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JOURNAL OF THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
The Victoria Institute

VOL. LXXXVII

1955

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

VOL. LXXXVII

1955



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- 1865-1886.—The Right Hon. The EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, K.G.
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 E. J. G. TITTERINGTON, M.B.E., M.A.

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Auditor.

- G. METCALFE COLLIER, A.C.I.I., *Incorporated Accountant.*
Assistant Secretary.
 Mrs. L. I. HARGREAVES.

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VICTORIA INSTITUTE

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 1954

READ AT THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MAY 23RD, 1955

1. *Progress of the Institute*

In presenting to the Fellows, Members and Associates the Eighty-eighth Annual Report the Council returns thanks to God for the continuation of the work of the Institute.

The Council is grateful to all who contributed papers, to those who acted as Chairmen at the meetings, and to all who contributed to the discussions.

The Council also wishes to thank especially the assistant secretary, Mrs. Hargreaves, who has put in a great deal of hard work in the office in reorganizing the work and establishing the book-keeping on a satisfactory basis.

A questionnaire circulated to Fellows and Members asking for their views on the papers read before the Institute, and for further suggestions for subjects for future papers, met with a gratifying response. Well over a hundred replies were received, and many useful suggestions were made.

The method of conducting the business of the Institute has been rearranged. Meetings of the full Council are now called only four times in the year to deal with questions of major policy. Two sub-committees, Finance and General Purposes and a Papers Sub-committee meet for the transaction of current business, and report their recommendations to the Council.

Members will see from the statement of accounts that the financial position has very much improved. For the first time for many years there has been a balance in hand at the close of the year with no outstanding liabilities. If this continues, the finances of the Institute should reach a satisfactory basis. The bulk of the income comes from the annual subscriptions of members, and it is hoped that every effort will be made to increase the Membership of the Institute.

2. *Meetings*

Five Ordinary Meetings were held during the Session, in addition to the Annual General Meeting and Annual Address.

“Recent Theories of the Origin of Man,” by DOUGLAS DEWAR, B.A., F.Z.S.

N. N. E. Bray, O.B.E., in the Chair.

“Recent Theories of the Origin and Nature of the Universe,”
by W. E. FILMER, B.A.

Robert L. F. Boyd, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.C.G.I., A.M.I.E.E., in
the Chair.

“The Value of Religious Instruction in Education,” by
E. W. CRABB, Dip.Litt., Dip.Th.

J. Reginald Hill, B.A., in the Chair.

“The Bible and Current Theories about Language,” by
Professor MALCOLM GUTHRIE, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.R.S.M.

D. J. Wiseman, O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C., in the Chair.

“The Geographical Background of Old Testament Exegesis,”
by J. M. HOUSTON, M.A., B.Sc., D.Phil.

J. H. Paterson, M.A., in the Chair.

Annual Address—“The Victoria Institute and the Bible,”
by F. F. BRUCE, M.A.

Professor Malcolm Guthrie, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.R.S.M., in the
Chair.

3. Council and Officers

The following is a list of the Council and Officers for the year 1954:—

President

Vice-Presidents

- Professor J. N. D. Anderson, O.B.E., M.A., LL.B.
 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.

Trustees

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

Council

(In Order of Original Election)

- | | |
|--|---|
| Douglas Dewar, B.A., F.Z.S. | F. F. Stunt, LL.B. |
| Wilson E. Leslie. | W. E. Filmer, B.A., F.Z.S. |
| Percy O. Ruoff. | D. J. Wiseman, O.B.E., M.A.,
A.K.C. |
| Robert E. D. Clark, M.A., Ph.D. | A.K.C. |
| Rev. C. T. Cook, D.D. | F. F. Bruce, M.A. |
| Ernest White, M.B., B.S. (Chairman
of Council). | A. H. Boulton, LL.B.
E. W. Crabb, Dip.Th., Dip.Litt. |
| Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A. | G. E. Barnes, M.A. |
| E. J. G. Titterington, M.B.E., M.A. | D. M. MacKay, B.Sc., Ph.D. |
| R. J. C. Harris, A.R.C.S., B.Sc.,
Ph.D. | Rev. H. L. Ellison, B.A., B.D. |

Honorary Officers

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

Auditor

- G. Metcalfe Collier, Esq., F.S.A.A., *Incorporated Accountant.*

Assistant Secretary

- Mrs. L. I. Hargreaves

4. *Election of Officers*

In accordance with the Rules the following Members of the Council retire by rotation: A. H. Boulton, Esq., LL.B., W. E. Filmer, Esq., B.A., F.Z.S., D. J. Wiseman, Esq., O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C., P. O. Ruoff, Esq., and W. E. Leslie, Esq., of whom the first three offer (and are nominated by the Council) for re-election.

G. Metcalfe Collier, Esq., F.S.A.A., Incorporated Accountant, of the firm of Metcalfe Collier, Hayward and Blake, offers (and is nominated by the Council) for re-election as Auditor for the ensuing year, at a fee of ten guineas.

5. *Obituary*

The Council regret to announce the following deaths:—

W. W. Balloch, S. S. Cooper, Rev. W. E. Dalling, M.A.

6. *New Fellows, Members and Associates*

The following are the names of new Fellows, Members and Associates elected in 1954:—

FELLOWS: Rev. Kenneth Newton; Rev. Ian R. K. Paisley, B.D., F.R.G.S., F.R.S.L.

