowing God is the same as knowing about God, but evidently it is a higher and more satisfactory kind of knowing, to be compared with that knowing of another person which we enjoy when we have the sympathetic insight of love. But this more satisfactory kind of knowing presupposes some of the lower kind, of knowing about. Could we love anyone about whom we knew nothing at all? An Apostolic writer has put the case with regard to God with admirable lucidity: "He who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him." Religion, it seems, is rarely or never a purely subjective and individual experience, though apart from subjective and individual experience it does not exist. Even the most solitary mystic has come from some community and shares in some tradition which furnishes him with the symbols and the thoughts on which his spirit feeds. Religion, as we can study it, is always an experience expressed and shared. The shared experience which issues in belief is condensed and transmitted in the doctrines and dogmas which are the common heritage of the community and enable it to carry on a spiritual life which has continuity, though not identity, from generation to generation.

The expressions of religious belief are, as Croce observes, almost entirely in the form of symbol. The earlier type of religious wisdom is the myth and the characteristic feature of religious thinking is that it is mythological. It is true that in the more advanced religions the cruder and more anthropomorphic type of myth is reduced and the merely symbolical form of expression predominates, but myth, it seems, is never wholly excluded, nor is it easy to distinguish very clearly between myth and symbol.

The problem which confronts us here is not only perplexing but goes very deep and, like all fundamental questions, is difficult to formulate accurately. I suggest that the question is really one which affects the whole theory of knowledge and is simply this: are there aspects of reality, or apprehensions of reality, which can be formulated, presented and expressed only in the language of poetry, or on the contrary must we hold that truth can be conveyed and presented only in concepts and logical propositions? In other words, we must raise the question whether there is any ground for the assertion that a poem may be true, true not only in the sense that it tells us something about the experience of the poet which could have been told in no other way, but something about reality, about the whole of which our experience is a part. I think it would be hard to exaggerate the importance of this issue in general, but it is plain enough that it is of great moment for the philosophy of religion. The language of religion is poetry. It is a sign of the narrow intellectualism of this age that, when one makes a remark of this kind many people, and even many religious people, suppose that one means religion is false. There is an opposition in their minds between *Wahrheit* and *Dichtung* and they cannot conceive the distinction between imagination and fancy.

We must note further that an additional complication is introduced into our problem by some recent studies of the kinds of knowing. Ernst Cassirer would tell us that symbolism pervades all human experience and that it is never possible to transcend this condition by obtaining a point of view from which we may determine the truth-content of any complex of symbols. Man is best defined as "*animal symbolicum*." If this conception of the essential nature of human response, as contrasted with animal reaction, is true, the distinction between religious and philosophical thinking cannot lie where Croce and others have supposed—in the difference between symbolical and conceptual thought—and we should have to regard them as two complexes of symbolical representation. I do not venture to express any opinion here on the nature of philosophical thought, but I cannot altogether pass by the question whether the thought associated with religion is wholly symbolical. Perhaps in Cassirer's sense of the word it is, but not, I believe, in the more usual meaning of the term. The expression of religious faith in creeds is often a mixture of myth, symbol and

concept. Thus in the Nicene Creed there is embedded among the poetical language concerning the Creator and Him who came down from heaven the word *homoousios*, "of one substance," which comes from the more rarefied atmosphere of logic and metaphysics. At the same time, an examination of such a document as the Creed of Nicea illustrates the predominant and determining part which symbolical thinking plays in religion and theology. It would be quite impossible to translate it into terms of concept, of Descartes's "clear and distinct ideas," without emptying it, not only of most of its emotional effect, but also of the greater part of its meaning.

It may be suggested that the nature of religious knowledge, and particularly the function of myth and symbol in it, present a fundamental problem which needs more consideration from philosophers than it has yet received. The topic has not, however, been entirely neglected, for apart from Cassirer, to whom I have already referred, we have the masterly study of symbolism by the late Dr. Edwyn Bevan and an important chapter in Professor Urban's *Language and Reality*. But perhaps most remarkable of all is the contribution of Berdyaev, who explicitly maintains the legitimacy and necessity of mythological thinking both in philosophy and theology.

3. Pursuing our enquiry into the nature and logical order of the topics with which the Philosophy of Religion should deal we now come to the third group—the Metaphysical. Here of course we arrive at the point where the central problem comes up for consideration. Here the decisive word must be spoken concerning the truth of the religious view of the world and the objective foundation of its alleged insight. It is not to be wondered at that the so-called "proofs" of the existence of God have loomed so large in the reflections of religious thinkers so that they have often seemed to occupy almost the whole field. The Ontological, Cosmological, Teleological, Moral and Aesthetic arguments have to be examined, not only in themselves, but in their relation with one another. In this preliminary sketch of a philosophy of religion we cannot do more than offer some general remarks upon the arguments as a whole.

In my opinion, the place which the discussion of the arguments for the existence of God occupies in the exposition of a philosophy of religion is a matter of great importance. It is not simply a question of convenience of statement or rhetorical elegance, it affects our judgement of the arguments themselves. Too often

they have been approached *in vacuo*, as if they were without historical roots. I venture to think that we shall not properly understand them unless we have first studied the phenomenology of religion and the questions which arise immediately out of such a study, because it is only when we have that background that we are able to realise the real character of these arguments. They are not speculations which are thrown up by the restless curiosity of the human mind; they are attempts to answer a question which is forced upon the thinker, not only by the particular aspect of experience from which he takes his logical start, but by the age-long experience of the human race. They are elaborated not in an empty world but in one in which religion is a continuing fact.

I do not believe that any of the well-known arguments can be stated in a way which is apodeictic. If by demonstrating the existence of God we mean producing a train of reasoning which compels the assent of all who understand it, I doubt whether that can be done and I am tolerably certain that it never has been done. Perhaps it would be better to regard the arguments as various ways in which an hypothesis is sought to be verified, but there are difficulties about this which may be a cause of misunderstanding. The hypothesis, in this case, is not strictly analogous with hypothesis as employed in the scientific method, because the God-hypothesis, if the term may be allowed, is not an hypothesis to explain a limited set of phenomena, or to solve some definite problem, but an hypothesis to explain the whole of phenomena. Further, we must remember that the hypothesis of God is, as we have seen, not one which we invent *ad hoc*. We find it, nor can we be indifferent towards it. It comes to us with the weight of centuries of human thought and emotion behind it and we cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that our choice to adhere or not to adhere to it is not only a matter of intellectual satisfaction but may be a choice between life and death, or at least between hope and despair.

Can anything be said that is not merely banal on the arguments for the existence of God of a purely general character? Probably not; but I will venture on one remark. It seems to me that they all have the same form, or perhaps rather they all pursue the same road. In so far as there is any argument to be based upon the fact of religious experience, I suppose it would be that the existence of God, or of the Divine, makes sense of the experience more completely than any possible

alternative. In much the same way the other arguments, taking one or other of the aspects of our total experience, try to show that, if we think out its implications to the end, we are brought to the conception of Deity. In Mr. Bertrand Russell's book on Leibniz he reproaches that philosopher for bringing in the idea of God to get him out of difficulties. It is apparently, in Russell's view, a serious defect that the philosophy of Monads will not make sense without the idea of the Supreme Monad. I have never been able to see the justice of this criticism. How else, may we ask, could the existence of God be shown on philosophical grounds? And further, what more impressive argument could there be than the discovery that, at the end of every research into the universal characters of our experience, we find the hypothesis of universal mind forced upon us? So I think the various arguments really proceed. We may begin with thought itself, and then we have the Ontological argument; we may pass on to thought striving to understand things—the outer world—and there emerges the Cosmological argument and its child the Teleological Argument; we try to make sense of our ethical life and stumble on the Moral argument, or of our apprehension of beauty and the Aesthetic argument appears. But there is one presupposition on which all these arguments depend. We must take the experiences from which they start, I will not say at their face value, but at the value which, on reflection, they claim to possess. Thus, there can be no Ontological argument unless we admit that the end of the intellect is truth and that truth is not an illusory value; if the moral argument is to start at all, we must take our moral consciousness in deadly earnest and not explain it away; we must believe that there are purposes which we ought to promote at any cost to ourselves and deeds which we ought to die rather than do; we must not dissolve out æsthetic experience into something else, but accept the deliverance of our hearts that there is in the world beauty which we did not make and which is altogether adorable and worthy of love. All this, after all, is only another way of saying that the philosophy of religion is deeply concerned to maintain the reality of the eternal values.

4. The final section of our projected Philosophy of Religion would be devoted to a group of problems which might be called cosmological. I shall do little more here than enumerate them, because they are obvious enough; at least the questions are

obvious, though not perhaps the answers; nor do I think that the order in which the problems are considered is of such moment here as it is in the other sections. The supreme problem under this cosmological heading is, of course, the relation of God to the world. Indeed it is doubtful if that phrase is correct, for to speak of a relation of God and the world, is at least on one possible view, an error. The possible theories on this subject all seem to be variations of three themes. The world may stand in relation with God as His creation, or it may be an emanation from Him, or it may be identical with Him—that is, the whole of being, considered as a whole, may be the divine. In these phrases, which are so easily spoken, lie the deep causes of division which have sundered the higher religions from one another. Though their examination and criticism lie well within the sphere of the philosophy of religion, we are obviously drawing nearer to the realm of theology and the calm of philosophy begins to be disturbed by its discordant cries. Yet the discussion of the being of God cannot be severed from that of the nature of God and that again must be closely related with the cosmological problem. Here, I think, would naturally come the full treatment of the problem of evil in its threefold forms of sin, suffering and error.

We draw still closer to theology when we raise the final question—the possibility of revelation. If we have seen reason to believe that God exists and that He is the Creator, we have before us the probability that He would communicate with men. How is this possible, and what kind of evidence might we expect of such communication? Those revelations which are the basis of the different theologies all profess, in some way, to be given through history, through human experience of a certain character, and through personalities of a peculiar quality. We shall not have finished our task until we have tackled the meaning of history and the place of personality in the cosmos in the light of our metaphysical convictions.

III

Thus I have, I hope, shown how a philosophical consideration of religion spans a large space. Beginning where the sciences of comparative religion and psychology leave off, it takes a high mountain path through epistemology and metaphysics, and leaves us where theology begins. A map cannot prove anything,

but I shall have wasted my time and yours if I have not succeeded in suggesting that the philosophy of religion attempts to answer some real questions of high importance. Even if all the questions should be in fact unanswerable, we shall be the better, though not the happier, for knowing why this is so, but if in fact they are soluble we shall be both wiser and happier for finding the answers. I believe that the theologians would be well advised to pay more attention than they do to the philosophical prolegomena to their own studies. The philosophy of religion has, I believe, a value in itself, but even supposing that it can reach no conclusions which are useful to theology, it is a branch of research which, by its very nature, is bound to be aware both of the progress of secular knowledge and of the development of religious thought and practice, and therefore could preserve theologians from their besetting temptation, that of retiring to a sacred enclosure remote from the thought and the culture of our time.

I feel comparatively safe in addressing a word of exhortation to theologians, because after all they are accustomed to it, but I scarcely dare to speak in the same strain to philosophers. Yet I will express an opinion which has been more and more taking hold of my mind in these years of confusion, material, political and moral. Is it not a grave misfortune that at such a time so many philosophers have given up the attempt to grapple with the great problems which centre upon the nature of man and his place in the universe? That ambition to grasp with the mind the whole of things and to penetrate its meaning, which is always frustrated yet never fruitless, will certainly revive. There will be another constructive era in philosophy. When it occurs we may be sure that the problem of religion will be central, for how could such philosophers fail to see the need of interpreting this strange propensity of man, to believe in a Reality which is unseen, to worship and to seek a peace which is not of this world?

DISCUSSION.

Rev. Prof. E. O. JAMES (Chairman) said: In opening his survey of the present position of the Philosophy of Religion, Dr. Matthews has been wise, I think, to call attention to the "flight from reason" which has become a disquieting symptom of an irrational and fundamentally sceptical age. To eliminate the judgment of human reason from the interpretation of divine revelation, as do the

Barthian theologians, or, like the Logical Positivists from the side of philosophy, to dismiss as "nonsense propositions" all concepts and phrases incapable of empirical verification, is to destroy the *raison d'être* alike of theology and philosophy, and can only have disastrous consequences for both disciplines.

Similarly, I welcome the word of warning that he has uttered in my own field of inquiry. It is all too easy for those of us who are primarily concerned with religious phenomena as a universal aspect of human culture to concentrate our attention on the function of religion as an essential part of social mechanism—a means of enabling human beings to live together in an orderly arrangement of social relations—to the exclusion of the fundamental concepts and realities that lie behind these processes. If the only true purpose of religion is to maintain a social order—to hold together society as an integrated whole—then Nazism or Marxism might be calculated to serve equally well and probably much more effectually. To be vindicated, religion must rest upon a transcendental basis verifiable at the threefold bar of reason, history and spiritual experience.

Concerning the vexed question of a definition of religion I should say that religion is best defined perhaps as an effective desire to be in right relations with a transcendental order of reality regarded as the ground of the universe and responsive to human needs. This relation finds expression in the first instance (*i.e.*, in primitive states of culture) in a ritual technique of sacred actions and modes of behaviour centred in the deepest needs and desires of man—his hopes, fears, passions and sentiments. The transcendent "otherness" with which the human spirit seeks efficacious relations ranges from the idea of a universal Providence, the source of bounty and beneficence, to that of an Ultimate Reality as the eternal ground of the highest evaluation conceivable—goodness, beauty and truth. In establishing a religious relationship with all that is involved in the idea of God, sacred action finds expression and rationalization in the sacred story or "myth."

Now, "myth" is not, as the Oxford Dictionary erroneously defines it, "a fictitious narrative concerning natural or historical phenomena," nor is it, as Frazer asserts, the philosophy of primitive man, a first attempt to answer general questions about the world, or imaginative stories about the doings of gods as in the pseudo-

mythology of ancient Greece. Myth is the expression of fundamental notions about the deepest realities in human experience—the things by which men live. These may be material (*e.g.*, dealing with matters connected with the food supply or the cycle of birth and death in nature or man); or spiritual (*e.g.*, relating to the nature of God and His relation with man and the world); or ethical (*e.g.*, determining the right ordering of human conduct). Therefore, myth expresses and codifies fundamental beliefs and enforces ethical evaluations by formulating reasons for conduct. It is a reality lived. Consequently, every vital religion must have its mythology because myth is the natural language of religion. As the Dean has said, creeds are often a mixture of myth, symbol and concept. This is inevitable because only in these terms can their verities be stated. They are the essential means of giving expression to religious truth and reality. With him I entirely agree that this most important aspect of religious knowledge needs more consideration and elucidation than it has received from philosophers, and I hope that this penetrating exposition of the aims and scope of the Philosophy of Religion will have the attention its importance richly deserves.

Rev. C. T. COOK said: I would like to thank the Dean for a most instructive paper. It is to be feared that the attitude of many Christians to this subject is similar to that of Karl Barth—that the question is a purely academic one and remote from daily life. Yet it has been truly said that every thoughtful man must be in some sense a philosopher; he must have some kind of view of man's place and purpose in the scheme of things. Human nature is so constituted that it will always seek an answer to the ultimate questions. Moreover, we are bidden by the Apostle Peter to be ready always to give a reason concerning the hope that is in us, and in certain circumstances that may involve going beyond a simple testimony concerning our conversion and personal experience of divine grace.

The great Augustine has pointed out that in our Lord's words, "Ask, and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you," we have a perfect expression of the beginning and end of the philosopher's quest. Recently I came across a statement by a nineteenth-century writer, with which I am sure the Dean will heartily concur: "If the theologian do not

become a philosopher, if he do not diligently and intelligently cultivate the knowledge of mind, the knowledge of knowledge, the knowledge of moral philosophy, and the philosophy of religion, he will scarcely attain the place of a trustworthy theologian" (G. T. Ladd).

One would like to know how the Dean would define the term "myth." There appears to be some diversity in the modern theological usage of the word. Dr. Matthews has referred (in his extempore remarks) to mythical elements in the account of the Incarnation, making mention of the phrase "came down from heaven." While we recognize that such popular terminology is a necessary accommodation to our earthly viewpoint, it is nevertheless the expression of a tremendous and historical fact—that at a point in time God did become man in the person of the Babe born in Bethlehem. The word "myth" does not seem to me to be the right word in this connection. The term "symbol" might have relevance to the idea behind such phrases as "coming down" and "taken up," but, here again, we recall how Dr. Edwyn Bevan has stated that it is often difficult in Scripture to know where to draw the line between the symbolical and the literal.

I would like to ask Dr. Matthews about an aspect of this subject which is not precisely stated in his paper, although I think it is implicit in his arguments. I refer to the importance of the faith-principle in all inquiry, by which I mean that in our approach to philosophy, as to every branch of knowledge, we must begin with an act of faith, we must believe in something that is not self-evident. It has been affirmed that every scientific hypothesis is a venture of faith and every philosopher has a hypothesis as his starting point. In other words is it not a fact that we must believe in order to understand?

It seems to me that this consideration has a most important bearing on the relationship between philosophy and the Christian faith. In his concluding paragraph Dr. Matthews points out that it is almost impossible for philosophers to leave religion out of account. I note in this connection that Principal John Baillie has remarked that "the determining factor in the formation of philosophical systems has again and again been the initial presence or absence of religious faith in the philosopher's heart" (*The Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 38 f.).