MEMBERS: Harry Billingham, B.E.; J. Brown (on transfer from Associate); T. M. Brummer, B.D.S. (on transfer from Associate); D. A. Burgess (on transfer from Associate); J. R. Burne, B.A., Ph.D.; H. R. Drake, A.P.A.; Christmas Evans; W. O. Farley, Junr.; Jeremy E. FitzGibbon, B.A.; Dr. John F. Flegg; Rev. P. H. Francis, M.A.; G. D. Hooper, A.I.A.; Melvin Lopton; D. M. MacKay, B.Sc., Ph.D.; B. H. Page, M.A., M.B., M.Chir., F.R.C.S.; Miss Cecil J. I. Smith; Miss Clarissa L. Smith; A. P. van der Post, B.A., B.Sc.; C. A. F. Warner, M.A.; Rev. R. Weir (on transfer from Associate); Henry N. Wells; Rev. D. J. Wilson, B.Sc., B.D. (on transfer from Associate).

ASSOCIATES: Miss Shirley A. Byatt; A. B. Cairnie; Miss Gwendolyn Charles, M.A., M.P.A. (on transfer from Member); D. W. Dockrill; B. C. Holmes, M.A., Dip.Ed. (on transfer from Member); Alan J. Lane; T. G. Murrell; Ian H. Tweddell.

7. *Membership*

Life Fellows	20
Annual Fellows	128
Life Members	32
Annual Members	232
Associates	41
Library Associates	58
	<hr/>
Total Nominal Membership	511
	<hr/>

This total represents a net increase of two during the year. Twenty-five new Fellows, Members and Associates were elected, and there were three deaths and twenty-five resignations.

8. *Donations*

W. E. Filmer, £35; B. P. Sutherland, £10; Lt.-Col. W. Leon Dale, £5; Rev. S. M. Robinson, £4 17s. 8d.; J. W. Laing, £2 2s.; Rev. A. L. Blomerly, £1 8s.; H. Dana Taylor, £1 7s. 6d.; J. McGavin, £1 17s.; Archdeacon T. C. Hammond, £1 2s.; Dr. Keith M. Townend, £1 1s.; C. J. Young, £1 1s.; Siew Kheng Oh, £1 1s.; Rev. H. McKerlie, 17s.; J. Byrt, 12s. 6d.; Rev. J. W. Wenham, 10s.; J. G. L. Wedge, 8s. 6d.; G. Judd, 8s.; Rev. R. C. Webber, 7s.; Anon., £1; Total, £70 0s. 2d.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1954

EXPENDITURE				INCOME			
1953		£	s. d.	1953		£	s. d.
	To PAPERS, LECTURES, ETC.:—				By ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:—		
	Printing: General	17	11 2	394	Fellows	411	17 5
	Transactions	279	15 9	491	Members	461	15 8
				22	Associates	64	2 2
	Lecturers' Expenses		297 6 11	—	Library Associates	68	3 5
	Hire of Halls		4 9 0				
			15 17 6				1,005 18 8
836			317 13 5	25	LIFE SUBSCRIPTIONS:—		
	ADMINISTRATION:—			228	Proportion for 1954		36 3 3
239	Salaries and National Insurance		217 12 2		Sales of Publications		61 4 1
	Rent	22	15 0	64	DONATIONS:—		
	Rates	19	1 3	64	Casual	35	0 2
	Lighting and Heating	12	6 6		Covenanted (gross)	63	12 9
	Cleaning	13	19 0				98 12 11
73			68 1 9	13	INTEREST FROM CRAIG MEMORIAL FUND		13 3 4
	Office Stationery and Duplicating	67	11 7				
	Insurances	1	0 0				
	Telephone and Sundries	16	0 5				
	Bank Charges and Cheque Books	2	18 11				
			87 10 11				
126			10 10 0				
10	Audit Fee		— — —				
11	Old Volumes		56 10 4				
38	Postages		757 18 7				
			457 3 8				
833	Excess of Income over Expenditure						
468	for the year		£1,215 2 3				
			£1,301				
			£1,301				
			£1,215 2 3				

PRIZE FUND

	£	s.	d.
To Prize Awarded			60 0 0
„ BALANCES IN HAND at 31st December, 1954:—			
Gunning Trust	72	12	11
Langhorne Orchard Trust	58	1	0
Schofield Memorial	52	14	11
	188 8 10		
	£243 8 10		

	£	s.	d.	
By AMOUNTS IN HAND at 1st January, 1954:—				
Gunning Trust	109	2	0	
Langhorne Orchard Trust	48	19	9	
Schofield Memorial	43	5	7	
	201 7 4			
„ INCOME:—				
Gunning Trust	23	10	11	
Langhorne Orchard Trust	9	1	3	
Schofield Memorial	9	9	4	
	42 1 6			
	£243 8 10			iii

CASH BALANCES

	£	s.	d.
To LIFE COMPOSITIONS FUND			630 3 3
„ PRIZE FUND			183 8 10
	£813 12 1		
	£813 12 1		

	£	s.	d.	
By GENERAL FUND OVERDRAWN			376 6 3	
„ BALANCES AT BANK:—				
General Account	158	16	2	
Prize Account	273	12	9	
Balances in Hand	4	16	11	
	487 5 10			
	£813 12 1			

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, 23RD MAY, 1955.

ERNEST WHITE, ESQ., M.B., B.S., in the Chair.

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 24th May, 1954, were read, confirmed and signed.

The Report of the Council and Statement of Accounts for 1954, having been circulated, were taken as read.

The Chairman then put to the Meeting the *FIRST RESOLUTION*, as follows:

THAT THE REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 1954, PRESENTED BY THE COUNCIL, BE RECEIVED AND ADOPTED.

There being no comments or amendments, the Resolution was carried unanimously.

The Chairman then proposed the *SECOND RESOLUTION*, which was also carried unanimously, as follows:

THAT THE VICE-PRESIDENTS, REV. H. S. CURR, M.A., B.D., B.LITT., PH.D.; THE RIGHT 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.; THE HONORARY SECRETARY, E. J. G. TITTERINGTON, ESQ., M.B.E., M.A.; AND THE HONORARY TREASURER, F. F. STUNT, ESQ., LL.B., BE, AND HEREBY ARE, RE-ELECTED TO THEIR OFFICES.