Mr. PERCY O. RUOFF said : The Dean of St. Paul's has certainly added charm to his able paper by delivering it in clear and familiar speech, instead of reading it in its more rigid form.

He presents a welcome view, both at the beginning and end of the lecture, that, in his opinion "there will be another constructive era in philosophy" with the problem of religion being central, and the need of interpreting the belief in unseen reality.

On page 110 the Dean's argument about St. Paul being "on both sides" of the controversy that two opposite views of philosophy for the believer are legitimate, is dispelled by a reference to what the Apostle wrote. Paul's words are cited "philosophy and vain deceit," and "a wisdom . . . and a *sophia* which unravels the mysteries of the world." But in 1 Cor. 2 the apostle is not contrasting two competing philosophies, strictly speaking, but current philosophies and a revelation "which God hath revealed unto us through His Spirit" (v. 10). The distinction is vital, and is intended to contrast the wisdom of this world that "comes to nought," with the wisdom of God which, he says, "is revealed by His Spirit."

Dr. Matthews adopts a strong position when he affirms that "belief, whatever else it may be, is a kind of knowing." Not so acceptable is his statement, "The language of religion is poetry." Would it not be more correct to say some of its language is poetic in form? It would, for example, be difficult to take a profound book like *Romans*, with its granite cast of argument, and apply to it the term poetic.

The excellent argument on pages 120 and 121 on ontological lines in which the Dean develops the argument "that the philosophy of religion is deeply concerned to maintain the reality of eternal values," is a convincing statement.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. E. H. BETTS wrote : This paper sketches, with some completeness of scope, the philosophy of religion. In it, religion is left undefined and a certain haziness marking the philosophy is one of the results. It is submitted to the eminent Author that his Christianity, if not treated by him with such scant respect, would have helped him. And there is nothing logically or philosophically unsound in the method which, for purposes of definiteness, starts with a

working definition, even if after a fuller survey it must be modified or rejected. A rudimentary acquaintance with "religion" gives the following elements for a tentative definition: (1) the universal vague movements or yearnings of the human heart after the Unknown, and (2) the multifarious methods, both true and false, of satisfying or attempting to meet these longings.

But the distinguished writer of the paper wants, at all costs, his philosophy, speculative and reflective; and he ignores or rejects in his interesting labours, all help from revelation. He will not, although an eminent and highly distinguished holder of Christian office, identify himself with Paul the Apostle, Tertullian the Latin Father or Luther the Reformer, not to mention Barth the Neo-Protestant. And, alas, of the Christ of God Himself he makes but one mention—an unfavourable comparison with Socrates in relation to the dialectical development of religion! And yet, if the Christianity from which the writer has received such signal honours of office is true, Christ *is* the *sophia* of God. Again and again Paul insists on this. Nor can it be granted for one moment that he vacillates in such manner as to seem "to be on both sides of the controversy." The wisdom which he spoke "among the perfect" (i.e., the spiritually adult) is "not of this world nor of the princes (*leaders!*) of this world who are on their way to come to naught or they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"—that glory which is the very development, though perhaps not dialectical development, to which our writer's eyes seem so regrettably blinded.

Our Lord said that these things are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes. Thus the way to wisdom and understanding proper to maturity is in His eyes, at least, *via* the receptiveness and dependence of the babe.

Mr. F. F. BRUCE wrote: It is a happy combination of circumstances that has brought the Dean of St. Paul's paper in such close proximity to Dr. Jocz's in this year's programme. Either without the other would have given a one-sided view of the problem of religion, but those who have read and digested both will have an all-round comprehension of the problem, and incidentally will realize how intractable a problem it is. It is impossible to accept both theses at once—if we wish to preserve a clear mind—and it is just about as difficult to find a compromise half-way between them. Here, if

anywhere, we are confronted with the *Either/Or* which the theology of crisis persists in thrusting before us, and here at least we cannot reply with a *Both-And*, or even with a *While on the one hand . . . yet on the other*.

For my part, it is a sense of gratitude which I have long felt towards Dr. Matthews that impels me to write. At a time when I was as sceptical as an undergraduate ought to be, a paper of his in the *Hibbert Journal* for January, 1930, on "The Destiny of the Soul" showed me how I might understand and continue to accept *ex animo* the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body. About a year later his *God in Christian Thought and Experience* was my first textbook in the study of the philosophy of religion. And now I must add a further word of thanks for the word of exhortation he has addressed to theologians. To be sure, as he says, we are accustomed to exhortations of many kinds from varied quarters, but the Dean's admonition is specially apposite. Theology has not abdicated her sovereignty as queen of the sciences, even if she does not receive the royal homage that is her due in the same degree as once she did. But she will lose even that which she has, and might as well abdicate forthwith, if theologians succumb to the temptation "of retiring to a sacred enclosure remote from the thought and the culture of our time." It is the prerogative of the Christian theologian to assert the claims of Christ and the Gospel in and over the *whole* of life.

908TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY
17TH MARCH, 1952.

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

THE LIMITATIONS OF NATURAL THEOLOGY

By R. T. LOVELOCK, A.M.I.E.E.

(*Being the Gunning Prize Essay, 1952.*)

SYNOPSIS.

The natural theology of our day is a lineal descendant of a philosophy which took its rise in the Middle Ages. The circumstances of that rise are noted, and the background against which it has developed summarised; thus is emphasised the dependence of natural theology upon the natural science which forms its basis.

The progress of thought in physical science, philosophy, and metaphysics during the last half-century is discussed. Particular emphasis is laid upon the modern theories of knowledge, since the limitations of natural theology spring from the principle of uncertainty pervading modern physics.

These limitations, which arise from physical uncertainty, are noted in detail as they are found in several important arguments of natural theology. The ontological arguments based on probability and on design, and the argument from analogy, are discussed in this connection.

Finally, the Bible attitude to natural theology is summarised. St. Paul's views of the limitations involved are found to emphasise the necessity for faith and revelation if these limitations are to be overcome.

INTRODUCTION.

MODERN science bases its methods on the technique of experiment, and has progressed steadily since the clear elucidation of such principles in Bacon's *Organum*. Thus it has by now accumulated a vast mass of data concerning the cause-effect sequence in the universe, and on the basis of such data synthesising theories are erected which serve to indicate the optimum direction for further experiments.

The ancient Greeks had an equally active mind, and they also spent time and energy enquiring into the functioning of nature. They, however, were not addicted to experimental methods, but preferred to erect a huge edifice of logical deduction on a foundation of 'obvious axioms.' Unfortunately, many of the

axioms which seemed so obviously true to them are now known to be false, and while we are greatly indebted to them for supreme examples of deductive logic, the detailed systems which they evolved are valueless today. As a lesson in how to reason the work of Euclid is 'timeless,' but when we try to measure a distant planet instead of a neighbouring field it requires supplementation because all of its axioms are not necessarily true.

When Christianity began to spread from Palestine throughout the Roman world, it was a 'breaking in' on Greek philosophy. It had none of the intricacies of that philosophy, and did not necessitate the exercise of complicated mental gymnastics in its acceptance. It was a simple moral way of life based on the authoritative teaching of Jesus and the prophets concerning the nature, will, and purpose of God. Emphasis was placed on the fact that God had *revealed* Himself to man, and man's duty followed simply from the details of that revelation. Originally, there was little attempt to explain 'why' or 'how,' nor to link up the 'way of life' with the involved systems of natural philosophy.

As Christianity spread, however, it began to draw within the net a few of the professional philosophers, and they continued to practise their old vocation, but exercised it in a new direction. In attempting to construct a philosophy of religion on the basis of God's revelation they gradually formed a 'system of theology.' In the first of his *Hibbert Lectures* Hatch comments thus on early Christian activity :

"It is impossible for anyone, whether he be a student of history or no, to fail to notice a difference of both form and content between the Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed. The Sermon on the Mount is the promulgation of a new law of conduct ; it assumes beliefs rather than formulates them ; the theological conceptions which underlie it belong to the ethical rather than the speculative side of theology ; metaphysics are wholly absent. The Nicene Creed is a statement partly of historical facts and partly of dogmatic inferences ; the metaphysical terms which it contains would probably have been unintelligible to the first disciples ; ethics have no place in it. The one belongs to a world of Syrian peasants, the other to a world of Greek philosophers.

"The contrast is patent. If anyone thinks that it is sufficiently explained by saying that the one is a sermon

and the other a creed, it must be pointed out in reply that the question why an ethical sermon stood in the forefront of the teaching of Jesus Christ, and a metaphysical creed in the forefront of the Christianity of the fourth century, is a problem which claims investigation."

To avoid a hopeless confusion through the clash of rival systems, the ecclesiastical leaders were forced to choose among them and define an authoritative set of dogmas; hence arose the 'authority of the Church' which was destined to play so totalitarian a part in Church history. Thus, no sooner did speculation get under way in any new direction, than the Church intervened and gave a ruling which served to freeze the debate from that point. A few centuries of this practice narrowed down the available fields of speculation, and, as the secular arm of the Church developed, made it a dangerous practice. A revival of Aristotelian studies about this time stirred up the minds of scholars, making them restless and impatient of restraint. The result was a fresh outburst of speculation, religious in nature, since religion was the mainspring of all activity in those days, but directed towards natural philosophy and away from the authoritative revelation which the Church had made its especial care. Out of this activity came 'natural theology,' the limitations of which we are to consider.

Thomas Aquinas was one of the most brilliant of these philosophers, and his presentation became the basis of natural theology for many years to come. He sought, on the foundation of *a priori* assumptions, to prove the existence of God and investigate His nature. The genius of the ecclesiastical oligarchy ran more to organisation than to philosophy and, when atheists such as Spinoza sought with the aid of pure reason to demonstrate the non-existence of God, they eagerly encouraged philosophers within the Church to take up the cudgels. Thus, many ideas, such as the impassibility of the Godhead, which had been adopted from ancient Greece and were in opposition to the implications of revelation, came to be accepted into the Church. Since philosophers were discouraged from developing further the implications of revelation, the inconsistency was largely unnoticed, and has served to confuse and retard later theological development.

Only with the rise of the Protestant movement was attention turned once more to an analytical examination of revelation, and by that time so many alien postulates had come to be

accepted that the battle to advance the implications of revelation was long and arduous. That struggle is now past history, and there would be little gain in examining the natural theology of earlier times, because much of its detail has been since discarded. Instead, it is proposed firstly to consider the reliability of present-day scientific postulates, since it is upon them that natural theology is built, and it will partake of any limitations inherent in natural science. The operation of such limitations will then be considered in relation to *modern* discussions of natural theology. Finally, the Bible attitude to natural theology as a system will be reviewed briefly.

LIMITATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE.

Throughout the nineteenth century experimental science made tremendous progress on the assumption that nature was a vast machine which could be completely comprehended by meticulously examining one feature at a time until the whole had been covered. The progress of atomic physics may be considered as typical of scientific method during that period. From the immense complexity of many thousands of substances confronting the chemist, the concept of an atom as the smallest non-divisible component of matter allowed all chemistry to be expressed as relationships between less than one hundred distinct elements. This comparative simplification was still further advanced by claiming that all atoms were composed of two fundamental particles, and that these same particles were themselves responsible for all 'non-material' electrical phenomena. As the century closed, vigorous efforts were being made to resolve these two particles into states of motion in a non-material ether, which should also be responsible for the transmission of electro-magnetic radiation.

About the middle of the century, Herbert Spencer, the agnostic philosopher, attempted (in *First Principles*) to undermine the whole structure of natural theology by postulating that the complete universe could be divided into two types of entity. The first of these, christened by him 'the knowable,' consisted of all external media capable of stimulating one or more of our five senses; within this category falls the whole material world which may be subjected to controlled experiment in the laboratory, and which comprises the proper domain of science. The second classification he named 'the unknowable,' since, if it existed at all, it gave no direct stimulation to our natural senses. To Spencer, the verb 'to know' had a fundamental meaning.

He, in common with most scientists of his age, thought of the brain concept resulting from sense stimulation as possessing a unique reality, a reality which was denied to anything which could not become the subject of a 'pointer reading' in the laboratory; it was only such concepts which we could really *know*, and he attempted thus to create an impassable gulf between the natural world and the domain of 'spirit.'

With the opening of the twentieth century grave doubts began to accumulate concerning the fundamental nature of our *knowing*. Karl Pearson was one of the first to publish this "scientific sacrilege" when (in *The Grammar of Science*) he questioned the reality, or absolute existence, of such fundamental concepts as 'force.' He saw the whole domain of classical mechanics as but a convenient set of rules by means of which an observed sequence of sense stimuli could be forecast, and he denied the logical necessity for absolute existence as fundamental entities of any factors represented by symbols in the equations. Pearson's attitude is summed up in the opening words of his preface to the first edition :

"There are periods in the growth of science when it is well to turn our attention from its imposing superstructure and to carefully examine its foundations. The present book is primarily intended as a criticism of the fundamental concepts of modern science, and as such finds its justification in the motto placed upon its title-page (*La critique est la vie de la science*)."

Out of this attitude, under the brilliant leadership of Einstein, emerged the theory of relativity, based on the axiom that none of the measurable quantities of physics has an absolute magnitude, but that a combination of measurements called the '*interval*' is invariant for all observers. Even though the minutiae of the theory are still the subject of controversy, observation has adequately confirmed the truth of the axiom. For an excellent and original presentation of the purely relative significance of symbols employed in the higher geometries reference should be made to Schroedinger's recent book *Space-Time Structure*.

In a similar manner, the efforts which sought to resolve proton and electron into vortices in a continuous ether have been doomed to bitter disappointment. It is now known that the concept of two fundamental particles was a gross over-simplification, and each decade of this century sees the postulated number of such particles increase. Not only has confusion been

created by the discovery of many more types of particle, and by the denial that there is any continuous medium such as ether to transmit energy, but further observation has revealed that particles do not obey the laws of classical mechanics which had been supposed universally valid. Thus, while relativity questioned the existence of the machinery, quantum mechanics came to suggest that it did not function as a machine. The vast uniformity of nature was seen to be but a statistical average applicable only on a macroscopic scale, but when attention was focused on the individual constituent, not only was its behaviour unpredictable, but its very dimensions and nature became doubtful; it could be legitimately represented either as a material particle with indefinite location, or as electro-magnetic radiation distributed throughout space. Several 'popular' presentations of these matters are available for those desiring more detailed discussion of the point.

The trend of thought away from the concepts of certainty and the machine, which has been noted in physics, has also occurred in other fields. It was normal for nineteenth-century biologists such as Huxley, and philosophers such as Haeckel, to assume as an established fact that the human brain was no more than our most complex machine, and the whole nexus of human motives and volitions was assumed as predictable as the performance of a locomotive. Our inability to make the prediction was considered due to ignorance of the machine, and in no way a function of its nature. The present century has seen great advances in psychology and psychical research, which indicate that the brain does not conform to the pattern of a machine any more than particles conform to the laws of classical mechanics: later advances in biology have confirmed the impression, and it has been suggested that both failures may be intimately related. For a summary of the biological position reference should be made to a small work by Schroedinger¹ and two recent series of broadcast talks, since published.²

Recent advances in metaphysics have been guided by this general trend of thought, and the nature of connection between sense stimulus and the responsible external agent has been seriously considered. Although the mental concept resulting from stimuli is not identical with them, so that a series of

¹ *What is Life?* (Cambridge, 1948).

² *The Physical Basis of Mind* (Blackwell, 1950); Young, *Doubt and Certainty in Science* (Oxford, 1951).

electromagnetic waves impinging on the retina of our eye can produce the sensation of a tree waving in the breeze, yet there is a one-to-one correlation between stimulus and concept. When, however, we pass to consider the relationship between any given stimulus and the external agency responsible for it, we are in complete ignorance; nor can we, in this case, resolve the point by experiment, and the true nature of external *things* falls within Spencer's category of 'unknowable.' To provide some definite basis on which progress may be made, it is usual to assume that a close 'analogy' exists between concept and percept (using 'percept' for external agent): it is vital that in doing this we are basing the whole of our knowledge concerning the external world on an 'act of faith,' an act which postulates the analogy which cannot be proven. It is ironic that the external reality on which Spencer placed so much reliance should be found within his despised category of that which cannot be known. Dorothy M. Emmet has given an extremely interesting analysis of these matters, and concerning scientific truth she says:

"We shall now ask in what sense, if any, the explanatory concepts of physical science may be taken to make assertions which go beyond phenomenal experience, and in particular ask how realistic an interpretation should be put upon the 'models' with the help of which scientific explanation seeks to make its world intelligible. . . .

"Yet its models can hardly be literal representations of 'how nature works.' They are rather illustrative analogies drawn from relations which we find intelligible. . . . But it looks as if the idea of 'mechanism' was a regulative principle, that is to say, a guiding principle of method rather than an explanation in the realistic sense. . . .