The *THIRD RESOLUTION*, which was also carried unanimously, was proposed by Rev. H. W. Funnell, and seconded by Major C. W. Hume, as follows:

THAT A. H. BOULTON, ESQ., LL.B.; W. E. FILMER, ESQ., B.A., F.Z.S.; AND D. J. WISEMAN, ESQ., O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C., RETIRING MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, BE, AND HEREBY ARE, RE-ELECTED.

ALSO THAT THE ELECTION OF D. M. MACKAY, ESQ., B.SC., PH.D., AND REV. H. L. ELLISON, B.A., B.D., CO-OPTED TO FILL VACANCIES ON THE COUNCIL, BE, AND HEREBY IS, CONFIRMED.

The Chairman referred to the services rendered to the Institute by the two retiring members of the Council who were not seeking re-election, W. E. Leslie, Esq., and P.O. Ruoff, Esq.

He then proposed the *FOURTH RESOLUTION*, as follows:

THAT G. METCALFE COLLIER, ESQ., F.S.A.A., OF MESSRS. METCALFE COLLIER, HAYWARD AND BLAKE, BE, AND HEREBY IS, RE-ELECTED AUDITOR AT A FEE OF TEN GUINEAS, AND THAT HE BE THANKED FOR HIS SERVICES.

There being no comment or amendment, this Resolution also was carried unanimously.

The Chairman announced that it had been decided to change the accounting year so as to correspond to the period during which Sessions were held; the next Statement of Accounts would therefore cover the period from 1st January to 30th September.

There being no other business, the Meeting was declared closed.

924TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 15th NOVEMBER, 1954

REV. ERASTUS EVANS, M.A., in the Chair

**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ST. PAUL'S
EPISTLES**

By

ERNEST WHITE, M.B., B.S.

THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES

BY ERNEST WHITE, M.B., B.S.

SYNOPSIS

It is difficult to separate the psychology of the Epistles from the psychology of St. Paul himself, because the Epistles contain so much autobiographical material.

The subject divides itself into two sections, firstly the psychology of the Individual, secondly the psychology of the Church as a group. Only the first section is discussed in this paper, and it is sub-divided into four headings: (1) Motives, (2) Thought, (3) Spiritual Intuition, (4) Christian Conflict.

1. The main motives of Christian living are faith and love, the psychology of each of which is briefly discussed. As a subsidiary motive, the Second Advent plays some part.

2. Christian thinking is positive, and the will plays a part in directing thought and conduct.

3. Spiritual insight is a particular form of intuition, without which a man cannot appreciate the things of God.

4. Christian conflict is the result of tension between the new principle of life, spiritual life, and the human inheritance, the flesh, and continues throughout the life of the Christian. The psychology of the conflict is discussed.

WHEN one commences to pass in review the Pauline Epistles, with the purpose of studying their psychological implications, either manifest or hidden, it soon becomes apparent that it is all but impossible to separate the writings from their author. Theoretically it should be possible to examine the doctrines of the Epistles in isolation from the character of the writer, and to extract from them those elements which are concerned with psychology as distinct from theology. It soon becomes evident, however, that the personality of the Apostle himself is so intermingled with his doctrinal and exhortatory material, that it is all but impossible to separate the one from the other. In single verses and in whole passages, the Apostle introduces autobiographical references to his own spiritual experiences and conflicts in order to illustrate his doctrine and reinforce his authority. For example, the seventh chapter of Romans, the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth chapters of the second Corinthian letter, and much of the Galatian letter, are almost entirely biographical. A study of the Epistles becomes therefore a study both of the writings and the man himself. These two closely intertwined strands present far more material than could be expounded in a paper such as this, and all I can hope to do is to describe in outline a few of the leading themes, and to make brief comments upon each of them in turn.

Seeing that all these letters are addressed either to individual Christians or to Christian churches, our study must concern the psychology of the Christian individually, and group psychology as revealed in the Apostle's teaching concerning the communities of believers forming the Christian churches.

This gives us two main divisions, firstly the psychology of the individual believer, and secondly the psychology of the Church as a body of believers. To deal with the psychology of the group as found in the Church would require a paper to itself. I shall limit this paper to the psychology of the individual Christian. To clarify our thinking further, and for purposes of description, I shall consider the psychology of the individual Christian under the following headings: firstly Christian motives, secondly Christian thinking, thirdly Christian intuition, fourthly Christian conflict. I have omitted the subject of mystical experience, for this also would demand a paper to itself. The other subjects open up such immense fields of thought, that I can do little more than make a brief and superficial survey of the ground in the hope that it may stimulate further thought and research.

I

Firstly, then, let us consider the motives lying behind Christian living. Modern psychology has made us familiar with the doctrine that the motives which lie behind conduct and actuate it are emotional rather than intellectual. Intellectual cogitation may sort out conflicting motives,

and give direction to the emotional impulses which clamour for expression, but intellect does not supply the energy necessary for the initiation of action. The intellect is the seat of judgment, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of different lines of action, and, in combination with the imagination, foreseeing the results likely to ensue. We may think of the intellect as a kind of sieve, separating off the less useful elements of the instinctual and emotional drives, and letting through those which can be turned into behaviour advantageous to the individual. To use another analogy, intellect is like the man at the steering wheel of a car. He decides the speed and direction of the car, and guides it accordingly, but the driving power which propels the car lies hidden within the engine. So instincts and emotions form the motive powers for conduct, whilst the intellect sits in the seat of authority and decides the lines along which conduct shall proceed.

When we turn to the Epistles we discover that the two main motive forces of the Christian life are faith and love. Speaking of his own experience, the Apostle writes: "That life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God Who loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2: 20); and "the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5: 14). In these two statements the Apostle epitomizes his extended teaching on the subjects of faith and love.

(a) Firstly, then, let us consider faith and its method of operation.

It is evident on the surface that faith is something more than belief in historic facts. The intellectual acceptance of a historic fact *per se* has no driving force because it leaves the emotional life untouched. Faith is concerned with the will, and with the emotions, as well as with the intellect. Whilst faith without reason becomes superstition, belief founded only upon logical reasoning is not faith. Faith is at once an attitude of mind and a mental action in which the whole personality is involved. In Dean Inge's most valuable book on *Faith and its Psychology*, the author points out that Christian faith is something more than the acceptance of the authority of an historic Christ; it depends on the presence of the living Christ dwelling within us by His Spirit. "If Christ was divine as the Church teaches, and in the sense which the Church teaches, His revelation cannot have been purely external or purely historical and static, but must be given to and through the Christ-like elements in our consciousness. In fact, it seems to me that the doctrines of the Divinity of Christ and of the indwelling Spirit of Christ stand or fall together" (p. 136).

The Epistles contain very few references to the earthly ministry of our Lord or to His recorded sayings. They expound at length the truths about the living and ascended Christ, and the indwelling in the believer of His Spirit. Hence faith becomes trust in, and reliance upon, and complete obedience to a living Person. It is no dead intellectual theology or philosophy, but a living dynamic. In his prayers for the Ephesian saints in the

first chapter of the Epistle he prays that they may know "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead" (Eph. 1: 19, 20).

Faith in a person necessarily involves an emotional relationship. It involves more. Modern psychology tends to stress more and more the importance of introjected or unconscious images in the mind, whether these images be good or bad (cf. W. R. D. Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality*). These images contain powerful emotional charges which become externalized in behaviour. So when St. Paul prays "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph. 3: 17), we may interpret it psychologically as the introjection of a good image, the Christ-image, into the mind. A new driving force is introduced into the life of the Christian, shaping and directing conduct from within.

(b) The other leading motive in the Christian life is love. Over and over again in the Epistles stress is laid upon the importance of love, love to God and love to one's fellows. It is interesting to note in passing that the great chapter on love (1 Cor. 13) was written, not by St. John, the apostle of love, but by St. Paul. The love of which he writes is something very much more than a mere sentimental feeling. It is a positive, constructive influence, finding its expression in service. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth" (1 Cor. 8: 1). "Through love be servants one to another" (Gal. 5: 13). Although love has a strong emotional content, it is something more than an emotion. Those who are familiar with MacDougall's writings will recollect that he classes love amongst the sentiments. He thinks of sentiments as complex structures containing several elements of instinctual and emotional origin bound together, and directed toward some object or group of objects. Love is of this nature, for it contains more than one component. Love may be narcissistic in quality, that is to say it may be centred more in the desire for satisfaction in the lover than in the welfare of the loved object. The over-possessive mother illustrates narcissistic love. She loves her children as part of her own ego which she must retain at all costs. The love described in the epistles is selfless and sacrificial. For example, we read: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself up for it" (Eph. 5: 25). "Love seeketh not its own" (1 Cor. 13: 5). "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men" (1 Thess. 3: 12).

We have, then, behind all Christian living and service these two great positive and constructive motives, faith and love.

(c) The apostles allow no place for fear as a motive. Fear is negative, paralysing, or even destructive. It belongs to the evil rather than to the good side of life, and leads to bondage rather than to freedom.

There is, however, one aspect of the teaching found in the Epistles which borders on fear, and is put forward as a subsidiary motive for good

living. I refer to the eschatological passages. The Apostle obviously believed in the possibility of the Second Advent during his lifetime. Furthermore this great event was to be followed by the judgment seat of Christ where "we must all be made manifest . . . that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5: 10). The Second Advent was the hope set before the believer, and becomes a ground for exhortation that he may not be ashamed before Christ at His coming.

The belief in the imminence of the Second Advent thus became a subsidiary motive to the main ones of faith and love. The unseen Lord, served in love and faith, will hereafter become the Judge before whom all must appear, but the fear of final rejection or of eternal perdition is entirely omitted from Pauline teaching in so far as it applies to the believer. The motive is positive rather than negative. It is not that the believer will be rejected, but that he shall so live that he may be accepted as a faithful servant, pleasing to his Lord.

II

When we turn to the thinking, reasoning side of St. Paul's doctrine, we find that he has not much to say directly on the subject. Indirectly, however, logical reasoning plays a considerable part in the exposition of Christian doctrine. The most notable example of this is to be found in the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. These chapters contain a continuous logical argument, or series of arguments, setting forth the universality of sin, justification by faith as opposed to justification by keeping the law, the peace and security which ensue, newness of life and victory over sin, and finally the freedom and assurance associated with life lived on the spiritual plane. The latter part of the seventh chapter is a brief diversion from the main argument, and deals with the conflict of soul through which the Apostle passed. I shall return to this later. In its sustained argument, in its length, and in its brilliant advocacy of the doctrines it teaches, this passage, beginning with the seventh verse of the first chapter, and ending with the close of the eighth chapter of Romans, stands alone in Scripture.

In his exhortations concerning the conscious thoughts of the Christian, the apostle again lays stress on the positive rather than on the negative side. For example, in the fourth chapter of the Philippian Epistle, he gives positive directions. Anxiety is to be laid aside, and free expression of our needs is to be made in prayers to God. This is the equivalent of the mental catharsis so stressed by the Freudian school, the only difference being that free release is to be found in prayer to God rather than in talking to the psychoanalyst. This is followed by a positive promise of

the peace of God which will put a guard upon the heart and the thoughts. Finally, the apostle exhorts his readers to fill their minds with good, pure and lovely thoughts. There is no suggestion here of fighting evil thoughts. Any direct attack upon evil thoughts is almost certain to meet with failure. The more they are attacked, the more they remain central in consciousness. In communion with God in prayer, and in filling the mind with good thoughts, evil thoughts become peripheral and fade away as darkness flees before the rising sun.