"But we cannot with any assurance go so far as to claim structural identity between processes in nature and the intellectual relations between the ideas in which we symbolize them, and say with Spinoza *Ordo et connexio idearum idem est ac ordo et connexio rerum*. For mind is not a mirror, but a selective and interpretative activity which builds up symbolic constructions. But the mode of activity which constructs symbolic forms, and which, following Whitehead, we may call the 'mental pole,' grows out of the total experience of a 'bipolar' being whose 'physical

pole' consists in activities which are not constructive, but responsive to processes acting upon it."¹

Thus, not only has science found that its pointer readings do not yield exact knowledge of entities, but only the magnitude of probabilities concerning them—philosophy has now discovered that each personality is a closed system which can never obtain knowledge of such reality through experiment. It seems likely that these two limitations, the scientific and the philosophic, are two aspects of the same underlying principle. The application of the principle of uncertainty to the domain of religion has been brilliantly discussed by Alan Richardson, who stresses that since all scientific advances are based on an 'act of faith' analogous to that on which revealed religion rests, we cannot attain to a greater certainty not necessitating faith by basing religion on scientific investigation. He formulates his position thus :

"In science, no less than in philosophy or religion, *fides praeceedit intellectum*. This applies not merely to the process of arriving at such categories as those of 'mechanism,' 'natural selection,' or 'the unconscious,' but also to those very broad and prior categories, without which there could be no science, and yet which cannot be proved, such as the principle of the uniformity of nature. Science itself, including its most distinctive and valuable feature, the inductive method, is based upon an act of faith, and this faith is not formally different in quality from the faith about which the religious man speaks."²

Since physical science has now reached the stage when it denies any unique and fundamental reality to its postulates, it follows that all Aristotelian schemes of natural theology based upon the axioms deduced by physical science will inherit the limitations of those same axioms : they also can have no external objective reality. Natural theology can present but a logical schema consistent with all that is known today about the external world ; it cannot, however, claim any necessary existence for its postulates, and must rest upon the same act of faith which supports its scientific foundations. In the following sections certain important arguments of natural theology will be con-

¹ *The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking* (Macmillan, 1945), pp. 68, 88, 89, 95.

² *Christian Apologetics* (S. C. M., 1947), pp. 47-48.

sidered, and the detailed operation of the limitation in each case will be noted as illustrative of the general principle.

ONTOLOGY.

One of the cardinal aims of natural theology has always been to establish beyond all doubt the existence of God. Within recent years Sir Edmund Whittaker has examined afresh the classical presentation of this argument by Thomas Aquinas. In his book (*Space and Spirit*) he examines minutely the whole of the older argument in the light of modern cosmological theories. He finds that while much which Thomas advanced would be considered irrelevant today, nevertheless there are no established concepts of modern science which are inconsistent with the existence of God. On the other hand, he finds many indications in modern physics which agree so well with the type of God expected by Thomas that they may be said to contribute to the probability of His existence. Having covered the whole field, however, he is unable to find any train of reasoning which could establish as a logical necessity the existence of a transcendent God.

Since such a God is conceived as an 'ultimate reality,' such a failure should occasion no surprise. The principle of uncertainty considered above would lead us to expect a failure of any attempt based on a 'physical' foundation. In fact, the failure of so many keen intellects to find such a proof after seven centuries of unremitting effort should in itself be considered a pointer to the limitations of natural theology.

THE ARGUMENT FROM PROBABILITY.

An argument which has been frequently used during the last century, particularly in combat with rationalism, is that based on the probability that our universe could have arisen 'by chance.' The narrow range of temperature within which forms of higher life are possible, the very exacting physical and chemical requirements for its continuance, and the extremely complicated structure essential for the functioning of the living body, are all stressed, together with the requirement that all must co-exist before any form of life is possible. It is then argued that the probability of just this combination of circumstances arising from an initial chance shuffling of primeval energy is so infinitesimally small as to be equivalent to a practical impossibility of arising 'by chance.'

Whereas mathematical statistics involve much complicated algebra, and it is universally recognised that an amateur may obtain a meaningless answer by their use, there is a popular misconception that the fundamentals of 'probability' are so simple that they are obvious to the man who knows nothing about mathematics or systematic logic. In actual fact some of the most brilliant minds of our day are still engaged in controversy over the foundations of probability, a state of affairs which should give us pause in the making of hasty assumptions. While the ontological argument from probability is often thought of as a 'demonstration,' it can be shown to be indefensible mathematically.

To adopt a standard mathematical example, if one spins a perfectly balanced coin 1,000 times and records the sequence of heads and tails it can be calculated that the chance of obtaining the same sequence by a second set of 1,000 is infinitesimally small. To speak, however, of the probability that the first sequence will arise by chance is to use a term without meaning. Every time the coin is spun some sequence must result, and the first sequence did, in fact, arise by chance. The concept of probability in this case can only be applied to the duplication of a previous sequence by a second experiment, or to the generation of a particular sequence specified *before* the coin is spun. Thus, we may speak of the probability that a second universe identical with this one will arise in the future through some chance shuffling of energy, but we cannot speak with any mathematical meaning of the probability that our present system did so arise.

It may be argued that the conditions essential to life are eternally valid, and in this sense the specification of our present universe was laid down before its generation, and hence it is possible to speak of a probability that it would not arise by chance. This argument is not valid, however, for the question can only be raised subsequent to generation *by the life thereby made possible*. Thus it is only because it has arisen, and only because it is just that kind of universe, that we are here to speak of it; some sequence with infinitesimally small probability of repetition must arise from every chance shuffle of many independent entities, but human knowledge of such a system is only possible if it is our own particular type.

We, who cannot exist as animals outside of our present critical framework, can have no conception through our own reasoning powers of that which lies in the infinity of time before and after

our transitory 'present,' nor have we yet attained to certainty as to what lies in space beyond the horizon of observation. We only know for certainty that within an extremely narrow range of time, and on a planet of infinitesimal size, life is possible. Hence we have no solid basis of fact on which to calculate the probability that within the bounds of space and time a single planet such as ours might arise by chance: only by faith in a 'revelation' can knowledge of such matters be obtained.

However strongly therefore we may feel that 'downright common sense' makes obvious the correctness of this particular argument, we must reluctantly lay it aside as one of those mathematical paradoxes which exist as a trap for the unwary. The argument is useful only in so far as no second universe is known to exist identical to ours, and the Bible implication that the earth is a unique system remains unchallenged.

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN.

A second ontological argument, which is closely akin to that from probability, stresses the existence of design in the living body. Although used considerably before his day, it was Paley who made this argument so popular, and who exploited it to the full in terms of his contemporary knowledge. An excellent and powerful statement of the same argument in terms of our own scientific outlook has recently appeared from the pen of Dr. R. E. D. Clark (*The Universe, Plan or Accident?*), and the reader is referred to this for the vast mass of detail with which it may be supported. The book may be summarised by saying that it demonstrates beyond all reasonable doubt the existence of design throughout the universe.

The ontological argument, however, requires a further step beyond this point, and it is in this step that the weakness lies. It is argued that the existence of design necessitates the existence of a designer, and hence the existence of God as a purposive cause is demonstrated. The weakness is seen at once when we realise that this step is an argument from analogy. Every non-living mechanism on this earth constructed of minerals and other materials is the product of a human designer: it is argued by analogy that every living mechanism on this earth constructed from organic chemicals in the form of living cells must be the product of a superhuman designer. Unfortunately, argument from analogy can never at best be a certain demonstration, but can only yield a probability.

Man, beyond all question, is the product of his framework, and the rationalist who does not believe that God forms any part of that framework would argue that the universe which has arisen by chance is one which chances to produce the consistent pattern which we call 'design.' Hence man, the creature of a universe manifesting design in every direction, himself works in accord with the pattern 'built in' to him, and produces his own smaller designs. Hence, he would argue, design in nature is the cause of human design. Argument by analogy back to a divine designer really rests on acceptance of the Bible statement that man was made 'in the image of God.'

It appears therefore that the 'design argument' is not a logical demonstration of the existence of God, but depends on an act of faith to justify use of the analogy between man as a limited cause, and the universe as a comprehensive effect of a primal cause. It does however serve an extremely useful purpose as a negative argument; if the Bible is correct in claiming God as universal creator, and man as made in 'His image,' then we would expect just such a design pattern as is found in the universe: no inconsistency can be advanced by science, but the existence of God is logically consistent with the observed facts.

SYSTEMS OF NATURAL THEOLOGY.

A broader, and possibly less ambitious, aim of natural theology has been to establish by observation and pure reason the nature of God and the principles of His operations with man. This argument also proceeds on analogy; assuming that there is one transcendent God, who has created the universe and is directing it towards an intended consummation, and whose mode of action is analogous to that of man, the design pattern of the natural world is projected on to the 'spiritual nexus' and thus the form of those things which cannot be seen and handled is postulated. There are two directions in which this argument may proceed: either the revealed system in the Bible may be compared with the natural world and a close analogy demonstrated, thus arguing for the truth of the Bible; or, by assuming such analogy and ignoring much of the biblical detail, an independent system of theology may be constructed. In many cases treatments have been given which are a mixture of the two methods.

As typical of the first approach, the presentation by Butler (*The Analogy of Religion*) may be cited. It was assumed by Butler that if he could successfully demonstrate the same design pattern in nature and revelation, he had established the truth of the latter. We have already seen, when considering the ontological aspect, that the establishment of design does not necessarily prove the existence of a designer, and the same answer can be extended by the rationalist to cover this case. Since he assumes the Bible to be a human product, he would argue that the design in revelation is the work of the human intellect, and that man as nature's child will reproduce the design pattern of his greater parent. All therefore that Butler has been able to prove by establishing the analogy is that the contents of the Bible are consistent with its being the revelation of the God who designed, created, and maintains the universe. Again we meet the inherent limitation which restricts natural theology to the rôle of providing a negative argument. In this case, however, the value of the argument is extremely great: the rationalist has done all in his power to produce reasons for disbelieving in the God of the Bible, and the series of negative arguments which natural theology presents are of positive value in preventing a charge that the Bible is logically inconsistent with observed facts.

As an example of presentation which is a combination of both methods we may note the book *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, by Henry Drummond. He seeks to demonstrate the same analogy as Butler but, having done so, to press that analogy in extra-biblical directions to expand and supplement revelation. The limitations of both methods will apply to such a treatment.

The second approach is one which may be exploited in a myriad ways: it has been handled so diversely by many writers that it is difficult to find any common denominator, or typical method. Two very different examples may be cited to illustrate both the breadth of field covered and the diversity of aim and result. To show how widely the results may differ with the personality of the writer, the two examples were chosen from men in a similar walk of life—leaders of English religious thought. As a first example we may consider the Gifford Lectures of Dr. Barnes. The spirit of the work is best illustrated by the opening words:

“ The Christian Church at an early period of its existence

took over from the Jews beliefs as to the creation and early history of the world and as to the origin of man. Such beliefs, as every educated person knows full well, can no longer be accepted. The beliefs, however, formed a background to Catholic theology and were consequently associated with the Christian idea of God. That idea rests primarily on the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth; and it is not erroneous to say that He regarded it as an intuition which man's richest and deepest spiritual experience would confirm. But human thought naturally and rightly refuses to rest content with such an intuition. The God to whom man's spiritual experience leads him must be also the God revealed in Nature."

Thus, all idea of an authoritative revelation is set on one side; it is man who approaches to God, not God to man; it is from the laws of mathematical physics that we are to infer the nature of God. The fact that science changes with each generation is cheerfully accepted as a reason why religion and theology shall also be different in every age.

The second example is that of Dr. Temple who, in his two books *Mens Creatrix* and *Christus Veritas*, seeks to explain æsthetic value in terms of Christianity. He also may be quoted for aim:

"The argument of this book is as follows. It traces the outline of the Sciences of Knowledge, Art, Morality, and Religion, as the author understands these, not pausing to discuss what is disputable, but merely affirming the position which is adopted. The four philosophical sciences are found to present four converging lines which do not in fact meet. Man's search for an all-inclusive system of Truth is thus encouraged and yet baffled.

"Then the viewpoint changes. The Christian hypothesis is accepted and its central 'fact'—the incarnation—is found to supply just what was needed, the point in which these converging lines meet and find their unity."

His second book starts from the position established in the first, and works out a system of theology which is based upon revelation as the primary authority, but which uses all philosophy to supplement it and yield still further information concerning God.

However strongly these approaches may be pressed, Herbert Spencer's objection still robs them of supreme authority as a

demonstration. Christian theology is concerned with a spiritual world where gravity and molecular forces do not exercise the supreme rôle which we find in nature: the risen Christ could pass through wall or door into a locked room, and His presence only excited the physical senses of His disciples when He chose that it should. Spiritual entities are not susceptible to experimental examination in the laboratory, and hence the analogy between natural and spiritual, however probable, may never be demonstrated and must remain a postulate of faith. As an aid to the Christian philosopher in the synthesis of his knowledge it can, however, be invaluable.

The new Continental school of theologians, of whom Karl Barth is a notable example, would deny to natural theology any useful function whatsoever, and would postulate that any knowledge of God can only be assimilated with direct and miraculous intervention by God in the mental life of the believer. This point of view is as inaccurate an extreme as is that which would say that only through physical science may we find knowledge of God. Though natural theology may not, due to its limitations, usurp the authority of revelation, it can act as an extremely useful supplement to infuse fundamental meaning into the values of philosophy, and to add extensively to our knowledge of God as the architect of the universe. This matter will be more fully considered in the next section.

THE BIBLE VIEWPOINT.

A Christian is one who accepts the authority of Christ, and, in consequence, has his Lord's reverence for Scripture as God's revelation. The rationalist, on the other hand, does not accept the fact that God has spoken: from his viewpoint, out of primitive awe sprang animism, and hence, in slow succession, demonism, polytheism, monotheism, agnosticism. To him, the Bible is but one of many human records of man's slow progress through the later stages of polytheism into the heights of monotheism; it is a human effort, albeit a great one, and not a divine revelation. Unfortunately, this view is not the prerogative of the rationalist, but has been accepted by many Christians without realising how widely it is astray from their Lord's teaching. If this outlook be adopted, then the Bible is considered to be only the earliest record of Jewish natural theology, and as such will be subject to all the limitations inherent in natural theology. To the man thus placed there can

be no certainty or authority, but due to the limitations considered above he is lost in a haze of uncertainty.

The view that man's religious history is a record of gradual development and progress from animism upwards is not so universal among scholars as some would like to think, and several authorities competent to speak on the subject have denied its validity. The Bible itself lends little support to the position, for some of the earliest books contain theology approaching in ethic the final Christian outlook, and textual critics have been forced to postulate fragmentary assembly by a late editor to explain the lack of 'religious evolution' in its present arrangement. Stephen Langdon, who was one of our most competent Assyriologists, interpreted Sumerian and Accadian sources as indicative that monotheism was the original Semitic religion.¹ Wilhelm Schmidt² has also argued for a primeval *revelation* of a supreme God, with the rudimentary religion of present-day 'backward peoples' as a degeneration normal to a backward race. Since these two scholars published their work, publication of the Ras Shamra texts has revealed that primitive Phoenicia had a supreme God instead of the pantheism supposed. In his fourth Schweich Lecture on the subject, Schaeffer says: "This supremacy of El is a clear indication of a monotheistic tendency in the Canaanite religion." C. H. Gordon, in his translation of the texts (published by the Vatican), notes that these records have shown how false was the basis on which Frazer's advocacy of development in *The Golden Bough* rested:

"As an object lesson, we may turn to the accepted view of the fertility god Baal who is incorrectly identified with a mixture of real and imaginary motifs including the Dying God of Frazer's *Golden Bough* . . . the evidence for this is of the most specious character. . . . Before the discovery of the Ugaritic texts, this Greek version was read back into Phoenician mythology . . . the widespread notion that the year in Canaan is divided into fertile and sterile seasons is false. No part of the year is sterile. . . ."

The Bible teaching on this matter is very clearly set forth by St. Paul in the first chapter of his epistle to Romans. We are told that God revealed Himself to early man as recorded in

¹ *The Mythology of All Races*, Vol. V, *Semitic Mythology* (Arch. Inst. of America).

² *The Origin and Growth of Religion* (trans. H. J. Rose).

Genesis, and that man fell away into cruder forms of polytheism and idolatry. This statement of St. Paul is of much more importance than a mere support for the Genesis account, it gives his own views on the limitations of natural theology. It was man's dissatisfaction with revelation, and his desire for something more complicated which should be the product of his own intellect, that led to the degeneration. Hence, St. Paul, in this argument, points to a general natural theology which led earliest man seriously astray, and was instrumental in his moral degeneration. When he says that "the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made," he is not invalidating the argument, for he specifies that it is the "everlasting power and divinity" to which creation witnesses. He refers to the perpetual witness of creation to the greatness of the Creator Whose existence had been *revealed* to man.

That St. Paul did not view the natural theology of his own day in any more favourable light we may gather from his first letter to Corinth. With an eye to the Gnostic absurdities then springing up, he outlines the impotence of human wisdom unguided by divine revelation. When he came among them, he determined not to speak in terms of man's wisdom which had led to the crucifixion of Jesus, but to adopt God's way which he describes as the "foolishness of the preaching." His words in this connection form an excellent summary of his views :

"For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe."