It is interesting to note that, by implication, St. Paul lays great emphasis on the place of the will in controlling and directing mental processes. In the passage in Philippians already quoted he tells his readers, "In nothing be anxious"; and later he exhorts them to think on certain things. Earlier in the same Epistle he writes: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2: 5). He tells the Ephesians: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." He takes it for granted that men have the ability to control and direct their rational and emotional attitudes. This may be contrasted with the deterministic attitude of the Freudian school in its doctrine that our beliefs, emotions, and even our reasoning, derive from unconscious processes over which we have no control. As we shall see later, however, the Apostle describes evil or sinful promptings from within over which he has no conscious control.

III

Let us now consider what the Apostle has to say about spiritual insight, or spiritual intuition. The outstanding passage dealing with this subject is in the second chapter of the first Corinthian Epistle, verses 6 to 16. The late Professor Arthur S. Peake in his Commentary wrote a very clear paraphrase and commentary on this passage, part of which I quote:

"He [St. Paul] proceeds to explain how it is that the Spirit can reveal. He thoroughly explores all things, even the depths of God's being and purpose. And He alone can reveal the mind of God since He alone can know it. Just as the spirit of each man is alone able to know the thoughts and emotions within him, so only the Spirit of God can know God's innermost experiences. It is that all-searching Spirit that we have received. And this Spirit-given knowledge is not merely possessed, it is uttered in Spirit-given words, the speaker combining spiritual truth with spiritual expression. But spiritual things can only be imparted to those who are fit to receive them. Man, as he is by nature, cannot accept them; he looks on them as folly, nor has he the capacity to apprehend them, because they respond only to spiritual tests which he is unable to apply.

"But the spiritual man tests everything, for the spiritual is the higher realm and commands those beneath; whereas the natural man

has no competence to estimate the spiritual, he lives on a lower plane. No one, Scripture says, has apprehended the mind of the Lord so as to instruct Him. And since by union with Him we have His mind, we are equally beyond human judgment."

In the passage St. Paul contrasts the spiritual man with the natural man. The word "natural" occurring in this passage is a translation of the Greek word *psuchikos*, an adjectival derivative of *psuche*, the "soul". The spiritual man is he in whom the *pneuma* prevails. In the Epistles, as in the whole of the New Testament, "soul" stands for animal life, the life of the mind and the body. It is contrasted with the spiritual side of man's being. It is included in the flesh, that is that part of man's nature which he inherits from his human ancestry, as distinguished from the spirit which is derived directly from God. It is important to note that the flesh is not synonymous with the body, except where the context indicates the contrary.

The natural man is the man who lives on the temporal, material plane, whilst the spiritual man lives on the eternal, divine plane, and is in direct relationship with the Spirit of God. The natural man, living on the lower plane, has no insight into spiritual things. They belong to a different realm, and he cannot know them. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man receives spiritual insight, his eyes are opened to a new realm of truth.

Intuition or insight is somewhat similar to extra-sensory perception with which the parapsychologists have made us familiar. In the ordinary way we attain knowledge by means of our senses, our sensory perception, and our reasoning. There is another form of knowledge which has a different quality, and may be termed intuitive knowledge. It has a large affective element, as contrasted with the neutral or cold nature of much intellectual knowledge. Intuitive knowledge feels that a thing is true. In the course of psychological analysis it often happens that a patient believes certain things about himself, founding his belief on the authority of the analyst and on logical grounds. This, however, is not sufficient. One day he may suddenly gain insight, and, looking within, he sees the truth as true within himself. He has achieved intuition. This process is the result of the removal of the repression which has hitherto held things down in the subconscious or unconscious mind. When the repression is removed, the patient sees things in a new way. It is no longer a matter of intellectual acceptance of a proposition. The realization comes that it is certainly true in a way not seen before. So it is with spiritual insight. It is quite possible for a man to have a good theoretical knowledge of Scripture, and to accept the main doctrines of the Christian faith with his intellect, and yet to remain entirely lacking in spiritual apprehension. Then one day his mind becomes enlightened, and his knowledge takes on an entirely new aspect. It becomes warm and powerful instead of cold

and dead. Canon Streeter in his book entitled *Reality* gives a very fine exposition of the two kinds of knowledge in the fourth chapter, headed "Two Ways of Knowledge." He points out that we attain knowledge not only by scientific observation and classification but in addition by the inner experience which we call intuition. Speaking of the life of plants and animals he says: "How and why is it that I can take for granted as being something perfectly familiar a mysterious entity which no one has ever seen, heard, touched, measured, or weighed? I do this because I have direct experience within myself of this mysterious something; I feel it rather than know it." Later on he says: "Whenever therefore I speak of life, I am interpreting the observed fact of behaviour in the light of an inward experience of my own." It is this direct experience, this inner experience of my own, which is present in spiritual intuition. The Apostle speaks of these spiritual experiences as "things which eye saw not and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him." This is the wisdom "which none of the rulers of this world knoweth," a wisdom concerning not the future life, as some have interpreted the text, but an inner apprehension of present spiritual reality.