The teaching of the Old Testament on this subject is so vast, as to require a paper on its own to examine the details : with this as excuse, only the judgment of a single scholar well fitted to judge will be quoted as evidence that it relies primarily on revelation rather than scientific investigation. Dr. A. B. Davidson says :

"Now, thirdly, as to the channels through which this knowledge reaches man, or the regions moving in which man knows or comes to the knowledge of God. Those that Scripture recognises are very much what we insist upon to this day, viz. *nature*, *history*, the human *soul*. But I think Scripture does not make quite the same use of these

things as we do in our Natural Theology. For example, I doubt whether it regards these as primary sources of our knowledge of the existence or of the character of God. The position it assumes is not this: Contemplate nature and you will learn from it both that God is, and what He is; but rather this: You know that God is and what He is; and if you contemplate nature, you will see Him there—the heavens declare the glory of God . . .

“The Old Testament, as it spoke chiefly to a people having a knowledge of God from revelation, insists mainly on recognising that God of revelation in nature; but it also appeals to nature to correct the ideas of God given by revelation when the people had perverted them.”¹

In a recent work (*Revelation and the Modern World*) Thornton has analysed the various aspects of revelation. He would see in nature the instrument of God through which and by which He supplements His special revelation through prophets. By viewing the course of history with the eye of faith, recognising in it the working of God and fulfilment of His purpose, a fuller and more detailed appreciation may be obtained of His nature. Thus his definition of ‘natural religion’ is not that usually adopted, but it points decisively towards the Bible attitude, and indicates the divinely intended use for natural theology in all its aspects.

CONCLUSION.

The circumstances of early Church history tended to divorce the development of natural theology from a close consideration of revelation, and in consequence it has come to be considered as an alternative and independent method of obtaining knowledge of God. Modern philosophy has probed the subject of ‘reality’ behind scientific concepts, and indicated that a knowledge of the transcendent can never be obtained by physical experiment. Since all natural philosophy will inherit the limitations inherent in the observations upon which it is based, it follows that through natural observation alone a certain knowledge of the spiritual world can never be attained. Only by an ‘act of faith’ in revelation may the initial step of postulating the existence of God be taken, and natural theology becomes an adjunct to revelation rather than an independent source of information.

¹*The Theology of the Old Testament* (T. & T. Clark, 1911), pp. 78–79.

While failing in their object to demonstrate the certainty of God's existence, the various modern arguments of natural theology have succeeded in demonstrating that there is no inconsistency between the observations of physical science and the revealed God of the Bible. Despite their limitations, therefore, they have been of considerable value in combating the attacks of rationalism, and in this direction have performed a task which revelation by itself was powerless to achieve. It is suggested that in this field of rapprochement between religion and science lies the most effective exercise of natural theology.

Perhaps the least useful exercise lies in the endeavour to obtain knowledge of God's nature from natural observation. Since the 'act of faith' in a revelation must in any case be the basis for a belief in His existence, and since that same revelation in the Bible contains a fund of information concerning the personality of God, the amount of information to be obtained from science is small indeed by comparison. The Bible itself would suggest that when exercised in independence of revelation, human speculation upon God tends to lead men seriously astray, and that the main use of such enquiry is to correct initial errors of men who are still bound to revelation, but not as familiar with it as they should be.

It is seen therefore that any relationship with the 'absolute' must be founded upon faith. Natural theology is powerless apart from revelation, and can never therefore be its enemy; the proper rôle of natural theology is as hand-maid to revelation, and its limitations are such that it can never become the more important partner of the two.

DISCUSSION.

The Chairman (Dr. E. WHITE) said: Perhaps one could sum up Mr. Lovelock's paper by saying that the existence of God can neither be discovered by science nor proved by logic. Thousands of years ago it was written by an old sage, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Ultimately we can know anything about God only by revelation.

Perhaps it is an unduly sceptical attitude toward the universe to say that "philosophy has now discovered that each personality is a closed system which can never obtain knowledge of such reality through experiment." I very much doubt whether all philosophers would accept this view. It depends upon what is meant by

“reality.” If by reality we mean an external world which is “not-me” in antithesis to me, it is surely necessary to accept such reality as existing. Otherwise how could we carry out any experiments at all? The fact that we can weigh and measure things surely implies that there are things to be weighed and measured. It seems to me a fallacy in Berkeley’s philosophic reasoning to conclude that the universe exists only in our minds and in the mind of God. As Bertrand Russell pointed out, however successful we may be in reducing everything to terms of our own sensations and perceptions, we cannot escape the inference that something real causes those sensations and perceptions. Otherwise we are apt to fall into the delusion of some insane people who believe nothing is real, and withdraw into a world of fantasy and illusion of their own making.

What Mr. Lovelock says about the support given by Natural Theology to revealed religion is of value. As far as possible we should seek to synthesize our knowledge and beliefs into a consistent whole. It is a great aid to our faith if we are able to integrate it with our scientific and philosophical knowledge.

Mr. B. C. MARTIN said: Whilst appreciating as a whole Mr. Lovelock’s interesting paper, I do not find myself in entire agreement with his remarks (on page 147) in regard to St. Paul’s view of natural theology. Whilst agreeing that “it was man’s dissatisfaction with revelation and his desire for something . . . of his own intellect that led to the degeneration,” surely it was not natural theology which led him thus astray, but his neglect of it!

St. Paul’s argument in Rom. 1 seems to be that in spite of man’s forgetfulness of God’s original revelation of Himself, He can know enough of God in nature to be “without excuse” if he fails to glorify Him as God, and to be “thankful.” Man as a whole failed to respond to this limited revelation—he turned his back on this “natural theology,” which expression I take to mean the theology based on God’s revelation of Himself in Nature, Providence and Conscience.

But there were exceptions as is clear from the next chapter—those “who by patient continuance in well doing seek for . . . eternal life” (v. 7); those who “do by nature the things contained in the law . . . which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their

conscience also bearing witness" (v. 14 f.); and the "man that worketh good" (v. 10). Such had genuine "natural religion"—in spite of Karl Barth! "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him" (Acts 10 : 34).

This natural theology, however, had severe limitations. It had nothing to say on the nature of man, his sin, his destiny, nor on God's essential character, His purposes and will for mankind. It is therefore somewhat of an anachronism in a day of "special revelation." Nevertheless, it was God's witness—without which He never left Himself (Acts 14 : 17)—in other times and climes, and man, if he chose, could rise to considerable heights under such a regime, as can be seen in such a man as Socrates who "confessed his ignorance and deplored the want of superior direction," and the Athenian poets who, without debt to "special revelation," were able to say with remarkable insight, "For we are also His offspring."

Mr. TITTERINGTON said : I should like to express my appreciation to Mr. Lovelock for a very interesting and stimulating study. I like particularly the way in which he has shown the inadequacy and inconclusiveness of Natural Theology in every field of approach.

But I was rather surprised to see that at the outset he seemed to take a somewhat limited view of what is comprehended in the term, and thus gave Natural Theology so late a date for its beginnings. Later on, it is true, when he comes to discuss the system of Natural Theology, he broadens the scope of his study ; but in the main he seems to have confined himself largely to the modern form of Natural Theology, rather than to Natural Theology in its wider sense. I think, if I may be pardoned the suggestion, that it would have conduced to clarity if he had given us a definition of that of which he was intending to speak.

If I may venture a definition of my own, I would suggest that Natural Theology is that Theology that is the product of man's own mind. It can be based on observation and deduction, or, as in the case of the Greek thinkers, on argument from *a priori* assumptions, the insecure basis of which Mr. Lovelock has very clearly expressed. But in its earlier form Natural Theology was mainly of the former kind ; that is, it was based on a consideration of natural phenomena, and the limitations of this kind of Natural Theology are not the same

as those of the more speculative kind, though they are real enough. Modern Natural Theology seems to be a compound of the two elements, and this is particularly apt to be dangerous, because it is not easy to disentangle the elements, and indeed the attempt to do so is not always made. The result is that purely philosophical speculations are given a validity that belongs only to ascertained fact. This is very often seen in Natural Science, and is equally true of Natural Theology.

Natural Theology of any kind must, from the very nature of the case, take its content from the knowledge of the time, and this is always coloured by the mode of thought of the time—what I suppose Alan Richardson would call the “ideology” of the age. This is something which is subject to constant variation—how much it can change in the course of a single lifetime can be seen even from a comparison of our own *Transactions* during the course of our short history. The shape of Natural Theology thus varies from time to time ; it must therefore be always unstable and inconclusive.

It is true that in Old Testament times, and in Bible lands, this instability was not apparent. Knowledge did not increase rapidly, nor was there much change in the mode of thought ; and the position was more static. But this position was again illusory, as the limitations of both knowledge and thought were so easily concealed.

The conclusions of Natural Theology are therefore vitiated at all times by the imperfection of our knowledge and our reasoning ; but, as St. Paul shows, they are still more vitiated by the “depravity” of our minds in consequence of the Fall, so that when man *could* have arrived at some measure of truth, he has always, in the mass, failed to do so.

The well-known passage in Rom. 1, which has been so often quoted in our recent discussions, as well as in this paper, calls for a closer examination than I think it has yet received. In the first place it is a complete answer to what I understand to be the Barthian position, that would deny to Natural Theology any value at all—and here I am in hearty agreement with our author. But I am not sure that I can wholly accept his argument that its value is only supplemental to Revelation. St. Paul’s argument seems to be that even where Revelation has been entirely lacking, God has not left Himself without witness (cf. Acts 14 : 17 on this point), and that

men are to be judged according to the heed they have paid to this witness, and condemned where they have neglected it, or distorted its message. That knowledge derived in this way is not sufficient to bring man into saving contact with God is not the point; God judges men according to the light they have, and this light is not wholly lacking (see Acts 10 : 35).

At the same time, St. Paul does in this passage define the limitations of this kind of knowledge: "His eternal power and Godhead." It would be interesting to consider at length precisely what is comprehended in these expressions. Here, I would suggest that Scripture itself gives a clue, from the form of argument from natural phenomena in such passages as Is. 40, or the later chapters of Job.

On one point I must part company with Mr. Lovelock, and this is in the quotation from Hatch in reference to the Creeds, which he appears to cite with approval. Surely the antithesis Hatch draws between the Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed is false. The antithesis would not be nearly so apparent if, instead of the Sermon on the Mount, he had based his comparison on some other pronouncements by our Lord, such as in the fifth or eighth chapter of St. John. The purpose of the Sermon on the Mount was wholly different. Historically too, the Creeds were not designed to "freeze debate"—at least legitimate debate—but as a very necessary safeguard against very definite and very dangerous errors and heresies, more particularly the Arian heresy. The Apostles' Creed is composed almost entirely of phrases taken direct from the Scriptures, and the amplifications found in the Nicene Creed are surely legitimate deductions from the Scriptures. Statements in credal form are indeed not lacking from the New Testament, as for instance in 1 Tim. 3 : 16.

Mr. W. E. FILMER said: Mr Lovelock dismisses the argument from probability as "one of those mathematical paradoxes which exist as a trap for the unwary." It is true, as he says, that it is without meaning to discuss the probability that any one sequence of events came about by chance. But it is not without meaning to discuss the probability that a sequence of ten letters drawn out of a bag would make sense as an English word. If the five letters MANIP had already been drawn, the odds would be 255 to 1 against a further

five letters making an English word, since the sequence ULATE is the only one which would do so.

In the same way, having been given the chemical properties of carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, etc., it is not without meaning to calculate the odds against a world existing where the temperature lies between 0 and 150° F., for unless such a world exists, no sense can be made of the chemical properties of the elements, for these demand a world of this kind in which to manifest themselves. I consider that the argument for the existence of God as set forth, for example, in Dr. Sutherland's Gunning Prize essay of 1940 is sound.

Nor do I consider it scriptural to dismiss Natural Theology as virtually valueless. Weymouth's translation of Rom. 1 : 18-20 reads, "For God's anger is revealed from heaven against all the impiety and the wickedness of men who through their wickedness suppress the truth; because what may be known of God is plain to their minds; for God has made it plain to them. From the very creation of the world, His invisible perfections—namely, His eternal power and divine nature—have been perceptible and clearly visible from His works, so that they are without excuse." Moffatt gives a similar rendering of Paul's argument that man is without excuse if he does not know that much about God. This seems to me a clear statement that Natural Theology does provide certain evidence about God, although very limited without the special revelation given in the Bible.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. F. F. BRUCE wrote: First of all, I should like to congratulate Mr. Lovelock on winning the Gunning Prize. I have much enjoyed reading his essay, although I think he dates the emergence of Natural Theology too late.

Even before New Testament times, the interaction of Hebrew and Greek thought, especially in Alexandria, led to a considerable advance in Natural Theology, of which the writings of Philo and the Book of Wisdom are outstanding monuments. In the second half of the first century A.D. a Hebrew Christian of Alexandria went further than his fellow-citizens of an earlier generation had been able to go, and declared that Jesus Christ was the true Divine Wisdom which one of these writers had described as "a clear effluence of the

glory of the Almighty . . . an effulgence from everlasting light, an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of His goodness." Nor is he the only first-century Christian writer to find in Greek philosophy a general preparation, as Hebrew revelation was the special preparation, for the advent of Christ and the full manifestation of God in Him.

In the second century, Justin Martyr very suggestively develops a rudimentary synthesis between the Logos of the Fourth Gospel and the Logos of the Greek philosophers. And Augustine, more than two centuries later, was led a good distance forward on his pilgrimage towards Christianity by studying the works of Plotinus and other Neoplatonists in Victorinus's Latin translation. But Augustine's account of these writings shows the inevitable limitations of Natural Theology. In them he read in substance what he also found in John 1 : 1-10 ; " but that . . . ' as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name '—this I read not there. Again I read there, that God the Word was ' born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God ' ; but that ' the Word became flesh and dwelt among us ' I read not there." True incarnation and redemption, it appears, must be divinely revealed ; Natural Theology does not reach far enough to discern them clearly. So even the Christians of the earliest centuries A.D. grasped the fact which Mr. Lovelock establishes on the basis of more recent work in this field, that " the proper role of natural theology is as handmaid to revelation, and its limitations are such that it can never become the more important partner of the two."

If Mr. Lovelock were a theologian I should be inclined to comment in some detail on his quotation from Hatch contrasting the Sermon on the Mount with the Nicene Creed, and on his account of the definition of dogma in the early Church. In both these respects I think he over-simplifies the issues. But that a distinguished engineer should make this incursion into the theological field at all, and acquit himself so creditably as to bear away the palm, calls for hearty felicitation.

Dr. H. TOWNSEND wrote : Had I been able to be present on 17th March, I should have warmly congratulated Mr. Lovelock on his essay. The construction, and the contribution to the Philosophy

of Religion are admirable. I hope the essay will have wide publication. His evidence on the scientific aspect would have been helpful to me had I still been lecturing.

A fair amount has been written in recent years on "Natural Law." The revival of the mediæval argument by small groups of theologians has been seriously discussed. The conception of the law of Nature has had considerable influence on Christian ethical theories: *jus naturale*, *lex naturalis*, *jus gentium*.

The Stoic conception of Natural Law was based on the claim that the Universe was rational and moral. When a man ordered his life according to reason, which was immanent in the Universe and in his own nature, he attained the highest moral standard. The Church Fathers followed Plato and the Stoics and argued that such natural law was expressed in the Decalogue: that such natural law was identified with God's Law. And Canon Law was based on Natural Law. Also *jus gentium*—the Law of Governments—was based on Natural Law. By such arguments the schoolmen built a system of Natural Theology. I prefer Mr. Lovelock's argument of the Limitations of Natural Theology.

Mr. DOUGLAS DEWAR wrote: Although I greatly appreciate Mr. Lovelock's most valuable paper, I am constrained to say that it seems to me that the author does not realize the potency of the argument from probability. To compare the origin of a living organism from inanimate matter with the sequence of heads and tails in a thousand spins of a perfectly balanced coin is on a par with comparing Mount Everest to a molehill.

So complicated is the simplest living organism that it can safely be asserted that it cannot have come into existence by the chance combination of atoms and inorganic molecules, and that no living organism will in future originate in this manner.

In support of this contention I here reproduce some remarks I made in letters which were published in *The Listener*, of November 1st and 15th, 1948:

"As Prof. V. H. Mottram pointed out in a B.B.C. broadcast in April, 1948, the odds against the chance formation of a protein molecule are one hundred multiplied by itself 100 times to one. And the simplest living organism is composed of a number of different kinds of protein molecules. Not only would at least one of each of

these kinds or molecules have to originate simultaneously and in close approximation, but one of each of these would have to combine with one of each of the other kind so as to form a living organism, and this would have to maintain itself intact and undergo a number of changes before it acquired the known (to say nothing of the unknown) characters of a living organism.

“One of these characters is the ability to capture inorganic elements and compounds, assimilate these and convert them into its tissues. This process would involve a series of co-ordinated chemical reactions which no chemist has succeeded in bringing about, and which apparently are only made possible by the concerted action of a number of enzymes and co-enzymes, each of which is of so complicated a nature that the odds against its arising by spontaneous chemical processes are very great. Each of this array of enzymes must be a catalyst taking part in a different chemical reaction. Therefore, in the words of Kermack and Eggleton (*The Stuff we are made of*), we must imagine the enzymes to be arranged in the right order so that each one comes into action at the exact point at which it is required, just as in the mass production of motor cars each worker does his little part and the car passes on. Unless the chain of reactions is complete the required result is not attained. As Dixon points out (*Multienzyme Systems*), the appearance of one or even several enzymes would be entirely ineffective unless they happened to form a complete chain with no link missing. The odds against all this happening by chance approach infinity.

“Moreover, if life originated in a liquid medium, the first bit of living matter would have to be surrounded by a membrane ‘to keep the constituents of the system in effective concentration.’ The odds against this membrane with its peculiar properties being formed by chance in the nick of time are prodigious.

“Then the first living organisms must have had the power of self-propagation, and this power necessitates exceedingly complicated structure.”

In fact the simplest living organism seems to be more complicated than any man-made machine. If it be improper to say that such an organism cannot possibly have been created by blind physical forces, it is equally improper to say this of the wheeled vehicle.

I submit that, in order to believe that the argument from proba-

bility can be successfully met, a man has to refuse to exercise his common sense—an attribute which distinguishes him from all other members of the animal kingdom.

The above submission applies equally to the belief that the argument from design can be successfully met. The use of the term design implies a designer, i.e., a being endowed with the capacity of conceiving a plan and with the power of carrying out the plan.

I agree that "the existence of God is logically consistent with the observed facts." To this I would add "But the observed facts are inconsistent with the non-existence of a Designer."

Lt. Col. L. MERSON DAVIES wrote: While appreciating Mr. Lovelock's paper as a whole, I cannot follow some of his reasoning. As a lifelong Bible student, and a working palæontologist of many years' standing, I regard the Bible as being unique among religious books, and the evidence of design in nature as being of such a kind that its origin without a Creator is unthinkable.

As Mr. Lovelock says, Dr. R. E. D. Clark has demonstrated "beyond reasonable doubt the existence of design throughout the universe"; and even Prof. Einstein declared that this "reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection" (*The World as I see It*, Eng. ed., 1935, p. 28). It is also remarkable that the Bible indicated the importance to man of many factors upon which his comfort and very existence depend, long before human science learned to appreciate their importance. Was that due to chance? Besides this, the Bible abounds with genuine prophecies undoubtedly written many centuries before the events which fulfilled them. Was that also due to chance? One cannot detail these things in a letter, but I have discussed them elsewhere (e.g., in *The Credentials of Jesus, The Bible and Modern Science*, and in my paper "The Present Status of Teleology," *Trans. V.I.*, 79, 1947). Indeed, our modern doctrine of exclusive Continuity (*alias* Uniformity) was expressly foretold as characterising the last days, although it was only accented by geologists about a century ago; and it led—just as Scripture predicted—to denial of the Noachian Deluge, and to belief in wholesale organic evolution. See my papers on the doctrine of Continuity, and on the Flood (*Trans. V.I.*, 61, 1929 and 62, 1930).

The rationalist who, as Mr. Lovelock tells us, argues "that the universe which has arisen by chance is one which chances to produce . . . 'design';" is assuming that the universe did actually arise by chance; and that assumption he is unable to justify, as I showed in my 1947 paper. And if, as Mr. Lovelock rightly says, the rationalist "assumes the Bible to be a human product," how does it come to possess its unique qualities—anticipating scientific appreciations by thousands of years, and likewise predicting events and developments many centuries in advance?

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I would like to thank all eight of the commentators for their kind remarks and the interest they have shown in the paper; it is inevitable from the controversial nature of the subject that there should be considerable scope for discussion, and in replying briefly to the various points raised I would like to stress that I feel much less certainty upon them than the brevity of the reply might lead them to infer.

Dr. White raises the question of our knowledge concerning the external world, and I would agree with him that we have as certain a knowledge of the *existence* of that world as we may have concerning any entity; when we descend from pure existence to the nature of that world, however, we have knowledge only of the interaction between it and ourselves—not of its own absolute nature.

Mr. Martin, Mr. Titterington and Mr. Filmer all made reference to the fundamental passage in Rom. 1, and I would plead in excuse for any ambiguity in the paper that this one passage would require the whole length of the paper for consideration in detail. Perhaps here it may suffice to point out that St. Paul was writing to a Church which accepted the Scriptures, and with them the postulate presented in Genesis that at the dawn of human history God revealed Himself to man. In actual fact man has never existed on the earth prior to the granting of a revelation, and the consideration of how man would react to nature in the absence of all tradition concerning or based upon revelation is hypothetical and not under consideration by the Apostle. He is saying that in the actual circumstances, man having descended from ancestors who had received a revelation, his observations of nature should have con-

firmed and supplemented his tradition so that he was not led away into the excesses which resulted from a positive attitude of "putting God out of their mind."

Mr. Titterington and Mr. Bruce both point out, quite correctly, that Natural Theology is of much earlier origin than those aspects considered in the paper: I must apologise for lack of definition in the paper of the very limited scope there considered. It seemed to me that the intentions of the Victoria Institute in seeking an essay were to combat the modern attitude of self-sufficiency for which excuse is sought by its adherents in Natural Theology, and the limitation of scope was intentional. My only excuse for ignoring what amounts to the major portion of the field lies in the subject. It was not natural theology as a system, but the limitations of that system which were to be considered, and it was possible to consider more detail in the limited scope of a single paper by dealing only with those limitations as met in our present century.

The same two commentators raise the matter of the Nicene Creed, and I am sorry if the quotation from Hatch was taken as an equation of Creed and Sermon as similar documents—this is not done by Hatch in the context, and was not intended in the paper. It is true, as pointed out in the comments, that the Creed was a comment and limitation on heresy, but its very existence is a comment on the type of thought which was then occupying the early Church, and the spirit of philosophy was obviously abroad in those days to a much greater extent than in Palestine A.D. 29. The only purpose of the quotation was to demonstrate briefly the existence of philosophy within the Church, and any criticism of the Creed would have been out of place in a paper on *Natural Theology*.

The question of "probability" is raised by two critics who question the paper in a fundamental point. It is true that the probability of repeating 1,000 spins of a coin is very much greater than that of repeating the universe—the argument did not proceed on magnitudes, but on the meaning of mathematical terms. To argue further on this point would necessitate the use of specialised vocabulary such as I have striven to avoid in this paper; as a practising statistician I would be happy to continue the discussion privately in much more detail should either of the commentators desire.

The final point calling for comment is that of "design." In this case there is not the rigorous certainty of mathematics, and the issue is the controversial one concerning the logical weighing of philosophical hypotheses. The existence of design cannot be in question, only the nature of it is under discussion. Two types of design fall within our experience, that produced by man, and that produced by nature; it is tempting to conclude that the greater design of nature is the product of a "greater man" (speaking in all reverence to point the analogy), but this does not *necessarily* follow from the facts. Until we are able to grasp within our own minds the totality of the universe, we shall never be able to say with certainty that only A can produce B.

In conclusion, thanks are due to all those who by contributing to the discussion have added materially to consideration of this subject, both by production of new facts, and by presenting a new outlook on old ones.

909TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY,
APRIL 21st, 1952.

F. F. BRUCE, ESQ., M.A., IN THE CHAIR

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS—TOWARDS A PERSPECTIVE

By REV. BLEDDYN J. ROBERTS, M.A., B.D.

As one tries to look around amidst the chaos of hypotheses concerning the Dead Sea Scrolls, and theories which seem to be mutually annihilating, it seems advisable to consider where, in the general scheme of Biblical studies, the scrolls are to be placed. At the moment I must confess to being rather overwhelmed, and in the present paper I shall not attempt to give even a résumé of theories, and certainly not another theory, but simply to put forward a possible perspective, and to explain that if we do not expect overmuch from the scrolls we might be able to find in them a comparatively important contribution. I shall consider them from three standpoints: their significance for the general study of the Old Testament, the nature of the sect, and the relative importance of the Isaiah scrolls.

I

I DO not think much is to be gained by minimizing the discovery itself. The early statements by archaeologists, that the jars containing the scrolls are from the Hellenistic period, have been largely confirmed by subsequent examination. Similar jars from that period have been found in Palestine, and it is becoming increasingly obvious that the Jews had always used earthenware jars as receptacles for their important relics. The prophet Jeremiah commanded Baruch to place in an earthen vessel the deeds of purchase of his field at Anathoth (Jer. 32 : 14). Indeed, Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar and put an omerful of manna therein, and lay it before the Lord, to be kept for your generations" (Exod. 16 : 32 f.). There is a very interesting reference in the Assumption of Moses, *c.* 1st century A.D., where Moses is made to say to Joshua, "Receive thou this writing that thou mayest know how to preserve the books which I shall deliver unto thee: and thou shalt set these in order and anoint them with oil of cedar and put them away in earthen vessels in the place which God made" (Ass. Mos. 1 : 17). It was obviously quite common for leather scrolls to be soaked in oil for preservation; the "heavenly books" shown to Enoch were

“fragrant with myrrh” (2 Enoch 22 : 12). The good state of preservation of some of the scrolls, and the difficulties of unrolling others from the cache at Ain Feshkha, may very well have been due to the success or failure of blending oil and bitumen for the first rolling and encasement.

One point of a rather sensational kind which has attracted notice recently is that an analysis based on the residuum of radio-active carbon in the wrapping around one of the scrolls has shown that the material—linen cloth—was produced at some time between the early 2nd century B.C. and the early 2nd century A.D. I think it is rather hyper-critical to say that this proves nothing about the age of the scrolls ; strictly, it is, of course, a criticism, but I think the wrapping would not have been of much use if it was centuries older than the scrolls themselves. On the other hand, it is indeed precarious to assume finality about the date of the scrolls solely on the basis of this latest analysis. The use of nuclear physics for establishing the date of archaeological discoveries is in an experimental stage, and, I think, it can only be used as confirmatory evidence.

The fragments of jars and manuscripts found in the cave by Mr. Lankester Harding, Père de Vaux and Mr. O. R. Sellers when they visited it in February—March, 1949, have turned out to be almost as important as the material in the larger scrolls. There were fragments of over fifty jars, with flat lids to each one. Each jar had a capacity for three or more scrolls ; consequently it is estimated that in the original cache there were about two hundred scrolls—a very substantial library. But this is where our problems begin. For a library officially attached to a shrine or to any religious centre, such as a synagogue *genizah*, this would be by no means a large number of books. The libraries at Ras Shamra, at least a thousand years older than the present cache, had a much larger collection of tablets. The *genizah* of the synagogue at Old Cairo, possibly of a date some seven or eight centuries later than it, again had a far greater store of manuscripts. We cannot, however, assume that the cache at Ain Feshkha was in any way connected with a shrine or a synagogue, for the general idea seems to be that the jars and their contents were hidden in the cave at a time of flight. There seems to be no other reasonable explanation for their being placed in a most inaccessible hole in a rock in a district known only for its barrenness and for its marauding thieves and bandits, as witness the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Among the six hundred or so small manuscript fragments found littered on the cave floor, there are two or three different classes which have great interest. The first is five pieces which give some verses of Leviticus in the old Hebrew script, a script which had been generally superseded by the square, Aramaic script as early as the 3rd or 2nd century B.C. Thus, an examination of the Septuagint rendering of the Pentateuch, produced *c.* the early 3rd century B.C., has shown that the parent text was written in the Aramaic script, or at least a script which approximates to it. The book of Isaiah, which chronologically followed the Pentateuch in that rendering, was based on a text whose script was still nearer to the Aramaic. But it should not be assumed that the manuscripts of Leviticus antedate the 3rd century B.C., although this is the conclusion of such palaeographers as Pèrè de Vaux and Dr. Solomon Birnbaum. There are passages in the Mishnah, bringing us down into the 2nd century A.D., which show that the custom of using the archaic script for writing the Pentateuch was still sufficiently strong to require a very emphatic prohibition by the Rabbis. Of course, if the early dating is confirmed, the implications for the Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch will be serious.

The second interesting class of fragments is that represented by one small piece of a commentary on a portion of Ps. 107. A phrase is taken from the text of the Psalm, and is followed by an interpretative formula, "this is." This fragment, therefore, may be placed alongside the complete scroll which contains a detailed commentary on Habakkuk 1-2, though it does not have the identical form of interpretation. It may be assumed, consequently, that the Habakkuk scroll was not an isolated work, but that there were other scrolls in the original cache which likewise consisted of commentaries, and which were based on books outside the second part of the Hebrew canon of the O.T.—the Prophets.

The mention of the Hebrew canon introduces a third group of interesting fragments, namely those which represent texts from the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. A portion of one of the scrolls handed over to the American Schools of Oriental Research, and which has defied treatment as a whole, has been identified as the Lamech Apocalypse, which is one of the sources believed to have constituted the original form of the book of Enoch. Another fragment, already identified, is from Jubilees 27 : 9-12. Still another fragment consists of eleven lines from a hitherto

unknown apocalypse with affinities with Enoch and Jubilees. It is a fair assumption that among the two hundred scrolls in the cache, some were books which are traditionally known to Christians as Apocrypha or rather Pseudepigrapha, and to orthodox Jews as *Genuzôth* ("hidden" or even "forbidden"). This is confirmed by the fact that many of the complete Dead Sea Scrolls contain quotations from the same and still other Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Thus, in the Manual of Discipline, 1 Enoch is quoted nine times in all, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and Ecclesiasticus each five times, and each of the following at least once: Jubilees, 1 and 2 Esdras, the Sibylline Oracles, the Psalms of Solomon. Furthermore, there are common references to such figures as Belial, the Teacher of Righteousness, the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, to mention but a few.

By the same token, affinities with the New Testament are both numerous and significant, and one of them deserves special mention because, I think, it has important implications.¹ In one of the Songs of Thanksgiving, published by Professor Sukenik in the second volume of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Jerusalem, *Megillôth Genuzôth*, there seems to be a continuous play on the motif of the deluge of fire which is to form part of the cataclysmic end of the evil world-order.² Now this passage is strikingly reminiscent of a mention of the Genesis flood-story in 2 Peter 2: 5, where there is also a reminiscence of one of the leading personalities of the Dead Sea Scrolls, namely, the Teacher of Righteousness, or the Righteous Teacher. Furthermore, the motif of a Noah *redivivus* recurs quite frequently in Jewish apocalyptic writings, for instance in the Life of Adam and Eve and the Sibylline Oracles, and in such Christian writings as the Shepherd of Hermas, Justin and Origen. Where exactly the so-called book of Noah, which forms part of the present 1 Enoch, fits into the background is not clear, and belongs to a discussion of apocalyptic generally. All I would wish to say here is that the similarities of passages in the scrolls with apocryphal and New Testament writings are both numerous and noteworthy.

In a special way, the fact raises the general question of the Canon of the Old Testament. Obviously, the question has to do with the whole of the scrolls, not solely with the fragments, and

¹ Father Vermès of Louvain has recently published an interesting monograph on the subject: *La Communauté de la Nouvelle Alliance* (1951).

² It is the third song, according to Sukenik's order; Plate 8 in *Meg. Gen. II*.

will also involve a discussion of the nature, aims and, to an extent, the history of the party. I shall have to return to a discussion of their identity; meanwhile I shall simply use a conventional designation for them, namely, the New Covenanters. Enough has been mentioned to indicate that these people, who composed the songs and commentaries and rituals of these scrolls, and whose constitution and organisations are described in the manuals, did not limit themselves to the tripartite Hebrew canon as we know it, nor to the slightly larger collection which Rabbinic Judaism discussed in the Mishnah. They did submit to the Torah, and interpreted it; likewise they were exponents of the Prophets and Writings; they included also one or two of the books of the Apocrypha, for we find in the scrolls quotations from 1 and 2 Esdras and Ecclesiasticus. But they also accepted books which go far beyond this compass, and include books in the Pseudepigrapha. Actually, the scrolls have more in common with the apocalyptic ideas and interpretations found in the Pseudepigrapha than with most of the Rabbinic teaching in the Mishnah and Talmuds.

As a rule we think of the Hebrew canon as a collection of Scriptures to be contrasted with the more amorphous collection in the Septuagint, sometimes called the Alexandrine canon. The Septuagint was the Bible of the Hellenistic Diaspora and of the Early Church, but it is really doubtful to what extent it was refused even by orthodox Judaists of the Palestinian tradition. We know that some apocryphal books were not to be read in the synagogue worship, that after the 1st century A.D. the Septuagint was replaced by the more orthodox renderings of Aquila and Theodotion, and that it was said by the Rabbis that the day the Septuagint was composed was as evil as the day the Hebrews in the wilderness worshipped the golden calf. Nevertheless orthodox Rabbis show considerable familiarity with apocryphal writings. In *Midrash Rabba* to Esther, which comes from a period later than the 10th century A.D., the additions to the canonical Esther are included practically verbatim as they appear in the Septuagint. Again, numerous quotations attributed in the Talmuds to Tannaitic teachers also occur in the Apocrypha; and Ecclesiasticus is, in at least one context,¹ actually listed among the Hagiographa.