IV

Turning now from spiritual insight to spiritual conflict, it cannot be doubted that St. Paul regards the Christian life as a conflict from start to finish. In several autobiographical notes he describes his own experience of the conflicts through which he has passed. For example, in the first Corinthian letter, he says: "I therefore run, as not uncertainly; so fight I as not beating the air: but I buffet my body and bring it into bondage lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (9: 26, 27). Toward the close of his life, in the second letter to Timothy, he says: "I have fought the good fight" (2 Tim. 4: 7). In the seventh chapter of Romans he describes at some length the warring elements which he discovers within himself: "The good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise" (v. 19). Again: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members" (vv. 22, 23). Much divergence has arisen among theologians as to whether this passage in Romans 7 applies to St. Paul's experience before his conversion, or describes his experiences as a Christian. W. H. Griffith Thomas writes: "This chapter is to be interpreted of the unregenerated soul, not of the regenerated Christian." E. H. Gifford, in his commentary, writes: "He deals not only with what is accidental and peculiar, but with what is

essential, so that his experience is realized by every believer as his own." J. A. Beet in his commentary says that "it has been much discussed whether the section [vv. 15-25] describes a justified man or a man still unforgiven. The latter view was held by Origen, the earliest known commentator, and by the Greek Fathers generally. The former is said to have been held by Methodius, a martyr who died A.D. 310; and was adopted by Augustine and the Latin Fathers generally. It was revived in the West during the Middle Ages; and by the Reformers."

It seems to me that the conflict here described is present to a greater or lesser extent in every normal man, Christian or otherwise. Surely there is present universally in man a moral sense. It may differ in quality in men of different races and religions, and according to the upbringing received by individuals, but a sense of right and wrong is part of human mentality. Side by side with all the evil inherent in human nature, there is some realization of what is right, an ideal to be striven for, together with a sense of failure to reach that ideal, and a sense of guilt resulting from failure. Hence the conflict. "To me, who would do good, evil is present." If we translate this into modern psychological terms, we should say, with Freud, that each man has in him a super-ego, and the super-ego has a twofold character or function. In the first place it contains an ego-ideal, the sort of person I should like to be. It contains also a censoring and punitive aspect, which exerts a censorship, or repressive force, upon the crude impulses arising from the id. It punishes the individual if these impulses break through into conscious thought or action. Guilt and remorse ensue, and these may have a profound effect upon mental and physical health.

Jung has explored the dark side of personality, and describes it as the shadow self, a self not altogether bad, but alien to our ordinary waking, conscious life. When a man becomes a Christian important psychological changes occur. Through his knowledge of forgiveness, he comes to terms with the punitive aspect of his super-ego. His former guilt and remorse pass away, and he obtains deliverance from the tyranny of conscience. At the same time his ego-ideal assumes a new pattern, a pattern founded on the image of Christ which he has now introjected.

Although Christian conversion brings about a resolution of the immediate guilt conflict, and brings about a sense of peace and of fellowship with God, it seems to me that it introduces a new source of conflict into the mind. With the assimilation of a new set of values, and with the introduction of new and higher motives, there arises, as time goes on, a keener perception of the evil nature still present. The shadow self is not abolished, and a perpetual warfare ensues between the flesh and the spirit. As St. Paul puts it, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. 5: 17). It is as though two natures were present in one personality, natures described

by the Apostle as "the old man" and "the new man". The old man is at once a menace and a challenge.

This dichotomy of personality is clearly apparent in the seventh chapter of Romans. The Apostle speaks of another self, which he calls sin, which acts independently of his conscious self, and is hated by him. In modern psychological language we should describe this as the upsurging of incompletely repressed material. Such material exists in the subconscious rather than in the unconscious, but it is often activated and driven upwards by unconscious emotions and instincts. It is doubtful whether any emotional or instinctual material once present in the mind is ever annihilated. It may be completely repressed, so that it produces no further effects, or it may be transmuted into useful channels by the process known as sublimation, but it cannot be destroyed. The conflict with evil within ourselves is best resolved, not by direct attack, which often only accentuates the difficulty, but by substituting higher motives for lower ones. As higher motives occupy more and more of the conscious field, lower motives recede into the limbo of the unconscious. Moreover the deeper instincts, with their strong mental drives, have their energy directed more and more along good channels, so that the old bad channels gradually dry up from inanition. "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5: 16). By this means, love takes the place of hate and resentment, humility cancels pride, the will of God replaces self-will. Gradually the centre of gravity alters its position, so that things which were once uppermost in consciousness sink to the depths, and the spiritual and Godlike material rises to the surface. Although this process is partly unconscious, it is in part dependent upon the will of the individual. He may encourage or discourage the new spiritual principle within him, either "walking after the flesh" or "walking after the spirit."

The Christian conflict consists, therefore, not so much in direct attempts to suppress the evil within, for such direct attacks bring the evil into the centre of consciousness, and are likely to issue in defeat. There should be a continual substitution of good for evil, a continual attitude of living on the spiritual plane. Direct attack is negative, and increases the conflict; substitution is positive, and resolves the conflict by leaving no room for evil.

Finally, it is to be observed that conflict is bound up with life as we know it; it is part of its very essence. As Jung has pointed out, life without conflict would become stagnant and sterile, for it is out of conflict that achievement arises. It is the stimulus to action, and a root of progress. The crown of life is for him who has fought a good fight.

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GENESIS 10:

SOME ARCHÆOLOGICAL

CONSIDERATIONS

By

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

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SYNOPSIS

Current views of Genesis 10 and its place in the early narratives are summarized. It is suggested that the text is marked by colophons which reveal the nature and contents of each part of the list according to Japhet, Ham and Shem. Lack of evidence precludes many theories based on physical anthropology. Possible meanings of *mishpahoth* show that the relationships discussed may be physical and/or linguistic and political. Recent archaeological evidence to help in identifying the sons of Japhet, Ham and Shem is listed, including some new information for the earlier existence of some of these peoples and places. The earliest inhabitants of Babylonia and Assyria are shown to be non-Semitic though some descendants of Shem in the area later gained supremacy politically and linguistically. The whole ancient Near East always bore a mixed population. A survey of areas known to early inhabitants of Babylonia and Egypt shows that Genesis 10 conforms to their possible geographical knowledge. Accumulating evidence therefore points to a date of c. 1500 B.C. or earlier for the compilation of the "Table of Nations".