It is not surprising, therefore, that occasional sayings from the Apocrypha occur also in the scrolls; and that the distinction

¹ *Baba Kamma* 92b.

between the Hebrew canon and the Septuagint has no particular relevance to the present problem. The position regarding the Pseudepigrapha, however, is quite different. These books had never been listed with the books of the Septuagint in the Great Codices nor in the Vulgate, but were transmitted solely by the Christian Church and were obviously treasured at least by certain Christian communities. In content, the Pseudepigrapha belong to the essentially Jewish literary and religious *genre* of apocalyptic, which the Early Church, though not everywhere, inherited and adopted with considerable avidity. So far as I am aware, we find no example of this kind of literature being preserved and transmitted by Rabbinic Judaism until about the 6th century A.D. It would, however, be wrong to think that apocalyptic was ignored by the Rabbis. Apocalyptic sayings are attributed to them, and it is unreasonable to think of Pharisees, for instance, as opposed to apocalyptic, for their acceptance of such a doctrine as resurrection, with all its concomitants, means that they were essentially apocalyptists. But I think the argument that orthodox Judaism refused to recognise as valid any written apocalyptic is an important one, and provides a clue to the present problem. The New Covenanters were obviously highly apocalyptic, and as such challenged orthodox Rabbinism. When the party was threatened by the Rabbis, in one of the purges of Judaism which probably took place after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, they decided to flee the land, hoping nevertheless to return and to "interpret" apocalyptically their beloved Scriptures and pore over its esoteric literature. Actually, the evidence for such a historical reconstruction is largely circumstantial, but it is not wholly baseless. The main element derives from a document which belongs to the party, but which had been discovered in the Cairo *genizah* in 1895. I shall return to this document later in this paper. My present point is that the New Covenanters diverged from orthodox Rabbinists on matters which we regard as pertaining to the authority of the Hebrew canon, and the latter's refusal of apocalyptic writings such as are found in the Pseudepigrapha.

Much of this apocalyptic literature is esoteric and "mystery"—if I may use the word in a semi-technical sense, to indicate the important part played by allegories and conundrums, with such literary devices as word-plays, hints and substitution of one name by another in order to produce a camouflaged historical writing. The best-known apocalypse, the book of Daniel, you will

remember, was to be a "sealed book even to the time of the end" (12 : 4), and in the other well-known apocalypse, the Book of the Revelation, one of the first objects shown to the Seer was "a book written within and on the back, closed with seven seals" (5 : 2). Now, one of the most important of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Habakkuk commentary, consists of apocalyptic interpretations of the prophet's oracles, and in them the "mysteries" and "secrets" of God and His providence are of basic importance. "And God," says the commentator in his explanation of 2 : 1-2, "told Habakkuk to write the things pertaining to the last generation, but He did not reveal to him the consummation of the time. And this is what He meant, 'So that he who runs may read from it': the explanation of this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness to whom God has communicated all the secret words of His servants the prophets. 'For the vision is yet for the appointed time, it testifies of the end and is not deceived.' The explanation of this is that the last days are delayed, and all that the prophets spake is left, for the mysteries of God are wonderful. 'Though it tarry (continues Habakkuk), wait for it; because it will surely come and will not delay.' The explanation of this concerns the faithful who practise the Law, whose zeal for loyalty will not languish when the consummation is delayed for them, for all the periods fixed of God will come in due time, as He has decreed for them in the mysteries of His providence."

What led the interpreter to utter these pieties? Unfortunately, columns 1 and 2 of the scroll are mutilated almost beyond restoration, despite an attempted reconstruction of the contents largely by means of conjecture. But even if the columns were intact, I doubt whether they contained anything explicit about the actual historical occasion, any more than the opening chapters of the book of Daniel. A camouflage of actual history by the substitution of another "history" seems to be one of the prominent characteristics of this literary *genre*. Nevertheless, the commentary on Habakkuk is very truly based on actual history, for without the historical occasion the pieties become insincere and meaningless. This problem of "history" is well represented in the following passage: "'For lo (says Habakkuk's prophecy, 1 : 5), I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation.' Its explanation concerns the Chittim who are speedy and strong in combat, to utterly destroy many, and they will traverse the country to strike and to strip

the cities of the land, for it is of these he says 'to possess dwellings that are not theirs.'" Who are the Chittim? The term is by no means unknown, and actually most textual critics of Habakkuk since the time of Duhm have argued that the "original text" of Habakkuk in this passage was indeed not "Chaldeans" of the Massoretic text, but Chittim. But obviously that is not the point of the commentator. His text read Chaldeans, but, he says, the Chaldeans here *mean* Chittim. Now this word is generally rendered Cypriotes, and is associated with Greece: cf. Gen. 10 : 4, where Chittim is one of the sons of Yavan (Greece), and which is paralleled in 1 Chron. 1 : 7. In other passages, such as Is. 23 : 1, Jer. 2 : 10, Ezek. 27 : 6, the word refers to the seaboard of the Greek islands, and similarly 1 Macc. 1 : 8, 8 : 5. But in Num. 24 : 24, in the oracle of Balaam, the word occurs in a passage which, though it refers to ships from Cyprus, has the idea of being the vehicle of destruction. Balaam's oracle is taken up, in the same sense of doom, in Daniel 11 : 30, which says that ships of Chittim shall come against "the contemptible person" to aggravate him. Now there is a well-founded hypothesis that the "contemptible person" of this passage is the notorious Antiochus Epiphanes, and one of the ancient historians, Polybius, who is quoted by Livy, describes how Antiochus Epiphanes was finally defeated by the Romans. Furthermore, the actual Septuagint of this passage (though not the better-known text of Theodotion) gives the rendering, "the Romans will have power over him." Likewise the Vulgate, which also renders the Numbers passage by "Italy." The Targums also associated Chittim with the Romans.

Consequently, a very well supported theory equates the Chittim of the Habakkuk scroll with the Romans, and we must admit that there are implicit references in the scroll which fit in with this equation better than with any other. For instance, the Chittim come from the "isles of the seas" and they worship standards and ensigns. Neither of these descriptions would apply to the Greeks, because the only "Greeks" concerned would be the Syrian Seleucids and the Egyptian Ptolemies. At the same time, in another of the scrolls, designated "Warfare between the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness," the Chittim of "Assyria" and of "Egypt" are very prominent, and I do not know of any scholar who has successfully challenged the obvious associations here with the Seleucids and Ptolemies. Thus, although the case for an identity with the Romans is

plausible for the Habakkuk commentary, it is not so for the Warfare scroll. I think the clue to the general question of the identity of Chittim comes from another fact, which has been elicited by Dr. P. R. Weis of Manchester. He has shown¹ that in medieval Jewish writings the term "Chittim" is used for any power in the ascendancy in Palestine likely to overthrow the rulers at any given time. That is, as far as the Dead Sea Scrolls are concerned, they may be either Hellenists or Romans.

Such a transferability of identity is by no means an isolated feature in apocalyptic writing. For instance, the prototype of the Abomination of Desolation in the Little Apocalypse of the Gospels (Mk. 13, Mt. 24, Lk. 21) is to be found in the book of Daniel. In the latter it is, presumably, the pagan altar set up in the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes; in the former it is, again presumably, the spoliation of the temple by the Romans. It is, at the same time, in both passages, an essentially eschatological phenomenon. I should suggest that in all apocalyptic writing there is nothing which specifically distinguishes between the actually historical and the eschatological. Consequently, to return to the Habakkuk commentary, the Chittim are either Hellenists or Romans or any other threatening power, and also the people responsible for the distressing experiences which precede the final consummation. In some ways, "realised eschatology" is not to be limited to a New Testament Christology; it is one of the prominent features of apocalyptic writing. Apocalyptic is not a remote catastrophe, connected with what we mean by "the last things" in some far-off and unreal future, but is a consummation which is already about to happen, immediately the mysterious revelation is made known, and when the actual "interpretation"—which is also the "fulfilment"—is being declared. Of course, the New Testament "realised eschatology" is more profoundly unique than all this, and I do not wish to imply that the Teacher of Righteousness, the leading figure in the scrolls, can be equated with Christ in the New Testament. But I do think that the scrolls, perhaps to a greater extent than any previously known apocalyptic writing, presuppose a consciousness of the fulfilment of prophecy and of the proximity of the "end" which is similar to much that we find puzzling in the New Testament, and sometimes in the Old.

¹ "The Date of the Habakkuk Scroll," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 41 (1950), pp. 125 ff.

II

It is possible to know a great deal about the constitution and way of life of the New Covenanters, particularly from two sets of documents which deal largely with their customs and beliefs. One of them is the "Manual of Discipline" which has recently been edited and translated by Professor W. H. Brownlee;¹ the other is the so-called Damascus Document, to which reference has already been made.² There are some slight divergences between the two documents, but these can easily be explained by postulating a slightly later date for the latter, with a change of circumstances due to the retirement of the party to the region of Damascus presupposed by the Damascus Document. It is from the contents of these two documents that the party derives the name of New Covenanters.

There were three sections in the community, Priests, Levites and lay members, the latter, possibly, including proselytes. The first are referred to as *bné Aaron* and *bné Zadoq*, and were the "perfect"—presumably the chieftains, though to what extent, if at all, they officiated at the temple is not clear. They pronounced blessings on the community. The Levites were the counterpart of the priests, and pronounced curses on those who had turned apostate. The community was monastic, that is, the members separated themselves from what are called "the congregation of perverse men," and lived together under a common doctrine and labour and with communal ownership of property. They practised "a common way of life, in a community of truth and humility, justice and righteousness, love and bounty." "They establish themselves as the true Israel, a community of the Eternal Covenant, in order to obtain pardon for all those who are come to the true sanctuary of Aaron, or the true house of Israel."³ We notice that these characteristics, and others mentioned in the sources, are based on actual quotations

¹ *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery*, Vol. II, Fasc. 2: *Plates and Transcription of the Manual of Discipline*, 1951. *The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline. Translation and Notes*, by W. H. Brownlee. B.A.S.O.R. Supp. Studies, 10-12, 1951. Other available translations are in French.

² This was discovered in the *genizah* of the Old Cairo synagogue in 1895-96. and published in 1910 by Solomon Schechter, under the title *Fragments of a Zadokite Document*. With the same title, a translation by R. H. Charles was included in vol. 2 of his *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*. (1913).

³ A full and very important discussion of the characteristics of the party may be seen in Lambert, *Le Manuel de Discipline du Désert de Juda. Étude Historique et Traduction Intégrale* (1951).

of Biblical phrases, which are developed along the lines of a specific exegesis.

The piety of the community is beyond question, but here, even more than elsewhere, there is ample evidence to indicate that they were by no means orthodox from the standpoint of Rabbinic Judaism. The leaders emphasize the need for a "new" interpretation of the Law, and it is required of the members that they diligently seek in the Torah to discover those things that, up to that time, were "kept hidden from Israel."

The government of the community is not quite easy to reconstruct, mainly because of inconsistencies in the Manual of Discipline itself, and it may be worth while mentioning that one recent publication¹ consists of an attempt to analyse the Manual into literary sources, somewhat on the same lines as Old Testament Higher Criticism. A scrutiny of the constitution is, however, very desirable, because in many respects it resembles the organisation of the Early Church. In both, there was communal possession, though the New Covenanters imposed the condition after a novitiate period. There was also in both a conscious desire for unity of doctrine. Again, there was among the community's officers a *paqid* who presided over the congregation, and a *mebaqqer* who seems to have been the purser and inspector of works, and I am not the first to suggest the possible similarity here with the *episkopos* of the New Testament.

A candidate for membership in the community "passed over" into the "covenant," or "entered into" it. He took the oath, with the priests blessing God and the candidate repeating "Amen, Amen." Then followed a ritual which led up to a confessional in which all the members participated. "We have been perverse, we have transgressed, we have been blameworthy, we and our fathers before us, in that we have walked contrary to the commandments of God. His judgment upon us and upon our fathers is right and just, and He has bestowed upon us the abundance of His goodness from eternity to eternity." This confessional calls to mind, very vividly, that most moving prayer in Daniel 9. Somewhere in the ritual of the community there was a "holy washing" (baptism) and a "holy meal" (eucharist), but as yet the precise part played by these institutions is not clear.

Part of the Manual is given to regulations of conduct, and I

¹ H. E. del Medico, *Deux Manuscrits Hébreux de la Mer Morte* (1951).

shall quote a few, simply to give an idea of the penal code. "If there be found among them a man who lies in the matter of wealth, and it become known, they (the community) shall exclude him from the Purity of the Community for one year"—that is, punishment by partial excommunication. Other periods of punishment are imposed as follows: insubordination and quick-temper, one year; blasphemy, six months to one year; deceit, six months; "whoever utters with his mouth a word of folly," three months; "he who interrupts his fellow," ten days; "whoever lies down and sleeps during a session of the community," thirty days; "whoever laughs foolishly with a raucous voice," thirty days.

The other scrolls deal more especially with events in the history of the community, but the Damascus Document is very helpful in that it combines something of the history and of the constitution, and describes some of the main historical personalities. One of them is the Teacher of Righteousness, whom "God raised up to lead Israel in the way of His heart." He was opposed by "the scornful man, who spoke to Israel lying words, and made them go astray in the wilderness, where there was no way" Now the Habakkuk commentary, too, seems to be concerned, above all else, with the misfortunes of the Teacher of Righteousness at the hand of the Man of Lies. Another prominent figure is the Messiah, who is identified as the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, and who, unlike the Teacher of Righteousness, is frequently mentioned in the Manual of Discipline. There have been, of course, a variety of Jewish Messiahs who were not of the house of David, as the New Testament as well as Rabbinic sources inform us; but the present Messiah (or Messiahs) is interesting because he is otherwise unknown. There were Messiahs ben Ephraim and ben Joseph, both slightly later than New Testament times; there were, furthermore, a great number of individuals who set themselves up as Messiah. But here it is interesting to see the whole life of a Messianic community of whom it might be said, as St. Luke said of Simeon, "this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel." Indeed, we may add with St. Luke, though using the Manual of Discipline as evidence, "and the Holy Spirit was upon him" (Lk. 2 : 25).

But is it possible to identify these people? Of course, this question raises all kinds of preliminary questions: date, the validity and adequacy of extant historical sources for any

particular period, the possibility—to my mind, rather remote—of reducing the information in the scrolls into identifiable “historical writing.” These and many other problems are involved; nevertheless, with or without consideration of them, there is hardly a writer on the scrolls but has ventured an identity. I have suggested that the most popular period for dating the scrolls is the 1st century B.C., and many leading scholars argue for an identity of the party with the Essenes. The suggestion was put forward soon after the scrolls were discovered, because there were Essene establishments in the vicinity of the Dead Sea about the beginning of the Christian era; latterly, the idea has gained force because of a number of common elements in the constitutions of the two parties. But there are also serious difficulties facing the theory, mainly on the score that what Philo and Josephus, our main sources for the history of the Essenes, have to say about them is vague and not always free from prejudice. The similarity between them, it would appear, amounts to little more than that both parties had neophytes and senior members; that they had a similar initiation rite and oath; that they apparently flourished at the same time and in the same locality. We do not know—and have grounds for doubting—whether they adopted similar standpoints on such questions as temple sacrifices, celibacy, and, above all, Bible exegesis. The importance of the last point is underlined by the fact that the New Covenanters were so pre-eminently concerned with Bible exegesis.

This last point brings to my mind a possible identity, which I can only present by a slight *détour* in my account of the scrolls. I need hardly explain that the presence of fragments of manuscripts and jars in the cave indicates that the cache had been found and sacked before its present discovery; the presence of late Roman utensils alongside the Hellenistic remains would, however, support the view that entry into the cave was made at some time in the Roman domination. But there is a strong likelihood that a letter written by a Timotheus, a bishop in the Nestorian Church about the turn of the 8th century A.D., deals with such a discovery. He says that about ten years before the letter was written, an Arab wandering about the region near Jericho had some trouble in rescuing his dog from a cave, and when the Arab entered the cave he found a large number of jars in which manuscripts were encased, and these texts turned out to be in Hebrew, many of them Biblical. This is the only extant historical reference that seems to pertain to the present discovery,

for it is much more likely than the hazard which would connect Origen's *Sexta* column in the *Hexapla* with the scrolls, since all Origen is reported to have said is that his *Sexta* was found in a jar near Jericho. Be that as it may, the cave at Ain Feshkha had not only been entered before the 9th century, but had also been deprived of some of its manuscripts.

I have already frequently referred to one of the community's texts which had previously been recovered, namely, the Damascus Document. Actually there are two manuscripts, one of which is a variant recension of part of the other and both together form the Damascus Document. Now, the existence of these two manuscripts in copies made in the 10th and 12th centuries and deposited in the Cairo *genizah* shows that the literature of the New Covenanters became of considerable importance to people, probably a Jewish sect, who flourished in later centuries. The most likely people are the Karaites, a sect with a very strong interest in the Bible and with distinct anti-Rabbinic tendencies. They are believed to have originated in the early 8th century A.D., and it is to the work of one of their prominent scholars, Kirkissani, who flourished in the 10th century, that I wish now to draw your attention. He wrote an important treatise, *Kitab al-Anwar wal-Marakib* (the book of the lights and the watch-towers) in which he describes, among other things, the early sects of Judaism.¹ He mentions at least two sects which have relevance to the present discussion. One sect is called Magharians, who were so-called "because their sacred books were found in a cave;" and some scholars have fastened on these as the people likely to be identified with the New Covenanters. My own interest, however, inclines to another sect, mentioned immediately before the Magharians, namely, the Zadoqites. "Their leaders," says Kirkissani, "were Zadoq and Boethus. They were, according to the Rabbanites, pupils of Antigonus who succeeded Simeon the Righteous, and received instruction from him. Zadoq was the first who exposed the Rabbanites, and disagreed with them . . ." This is not the occasion to elaborate on the suggestion, but I may mention that other points in the account agree with what we know of the New Covenanters, and I have included it here, in passing, because I think it is as

¹ R. H. Charles, in the Introduction to his translation, first drew attention to this possible identity, but a more recent treatment and translation of this work is that published by L. Nemoj, "Al-Qirqisani's Account of the Jewish Sects and Christianity," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 1930.

close an identity as any other and because I have not seen it mentioned elsewhere.¹

III

Finally, the significance of the Biblical scrolls and their characteristics should be briefly discussed. Among the fragments there are passages from various books of the Pentateuch and Judges and from the book of Daniel, but our main interest attaches to the longer texts, namely, Habakkuk 1 and 2, and the two scrolls which contain different texts of Isaiah. The text of Habakkuk is in itself interesting because it has occasional variants from the Massoretic text, but the major problem here is the question of the unity of the book as we know it. In the scrolls the whole book appears to have contained only the two chapters, compared with three in the Massoretic and Septuagint Bibles. Higher Criticism has argued for many generations that the Psalm in chapter 3 is an addition to the original book, but recently there has been a tendency to regard the book as we know it as an entity, and to say that the absence of the Psalm from the scroll has no special significance.

The texts of the two Isaiah scrolls are of considerable importance, and the recent new edition of the Isaiah text in Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* includes the variants of one of them in the critical apparatus. This text, of course, is the Isaiah scroll edited and published by the American Schools of Oriental Research as DSIa (or, as it may be referred to here for convenience, text A). The other Isaiah (text B), is as yet unpublished, and lies in the Hebrew University at Jerusalem. It was on view in the British Museum for a short time, and collations have been made of two or three of its columns. Short passages have also appeared in facsimile. It contains chapters 41-59, and sections of other parts have also been recovered.

Our main interest in these texts is the extent to which they diverge from each other and from the Massoretic text. Text A, as you may remember, was hailed as a most valuable witness to the correctness of the Massoretic text, because it was said that they agreed very closely. Nowadays, however, little is heard about this, for textualists soon discovered that not only are there thousands of orthographic variants but also that many of the

¹ It is, however, by no means an easy identification to establish, for obviously the New Testament Sadducees must fit into the picture somewhere; and they do not take their place very well.

textual variants introduce new meanings. Professors Hempel and Lindblom and the present writer argue that the variants represent a recension of the text which is self-consistent and different from the Massoretic, though related to it rather than to the other known early recension, namely, the parent text of the Septuagint. Professors Driver and Kahle, though postulating different dates, argue that the texts are simply popular texts whose deviations from the Massoretic, though numerous, have no particular significance. I shall not enter here into the intricacies of distinctions between these two points of view; they both agree fundamentally that there was some misplaced enthusiasm at the earlier stages in the discussions of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and it may now be noted that Professor Millar Burrows, who at first publicised the importance of text A, and who did extremely good work with the editing of the text in facsimile and transcription, has stated that the tradition of the text is a different one from that of the Massoretic.¹

In many ways the character of this "tradition"—if I may use this rather ambiguous word in this connection,—indicates a period which is later than that presupposed by the Massoretic text. Thus, the orthography, which incidentally is not quite consistent, shows a far greater abundance of vowel letters than does the Massoretic text, and it is reasonable to explain this as an indication of progressive ignorance by the professional readers of the traditional pronunciation of the language. It forms part—though not directly—of the process which ultimately produced the pointing of the Massoretic text. The Scribes and Massoretic of orthodox Judaism in the 1st century A.D. and later, and the translators of the Septuagint, three or four hundred years earlier, could manage fairly well to enunciate with far fewer *matres lectionis*. Another significant point is that a considerable number of the textual variants in text A consist of the substitution of familiar words for less familiar words and *hapax legomena* in the Massoretic text. Both these facts obviously presuppose the seniority of the Massoretic text. Attention has also been drawn to another interesting substitution: in 42: 4 the M.T., followed faithfully by the R.V., gives "the isles shall wait for his law." Text A, however, gives "laws," presumably because the singular, *torah*, had a different, technical meaning for the community. I think all these points must be allowed, and for them and for other

¹ "Waw and Yodh in the Isaiah Dead Sea Scroll (DSIa)," *B.A.S.O.R.*, Dec. 1951, p. 20.

reasons, we must concede that the M.T. is the older text, despite some different reasons which have been adduced for the seniority of text A. But it does not follow that we must accept Professor Driver's position in his latest, and to date, fullest treatment of the subject in the Dr. Williams' Library lecture,¹ and date the A text about A.D. 500. We should, rather, find here evidence that the Massorettes preserved a text-form which is considerably older than the period to which we can assign text A, and the Dead Sea Scrolls generally, that is somewhere about the early years of the Christian era, or slightly earlier. There are other and stronger reasons for giving the Massoretic text an earlier date; for instance, the strength of the oral transmission of the text, and the inherent and traditionally conservative character of the Massoretic activity. There is very little evidence to suggest that Rabbi Aqiba, or whoever it was who agitated towards the early 2nd century A.D. for a semi-standardized text, ever created such a text, or in any way interfered with the text.

As regards text B, the interesting feature is that it agrees with the Massoretic much more closely in matters of orthography and text, and if what I have suggested above is correct, this might well be an example of the traditional text in its pre-Massoretic form. Professor Kahle, however, finds in the few variants of orthography and text evidence of "popular" variations of the same kind as in text A. Nevertheless, until more of this text is available for study it is premature to come to any definite conclusion, for no one has been more industrious than Professor Kahle himself in showing that the Massoretic tradition itself shows some textual, and, definitely, orthographic variations at least until about the 6th century A.D.

An interesting speculation is whether or not the tenets and ideas of the New Covenanters are reflected in the textual variants of text A. Professor Hempel has argued² that they are present. He suggests that the chief care of the scribe was to preserve the recitation as free as was possible from contamination by Aramaic influences in Palestine, hence the plethora of *matres lectiones*; whereas orthodox Judaism did not need these safeguards. Furthermore there is a possible anti-Samaritan tendency implied in a significant omission of a place-name from the Massoretic text in 37: 13.

¹ *The Hebrew Scrolls from the Neighbourhood of Jericho and the Dead Sea* (Oxford, 1951).

² "Über die am Nordwestende des Toten Meeres gefundenen hebräischen Handschriften," *Nachr. d. Akad. d. Wiss. in Gött., Phil.-Hist. Kl.*, 1949.

In conclusion, I return to the general estimate of the scrolls I ventured to make at the outset. The Biblical texts are, of course, important because there are no early manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, nor of the Septuagint's parent text. But the texts A and B will not provide us with a "better" text-form of Isaiah than the one we already have. They will, of course, provide Hebrew grammarians and linguists with better means than ever before of reconstructing the history of the language development, and of kindred dialect-forms, at a period long before the Tiberian Massorettes pointed the text, and so frequently distorted its meaning. But before the results of these and similar researches can be applied to the textual criticism of Isaiah and of other books, much time must elapse; and meanwhile much care should be taken lest we "emend" the text wrongly, as has so often happened with emendations based on the Septuagint. As for the community, the New Covenanters themselves, it is certainly sensational that now, two thousand years after the time it flourished, we are able to give a fairly detailed reconstruction of its customs and its beliefs. Doubtless, a study of its constitution, its ways of living and thinking, its Bible study and interpretation—these and many other findings will help us the better to understand the story of the Early Church. But the Covenanters are not the Early Christians, nor is the community the Early Church. Their founder and inspirer was, undoubtedly, the Teacher of Righteousness, and we should like very much to know who he was. Their Messiah, however, was the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, and if any fact about Jesus is established on very sound evidence, it is that he was the Messiah, son of David, Son of God.

DISCUSSION.

The Chairman (Mr. F. F. BRUCE) said: The Victoria Institute may consider itself fortunate in securing Mr. Roberts to address it on this subject. Mr. Roberts has won the right to speak with authority on all matters concerning Old Testament textual criticism. His book on *The Old Testament Text and Versions*, published last year, has been warmly welcomed as filling a gap of which teachers of Biblical subjects in universities and theological colleges have long been acutely conscious; in it we have at last a standard work on Old Testament textual criticism to stand alongside several excellent handbooks to the textual study of the New Testament. As an expert on the text of the Old Testament, Mr. Roberts has

been much in demand as a writer and speaker on the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls; I have lost count of the number of learned periodicals to which he has contributed papers on this subject (in Germany as well as in this country); he has even broadcast on it.

After listening to his paper tonight many of us have a clearer appreciation than before of the probable value of the Scrolls as witnesses to the text of the Old Testament. Mr. Roberts has also touched on interesting possibilities in relation to the Old Testament canon, which will repay further exploration. But I think it is becoming increasingly clear—and Mr. Roberts's paper bears this out—that the supreme importance of the Scrolls will yet prove to lie in the light which they may throw on the background of Christian origins. For example, the apocalyptic emphasis in Matthew's Gospel—a subject to which I have had to pay special attention of late—makes one wonder if this Gospel appeared first in some community of people keenly interested in apocalyptic literature, or at least if it were influenced by such a community at some stage in its formation. (This would, of course, have been a Christian apocalyptic community, whereas in the case of the Scrolls we are dealing with a Jewish one.) I was therefore specially interested a few days ago, when reading Mr. Roberts's paper "Some Observations on the Damascus Document and the Dead Sea Scrolls" in the *Rylands Bulletin* for March, 1952, to find that he points out resemblances between the method of Biblical interpretation adopted in the Habakkuk commentary (DSH) and the way in which quotations from the Old Testament are introduced by the First Evangelist.

On the identity of the New Covenanters, it looks as if we may soon have further light from more recent manuscript discoveries made near the north-west shore of the Dead Sea—at Khirbet Qumrân and in the Wadi Murab'at. My knowledge of these thus far comes exclusively from an article in the *Manchester Guardian* of April 7th, 1952. According to this article (a despatch from that newspaper's Paris correspondent), Père de Vaux considers that the discoveries at Khirbet Qumrân strongly suggest that this may be the site of the Essene settlement above En-gedi mentioned by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* (Book V, ch. 17). It is also interesting to learn that pottery discoveries at Khirbet Qumrân have led Père de Vaux to the conclusion that the jars in which the

Ain Feshkha Scrolls were preserved were of the type still in use during the first century of the Roman occupation of Palestine.

It is a token of Mr. Roberts's sound scholarship that he has resisted the temptation to propound confident solutions to the problems which the Scrolls raise, as too many others have done on insufficient evidence. He has shown us clearly what the main problems are, and in which directions it seems that some elucidation may most profitably be sought. We are greatly indebted to him for his exposition on this fascinating subject, and in the name of the Institute I thank him most warmly.¹

Rev. H. L. ELLISON said: The suggested light thrown on the formation of the O. T. canon by the non-canonical Dead Sea Scrolls is very interesting, but we may perhaps go further. It is as unreasonable to base our estimate of the Pharisees purely on the Mishnah and the early Midrashim, as it is to base it purely on the N. T. The *Birkat ha-Minim* and the early Talmudic references to the *am ha-aretz* and others show how implacably those that would not conform were squeezed out of the synagogue in the 150 years that followed the destruction of the Temple, but the Pharisees were as implacable to the few nonconformists in their own ranks. It is clear, however, that it would be wrong to postulate any such attitude, at least widely diffused, among the Pharisees before A.D. 70.

There is ample evidence for much greater freedom then, and Dr. Klausner is almost certainly correct in maintaining that between Zealot, Pharisee and Essene we have differences only in degree, not in kind, and no clear line can be drawn between them. So it must not be assumed that the attitude of the Pharisee towards apocalyptic and the pseudepigraphic literature when Judaism was fighting for its very existence was necessarily the same as it was earlier.

There seems to be a remarkable similarity between Judaism and Christianity here. Jewish literature between 200 B.C. and A.D. 100 has been preserved for us almost entirely by Christians or archæo-

¹ Special reference should now be made to the latest study of Professor H. H. Rowley, *The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1952).

logical "accident"; similarly the bulk of non-canonical Christian literature from the first century and a half has perished, and what we have has often been preserved by "accident." That the parallel is not accidental seems to be shown by the same cause being adequate to explain both phenomena, viz., gnosticism.

Friedländer may have exaggerated the Jewish element in gnosticism, but he did show its relevance for Judaism. R. Aqiba, the champion of orthodoxy, was the only one of a group of four promising scholars to escape unscathed from it. Much of the pseudepigraphic literature lends itself to gnostic speculation, and I believe that the fixation of the canon and the weeding out of the old non-canonical literature had the same motive in both religions, though Judaism being in the greater danger did the task more thoroughly. But the old apocalyptic tradition flowed on, showing itself later in *Merkabah* mysticism, Qabbalah, etc.

If this is so, it would be wrong to look on the New Covenanters as necessarily heterodox. They will have been more interested in apocalyptic than the Pharisees, but once more it will have been a difference only in degree. At present it must remain a matter of speculation whether they reluctantly acquiesced in the banning of the pseudepigraphic literature, or whether they refused and became an unorthodox sect. If it were the former, Dr. Kahle may well be correct in his suggestion that the scrolls were hidden away to save them from ignominious destruction. If this line of thought is at all correct, the Pharisees were no enemies of the pseudepigraphic literature, but in the hour of Judaism's deadliest danger they saw clearly that only concentration on essentials could save it, and any book whose canonicity was seriously doubted was sacrificed to this end.

Mr. D. J. WISEMAN said: It is good to have a new approach to the much discussed subject of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and this paper goes some way in attempting this by relating the new material to the question of the Canon of Scripture. Yet to do this would seem to me to be impossible until the primary and difficult question of the date of composition has been settled. It matters much whether, for example, the Isaiah manuscripts are second century A.D. or B.C. if we are to place them in their correct relation to other Hebrew

literature, named rabbinic traditions and the sources used by the Massorettes. Unfortunately the further archæological work carried out in the Dead Sea area this year has shown that the support for the earlier dating, given by the so-called "Hellenistic" jars in which the scrolls were found, is unreliable evidence. Mr. Lankester Harding has excavated a settlement at Khirbet Qumrân, near the site of the cave in which the original find was made, and discovered the same type of jars in a context datable to the time of the Bar Kochba revolt. Further manuscript discoveries from a site further south near the Dead Sea must cause us to pause for a further examination of the material before safe deductions from all the related manuscript finds may be made. Mr. Roberts is obviously right in drawing our attention to the value of these documents for the early Christian period, whatever their dating within the generally conceded range of four centuries B.C.—A.D. may be. We are hindered still by a paucity of comparative material which precludes any sure comparison of the development of the script, vocabulary, grammar and even scribal methods upon which so many of the current arguments are based. It is surely wrong reasoning to make comparison with the Zadokite Fragment (Damascus Document) on the date of which scholars vary by as much as ten centuries and which, like many early and late Hebrew documents, draws largely on the Old Testament for its language and expressions.

Mr. W. E. FILMER said : Mr. Roberts has put forward good reasons for believing that the Isaiah scroll A is not as old as the original of our Massoretic text. This fact does not seem to me to detract from the importance of the find, as some would imply, but rather to enhance it. Dr. Birnbaum and others have stated on palæographical grounds that the date of text A is 150–175 B.C. (*Trans. V.I.* 82, 1950, p. 145). This opinion is not subject to the criticisms made against the dating of the Leviticus fragments, for it is not written in the Palæo-Hebrew script ; nor can it be questioned on account of archæological evidence showing a later date for the jars, for old manuscripts can be put into new jars. Isaiah text A clearly proves that the Massorettes preserved a text which dates back to at least 200 B.C., a conclusion which can only add weight and authority to the Hebrew text of our Old Testament as a whole.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I have but very little to add except to thank the Chairman for his valuable comments and for his kind references to myself, and to say that the discussion has been very helpful. It has served mainly, I think, to underline the need for keeping an open mind on the great majority of issues raised by the discovery. One authority on the Scrolls some months ago observed that over 500 articles had already been published in learned journals alone, and to judge by the rate at which they continue to appear, the number might well be doubled before long. Since there is a considerable diversity of views among the recognized experts it is manifestly impossible to be anything but cautious when advocating any general point of view, though some kind of perspective is obviously necessary.

The extent of the latest (1952) discovery at Khirbet Qumrân still remains comparatively unknown, for, at the time of writing, there is little, if any, fresh information to add to the brief report in the *Manchester Guardian*, to which previous speakers have referred. Among recent publications on the Scrolls, however, I should refer to an important textual discussion by J.-T. Milik¹, in which it is demonstrated that twelve of the fragments discovered during the archaeological examination of the first cache by Mr. Lankester Harding and Père de Vaux are part of a commentary on the book of Micah², now, of course, in a very mutilated condition, but originally composed in the same style and with the same characteristics and features as the Habakkuk commentary. The identification supports very strongly the view put forward in the present paper that the party was devoted to Bible exegesis, and was very apocalyptic in its interpretations. Whether the party had marked contacts or an identity with the Essenes, as so many scholars suppose, or with the Pharisees, as Mr. Ellison suggests above³, or with any other known party must still, I think, remain an open question. My main objection to identifications already suggested is that the

¹ "Fragments d'un Midrash de Michée dans les Manuscrits de Qumrân," *Revue Biblique*, July, 1952, pp. 412-18.