THE so-called "Table of Nations" in Genesis 10 has long roused the interest of students in various branches of scholarship. There has been a general tendency among Old Testament scholars who, consciously or otherwise, follow Dillmann and Driver, in considering the chapter "an attempt to show how the Hebrews supposed they were related through their "eponymous ancestor" Shem to the other principal nations". Since the names mentioned are not considered as real individuals the list is interpreted as having a primitive ethnological arrangement and as neither a scientific classification of the races of mankind nor an historically true account of their origins which it places about 2500 B.C. The chapter is thought to conform to a geographical knowledge current through trade about the seventh century B.C., by which time a number of the place names are referred to by Jeremiah, Ezekiel and in Assyrian inscriptions. Exponents of this school of thought, following their view of its late composition, are forced to draw attention to seeming omissions in the lists (e.g. Moab, Ammon, China, India). There are, of course, many variations on this view expressed by individual scholars to some of which I shall refer. Professor Albright has recently opted for about 1000 B.C. as the date of composition, but his reasons are, so far as I know, as yet unpublished. The

place and general purpose of this chapter within Genesis are more generally agreed. The Hebrew historian gives us sufficient introduction in the brief compass of Gen. 1-9 in which he narrows the focus from the universe to the Flood, and in the small space of Chapters 10-11 covers the long period from the Flood to Abraham. In accordance with his practice the author condenses large periods of history by the use of historical lists (*toledoth*). The text of Genesis 10 is in little doubt since we have a duplicate with few but important variations in 1 Chron. 1: 4-23.

The Arrangement of the List

The list is divided according to the sons of Noah—Shem, Ham and Japhet—and as such continues the genealogies from Gen. 5: 32, but thereafter (v. 2), in accordance with the method observed in Genesis, it notes first those branches not so intimately concerned with the narrative and thus leads to the line which is the subject of the subsequent history; i.e., the order is Japhet, Ham and Shem, Ham perhaps being considered closer to Shem through Cush, Mizraim and Canaan. The main divisions of the table are clear: (1) the descendants of Japhet (vv. 2-5); (2) the descendants of Ham (vv. 6-20); and (3) the descendants of Shem (vv. 21-31). Each of these divisions ends with a descriptive "catch-phrase" (vv. 5, 20, 31) which is reminiscent of the colophon, a literary device typical of Babylonian and Assyrian literature. The purpose of a colophon is to summarize the preceding narrative and form a link with subsequent texts which bear the same or a similar ascription and which were originally recorded on separate documents. A comparison of these phrases, together with the final colophon or sentence added after the three separate lists have been brought together (v. 32), reveals the intent of their compiler. The omission of these verses in 1 Chron. 1 supports this view that they are not part of, but comments on, the lists. For the phrase, "These are the sons of Japhet", expected in v. 5 (which some scholars would insert on the assumption of textual corruption by comparison with vv. 20, 31), we read, "From these separated off the islands and coastlands of the nations" (so *goyim* is to be translated elsewhere in this chapter; cf. v. 32). This might be a reference to additional territory, such as the European coastlands of Greece which were populated from Asia Minor. The term *me'elleh* ("from these") can be interpreted only as a separation from the main (parent) body (cf. Gen. 2: 10; 25: 23; Judg. 4: 11). For the moment it is sufficient to notice that the *common* catch-phrase begins after the purpose and content of each list with the words "in/with their land" and "with/in their nations" (each is governed by the preposition *beth*); and "with reference to their language (tongue)" and "with reference to their family relationship" (each expression being governed by the preposition *lamedh*). In each colophon the order of these terms varies and may be significant in showing the emphasis placed on each in the list.

Each has in common the feature that they end with the term "in their nations"; that is, the lists include within each branch units which have national affiliations. The list of sons of Japhet would, according to this view, emphasize the territorial or geographical ("with their lands") and the linguistic ("with their tongues") more than family relationships. Those of Ham and Shem deal more with tribal relationships and languages than with geographical relationships. In these it will be observed that the statements giving geographical detail (vv. 10-12, 19, 30) are introduced as explanations or expansions of the genealogical elements in the list. Whether or not this be the true explanation of the formation of these lists it cannot be denied that these "colophons" correctly state that each list contains elements of geography, linguistics and physical affinities. All these are essentially combined in any appreciation of "ethnology" according to ancient Near Eastern thought. Failure to appreciate the mixed nature of these documents has sometimes led to unwarranted criticism. To follow a merely geographical division (i.e. the sons of Japhet as the northern races, Ham as the southern and Shem as the central) requires some of the facts to be ignored, e.g., southern tribes such as the sons of Joktan are listed under Shem. Nor can they be simply linguistic groupings; e.g. Elamite (v. 22) so far as it can be traced is a non-Semitic language. Moreover all attempts to trace existing languages back to these three parent groups have failed and in most cases the earliest texts found in the area are pictographic and therefore there is no certainty to which group they may belong. The confusion of tongues has been further complicated by borrowings and other influences which, combined with insufficient historical data for many languages, make it at present impossible to formulate more than theories on this difficult subject. The most common views of this chapter are that it is either an early "ethnological" or late geographical survey. There is, however, little evidence given here to aid the study of physical anthropology. Too little is known of the racial types in the limited areas here mentioned for any continuous picture to be drawn. There is therefore a tendency to rely for "anthropological conclusions" on such linguistic evidence as can be recovered, but since this is scanty the chapter is seldom mentioned in modern works. It could be argued that the terms for "families" (*mishpahoth*) may not be used in early Biblical Hebrew to denote a physical relationship so much as a group of persons who are *subordinate*. Compare the only other word probably from the same root, *shiphah*, used of a maidservant or one in an inferior position (Gen. 16: 1; 2 Kings 4: 2, etc.). The word is used somewhat loosely for "clan" or any national subdivision, whether Hebrew or not, or even of animals. Since the etymology and range of this word are still uncertain, too much weight cannot be put upon this but it may point to inter-group relations other than physical and perhaps the result of influence or conquest is covered in this chapter—e.g. Semitic domination

of non-Semitic Elam (v. 22). Early ancient Near Eastern texts (especially Babylonian) frequently use the terms of family relation to denote merely political relations between nations; "brother" being freely used for allies or equals, "father" by a dependent of a more powerful nation and "children" in the case of a major nation of its dependents. This does not apply, of course, to each case in Genesis 10, but should evoke caution in interpreting possible ethnological connections dogmatically.