² Among passages identified are the following: Micah. 1: 2-5, 5b-7, 8-9; 6: 14-16.

³ It might be noted that the New Testament scholar, Dr. Bo Reicke, in an extremely interesting book on the scrolls, *Handskriften från Qumran* (Uppsala, 1952), argues for an identity of the sect with the Pharisees, withal at an early period in their history.

Messiah of the New Covenanters, the Messiah of Israel and Aaron, does not coincide with the Davidic Messiah who seems to be presupposed by any Judaistic party hitherto known. The same objection would hold even if it be argued that we are dealing with an early, more amorphous stage in the history of the sectarians, be they Essenes, Pharisees, Sadducees, or even Christians, on the one hand, or the earlier *Hasidim* and Maccabeans on the other.

910TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY,
MAY 26TH, 1952.

E. J. G. TITTERINGTON, Esq., M.B.E., M.A., in the Chair.

ANNUAL ADDRESS
THE CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE

The Challenge of our Early Background.

By Rev. Principal F. CAWLEY, B.A., B.D. Ph.D.

THE subtitle—The Challenge of our Early Background—will give us THE CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE. We have the near background, and the distant background. The near background is as perilous as it could possibly be: and there are many hearts failing them, and many minds perturbed. It was so with the Early Church. What a gallant group that Early Church constituted; just a handful—no more—against the world! Yet they stood out against their complete environment. They brought a new mind to it: a new heart: a new will. They were conscious of a new Presence. He had been with them: now He was beyond them, accessible only by faith and its experience. They challenged the traditions, the faith, and the practices of their time, to say: “Jesus is Lord.” If I were to take a text for what I have to say to-night, it would be just these three words: “Jesus is Lord,” as Paul wrote so graphically in his Epistle to the Philippians, chapter 2, verse 11. He was new, totally new: they had never met anyone just like Him; and what He said was new. What they were out to do was to see that their world became new in Him through them. As far as I can, I would bring this into our present setting. If we fully understood all that that meant, we would have all the assurance we need, and it would be definitely Christian, not dogmatically, save in the sense that truth is dogmatic, but experimentally, vitally, decisively. Our minds would be settled, our hearts sure, our wills steadfast. We would have a goal: we would have a Leader, a Master, a Lord. All that would constitute assurance, something very wonderful in its essence, something marvellously real, and especially so in any moments of crisis.

There are three main thoughts to lay before you: first, *Their Resources*. Let me begin where they began—the fact of Christ. It was not a new idea, nor a new system of thought, but a new fact. This is a day of hard facts. We are bidden to test every-

thing factually. Jesus was just that! Later on they spoke of Him as the God-Man. That was something utterly new. They had an experience of His grace, and it remains to this day. The early apostles had known Him in the flesh. They had walked with Him, talked with Him, had eaten and drunk with Him; in calm and in storm they had been with Him; on hill and in dale. They had lived with Him. As a result of their experience of Him in the flesh, they understood His grace. Now, the next generation was as near Him in spirit as the early Apostles had been near Him in the flesh; and, somehow, there was no loss: indeed, there was a gain. Now they knew that on any of life's roads the believer could meet Him, and He would be the same Christ, only greater, with all power at His disposal, beyond all limitations, and yet precisely the same. Each succeeding generation has entered into that wonder. It is the same Christ, now apprehended in spirit by faith and love; not by faith only, nor by love only, but by faith and love. That delivers from sentimentality; it would deliver us from love merely of the passing moment. Each succeeding generation has been won by that same Spirit. To each succeeding generation He has been God's amazing grace, and right down to this present moment. We name His Name with the same awe, the same reverence, the same devotion, and, one would say, with the same loyalty. We still say: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday (in the dead centuries), and to-day (in the living present, and amid all the perils of the hour), and for ever." "For ever"—what an experience! Who can say anything about to-morrow? Not a new idea; not a new theory; but an ageless fact, a timeless fact, that the Christ of Galilee is the Christ of experience, the eternal Christ, as free as the winds of God; nay, freer, for they are under control, but He is not, save the law of His own Being, and that Being, we say, in faith and in love, is the very Being of God.

From their experience of His grace, we pass, secondly, to *Their Re-creation in that Experience*. This is something that has been a phenomenon down the centuries. They knew Him in thought; they gave Him devotion and love; their wills were anchored to His will; and He willed Himself through them. You know the process. They were stirred by Him. Each generation understood that they had been bought by Him, and in being thus possessed by Him, they were re-ordered in Him. That can stand for the old term "conversion." I was interested recently in coming across this quotation: "Conversion is not so

much a new character as a new order in the old character." At first I dissented. It was put psychologically in order to enable modern students who knew nothing of Conversion in the sense in which our fathers knew it, to appreciate the modern way of treating Conversion. At first, I say, I dissented. Then I remembered that it is the same character. I am myself as I was forty years ago; and so are you. There is the law of continuity in all life. Yet between the Christian and the non-Christian what a great difference exists! Is it not the Christ-order within the old character? I just throw it out as a suggestion. Further, they were reinforced by His Spirit, as though His Spirit had been interlocked with theirs, becoming one with them. Their selfhood began where His left off; and His began where theirs left off. So much so that Paul could say: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It means this, that they were changed at their deepest levels, changed at their deeper unconscious levels. In these psychological days we speak a good deal about the sub-conscious, or the unconscious. We are well aware in these days of modern research that unless we have a special technique we cannot understand the subconscious. Now where we may not reach down, save by special technique and long training, these men knew that the Spirit of Christ had been knocking at their heart's door, and that, somehow, He had constrained them to open the door and let Him in. They found new life in Him; they lived in Him; and He lived in them. They were changed at their deepest levels by this One, factual in history, and in experience—the very fact of the Spirit of God.

There you get the perennial miracle of real and vital religion. It is a miracle, and any man who has had this experience knows it. For instance, I can remember the time of my conversion. I was only a lad of thirteen: careless up to that time. I entered into a religious meeting, with no particular intentions on my part so far as I can remember. I went in, and I came out other than I had been. That change marked a miracle in my life. Would to God it had been greater than it has been! To illustrate further: A German professor and a Chinese were accidentally flung together in an hotel abroad. The German knew no Chinese, and the Chinese knew no German. They were divided as races are, but they made signs to each other, and, somehow, those signs did convey something. Then suddenly the name "Jesus" was uttered, and the face of the Chinese lit up. He

seemed to say, with his expressive hands: "So you know Him, do you? So do I." The Galilean experience we have in the New Testament was no other than the experience of that German and Chinese. That is its perennial quality. It does not change; it does not alter. The man who belongs to Christ, belongs to every other racial character.

In this perennial miracle of real and vital religion there is a sense of identification with Christ: *i.e.*, to be made one with Him. Paul delighted in it. Every generation has done the same. Yet Jesus remains Jesus, and you and I remain just what we are. Again, the Christian feels and knows by faith that he is being indwelt by that same Spirit the Apostles knew in Galilee, and the generations have known since. There is a new spirit at their command when they are at His command. There is a new quality of thought in the mind; there is a new quality of love within the heart; and there is a new purpose. It is this perennial miracle, by means of which Jesus is conquering generation after generation and goes on to dominate the future. Here is the Christian's assurance. May I say, inevitable? Why? Because Jesus is Jesus, the very incarnate God of our faith and our devotion. If the Christian Church only lived that out, it would put the world right side up. As it is, the Church in a host of centres seems to be as effete as the dead centuries. Yet is it not true, that the miracle still goes on its widening way? Or, shall I say, not the miracle, for that is an abstraction, but the Living Christ goes on still, conquering and to conquer.

This brings me, thirdly, to *Their Achievements*. They are so notable that imperceptibly they have changed our total world. The secular world does not know it, and the religious world does not know it as it ought. Furthermore, these achievements go on to perpetuate that change in the oncoming years. Of course, you and I know that the Lord Christ may come at any moment, but no one knows when, or how. Quite a number of people have said they knew: but they are now all dead, and, being dead, they utter a warning against those who want to take their vacant chair. Let the chair remain vacant! The Lord Christ said in the days of His flesh that only the Father knew when He would come; not even the Son on earth, nor the angels. I think that still holds true. He may come at any moment, but He may not come in any moment in which you and I live. What then? All we have to do is to maintain faith and love, as those early Apostles did, and to perpetuate the achievements of our forebears, in order

that the Lord Christ may come more deeply into this present very perturbed, very anxious, and deeply imperilled world.

What of their achievements? First, through Christ, they have split *time* asunder. Probably the most difficult concept to understand is time. This is what I want to stress: They split time asunder irrevocably, so that now you cannot change what they changed. That is the marvellous thing. Whether one is a theist or an atheist, a Christian or a pagan, every modern man dates his engagements by the change that came over history with the birth of Jesus—B.C., "Before Christ"; A.D. "In the Year of our Lord." Moscow acknowledges that. China acknowledges that. They cannot do anything else. They are not religious by acknowledging it; but still they live in a changed world, and it has been changed by that fact. God works in the dark. He bids His people see what a light He kindles, even in the dark. I would emphasize this: Jesus did it, apparently without any command, without expressing any wish to that effect, without bidding them go out and do it. But He did it, and, so far as they were concerned, unconsciously. On the other hand, statesmen, soldiers, conquerors, emperors, many of them, have tried to date time by their own personality, or achievement; but not one did it, though they set out on purpose so to do. What Jesus did, through His people (they did not know He was doing it), stands irrevocably and unchangeably. Is there not something inevitable about it? There the miracle comes in again. It has come about almost as silently as dawn succeeds night. There came a change as silently as that, as a quiet, relentless pressure, the pressure of Jesus, changing life, and therefore, changing the centuries, and therefore marking them as though He wrote His own Name across them. Thus He divided them—He split time asunder. Is not that assurance? I think it is. He is the Lord of time! If that is so, then He is the Master of it. Very quietly He does His work: there is no noise about it. The stream runs noisily over pebbles. The great deeps are silent, but they move with terrific force. The stars also move silently in their orbit. So it is with Jesus.

His people split, not only time, but *character* asunder. There was the pagan character of their day, polytheistic, shackled by fear and superstition, uncertain of earth, and with little knowledge of heaven. Then there emerged, again very quietly, a new race. They were called a new race even by their enemies. They were as new almost as Jesus. They

bore the hallmark of His re-creation, and yet they were all races together—the Greek, the Roman, the Jew, the Ethiopian, the Scythian—and they all came together as new men, new women. They maintained their own identity, the same continuity, and yet were very different folk of the new race, the new way, the new life, the new truth, because of the new Master. There was bred in them a fine loyalty though the majority were slaves.

Remember how Paul put it: "Not many mighty: not many wise are called. . . . But God hath chosen the base things of the world, and *things which are not*." "Things which are not"—there you get the scorn of the patrician of the day. They scorned these Christian slaves, bought like chattels in the market place, butchered by the master, if he so willed. But what a royalty there was about them! It was against the most terrific odds for any slave to be in Christ. Seneca once wrote: "Once a slave; half a man." You see the deadly truth of it. Suppose any one of us this minute was bought by another, would it not mean that life would be cut in half—without the right to person, to time, to loved ones; robbed of the right to go where we would, tethered to the will of another? "Once a slave; half a man"! It would be the poorer half left! But here is the miracle: here is the royalty too. Not only did Christ deny that fact: He transcended it, for to be a Christian would not mean that you were half a man, but double a man. That is what Christ did. Tertullian, when he became a Christian, and when the fires of persecution broke out, wrote a letter, and he said this, or words to this effect: "Do what you like. Do your worst. We are everywhere. You cannot keep us under." That is true. Did He not split character asunder? Was not a new race called into being when Christ called the slaves and the patricians together—the Jew, the Roman, the Greek, the Scythian, the Ethiopian?

Does He not do it now? Is not that where our assurance lies? There is not a great deal to be said for a man when he stands up against the worst, unless he knows a power other than himself: if he does, then he is master. In their very worst hour they knew that. They were in Christ, and they could not go under for the simple reason that He could not be put under. That is true to-day. The Christian Church will only go under when the Living Christ is buried—though the Church, here and there, has been buried. Recall that dark passage in the Book of the Revelation about the candlesticks being taken away if they do not shine. We must not presume, though we may rest in assur-

ance. Assurance is one thing: presumption is another! We are delivered to the one: we must never forget the other.

Again, He not only split time asunder, and character asunder, He split *the dominant moods of life* asunder. They are two, in the main. The first is pessimism: a very ancient word, but a very modern experience. Is it not in the atmosphere? Is it not everywhere? You cannot get away from it. It is in Berlin, in Moscow, in Sydney, in New York. Gilbert Murray once said that the reason why Greece failed was simply because of failure of nerve. The only thing that really matters is, when the unexpected comes, to be ready to meet it. The failure of nerve really occurs not because there are not good resources, but because you have not those good resources in yourself. Optimism is the other mood. There is the sky-blue optimism of Emerson. But the optimism that can only live when the skies are blue is not good enough. The optimism that tells is the optimism that lives on when the skies are black, with not a star visible and not a single light for direction. It was precisely that which Jesus gave to His disciples. He split the moods of life asunder. He dismissed one, and He reinforced the other. "I am the Light of the world." "Ye are the light of the world." "Ye are the salt of the earth." "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Paul sums it up when he says: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." That is true optimism and perfectly obvious. What is it? It is the Spirit of Jesus alive in a virile personality, operative when one gives Jesus right of way. He is Himself again, as in Galilee. Have you not noticed in the New Testament that Jesus was always master, even in Pilate's court? He dominated the entire proceedings. On the Cross, in the eyes of men, He was anathema (*i.e.*, accursed); but it was the hidden glory of God redeeming men. He took the shame of it, and made it a glory beyond any human ideal. He took death, and made it a messenger to the ends of the earth to proclaim, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." He was never taken by surprise; never dominated; never thrust out of His stride. His own disciples, when they are most His own, have that same characteristic. First, it is a matter of choice; then it is a matter of surrender; and then, finally, it is a fact of life. The living Christian incarnates within himself the fact of Christ, as surely as Christ was incarnate within His own flesh in that far-off Galilee. Thus He split the dominant moods of life asunder, for, as we sing, "I'd rather walk in the dark with God, than walk alone in

the light." Many walk in the dark and are paralysed for action. The ageless miracle is that where Christ is loved, and obeyed, and followed, the darkness disappears as in the coming of dawn.

Lastly, *Their Successors*. The question is, "Who follows in their train?" Incidentally, here is the true apostolic succession. The true apostolic succession is in every man and woman who, from the first day, has followed Him. Anyone who to-day follows Christ, in mind, and heart, and will, is within that apostolic succession, for the life of Jesus through the centuries runs into them, and is transmitted through them. Jesus, who, in the days of His flesh, walked by the Galilean shore, still walks by the side of that man and woman who obey Him, and who love His law for love of Him. Every generation has shared their resources. The Early Church had no more, and no less. To know Christ in spirit is not to have less than those had who knew Him in the flesh; they share their resources, and enhance their achievements. The vital question is: Who are their true successors to-day? Every generation must be won, or the garden of the Church becomes a sepulchre. Let one generation be unwon for Christ, and the Church ends. That is the reason why every generation must be sought out, pleaded with, and lured to Christ. Every generation must be won, because every generation buries its last, and forwards the next. Every generation must freshly hear His call, and must know Him to be the Lord and Redeemer He is, and must count the cost carefully, and clearly, and decisively, and then be prepared to say: "I can do no other; I follow."

In one of Dorothy Sayers' fine plays, Christ confronts the soul. Christ is pressing, and the soul is resisting. The pressure goes on, until at last the soul, as in Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*, feels that it can no longer resist. "Peace, Peace, I follow! Why must I love Thee so?" But the cost! It is easy to talk about it. but it is not so easy to pay. The ancient world, in effect, said to the Christian: "There is no need to desert us. Scatter a pinch of incense on the altar in honour of the nation's god." That would mean owning him as Lord: a disloyalty to Christ, his Lord, who had taken death in His stride. The equivalent of the cost that followed is to be seen in China today, and in Russia.

A recent story from India is apposite. A convert from a caste family in India, who later became a gifted minister, was ostracized from the outset by his family as one dead. He exercised a great ministry. He heard that his mother, whom

he loved deeply, was dying of cancer. He went home and standing outside her door, said: "Mother, it is your son who stands here desiring to see you. May I come in?" Icily as the poles, came back the answer: "I have no son: my son is dead. Go away!" Such is the cost!

What is required of their successors? A faith that can believe in Him, and commit life to Him; a loyalty to Him and to His Kingdom that can meet any and every cost. One such loyal successor was a missionary friend of mine in India. When I last met him I invited him to come along for a few days' rest. The answer was brief and poignant. "My doctor has told me that if I stop all work I might last out for six months; if not, only three months. I must return to my native people. In three months I can accomplish much." I never saw him again, to my own loss. He went back immediately to his lonely missionary bungalow. The last news I had was that the time permitted him was just those three precious months. His one and great desire was to serve and love these people whom he had won for his Lord until the last moment—loyal to God, loyal to all the folks in his pastoral charge. It was a great ending. Surely, when he passed over, it was a case of "Well done, good and faithful servant." Again, let me ask, who follows in their train?