A further caution seems to be needed since some investigators object to the use of personal names to denote either a nation or place. A study of Near Eastern city names shows that many are named after their individual founder, whether he be thought of as a god or a mortal. Larger territories usually take their name from the principal city, or from the name given to the most numerous or powerful group of inhabitants, who themselves are often called after a prominent ancestor or leader. There can therefore be no objection on these grounds, to nations or places in Chapter 10 being named as "sons" or to the seeming interplay of individuals, places and generic terms. I personally believe that the tradition of these relationships, where they are listed in the genealogical manner ("begat"), goes back to an initial physical relationship, e.g. that the founder of the tribe of Seba was a person of that name, son of Cush, and that his name was retained to describe the line of his descendants, each of whom had his individual name. In the only *direct* reference to cities they are said to have been *built* or their geographical location is precisely given (vv. 10-12, 19-30). In all other places undoubted city-names are used only as gentilic, i.e. to denote their inhabitants (e.g. vv. 16-18). The only sure conclusion, then, from a survey of the arrangement of the list is that it contains both geographical, linguistic and ethnographical data. An appreciation, if not a verbal expression, of this fact has guided most investigators to analyse the list *seriatim*. Few have, however, followed G. Rawlinson's comprehensive work *The Origin of Nations* (1877) in trying to bring together data on individual references.

The Line of Japhet

In a comprehensive survey of the first list enumerating the sons of Japhet, E. Dhorme (*Les Peuples issus de Japhet*, 1932) shows that "the Bible groups under Japhet all those neighbours of Phoenicia, N. Syria and E. Mesopotamia who were non-Semitic in physiognomy, language and custom." He argues that the descendants of Yawan (Ionians) spread from Cyprus to Rhodes and Tartessos, while the sons of Gomer (Cimmerians) spread northward, colonizing Scythia, where they later met with the Tibarenians (Tubal) and Mushki (Meshek). The Medes, also linked with Japhet, joined up with Persia and the Eastern countries. On the sea borders Tiras (the Etruscans) were pirates until later they settled on the Tyrrhenian coast.

In general, recent archaeological discoveries, and especially the inscriptions found, support the view that the Japhetic list covers the N.E. Mediterranean-Anatolian region. The Cimmerians (Gomer) and Scythians (I/Ashguzai-Ashkenaz)¹ first appear as settlers in Eastern Anatolia, having crossed the Caucasus some time before the eighth century to infiltrate into Urartu (Armenia) but, since they do not move into the "Fertile Crescent" until the next century, no early direct reference is necessary or is made to them by the Assyrian or Hebrew historians (Ezekiel 38: 1-2, 6). Similarly the Medes do not rise to world power until the sixth century but this does not mean that they were not known earlier as an Aryan group inhabiting the Lake Van area. Shalmaneser III (859-824 B.C.) mentions them with Parsua (later Persians) in a way that implies that they are the normal (old) inhabitants of the area. It has been common to deny the existence of Ionians before the eighth century B.C. but there now seem to be undoubted references to them as *ym'n* in the Ras Shamra texts (thirteenth century B.C.). Tubal or Tabal, east of Cilicia, was annexed to Assyria in 837/6 B.C. and is probably the same as the Hittite Tipal and the earlier Tibar district through which Naram-Sin passed c. 2200 B.C. The neighbouring area of Meshek (*Mushki*) was already well known to Assyrian writers in the time of Tiglath-pileser I (c. 1116-1090 B.C.). Tiras was linked with the sea peoples by the Egyptians at least by c. 1220 B.C., since it is mentioned in a stela of Menephtah (*tw-rw-s'*) and men named *ty-w-r'-s* of the sea are depicted in Anatolian headdress among the captives of Rameses III (1198-1167 B.C.). There seems every reason then to agree with Dhorme's identification of Tiras with the Etruscans.

The next generation is represented by the sons of Gomer. As already mentioned, the Ashguzai (Ashkenaz) are linked with the Cimmerian (Gomer) influx of peoples into Eastern Anatolia. Riphath remains unknown although identified by some with Bithynia or Paphlagonia. The form of the name would agree with a location near the Black Sea and relate him with the early Cimmerians, Scythians and thus with Tubal and Meshek. Togarmah has been the subject of a number of theories, the most reasonable being an equation with Tagarama in the Carchemish district of the Upper Euphrates mentioned by the Hittite king Mursilis II in the fourteenth century B.C.

The grandsons of Japhet by Yawan are listed as Elisha (Alashia), a name for Cyprus which is frequently found in cuneiform documents in the eighteenth century B.C. (e.g. at Alalakh) and which is linked with *ym'n* in the Ras Shamra texts. Recent excavations at Enkomi-Alasia in Cyprus show that c. 1200 B.C. the "Mycenaean" group there was displaced by a non-Semitic people who are believed to be the Philistines en route for Palestine. Tarshish can be variously identified with sites on the southern coast of Asia Minor, Sardinia and Spain where there is evidence

¹ L. Piotrovicz, *L'invasion des Scythes*, p. 477.

for a Tartessos (the name may mean something like "iron-works"). Recent interpretations show that a "ship of Tarshish" carried metal ore and that the name Tarshish is to be found at a number of Near Eastern mining centres. It would seem therefore that one of these Anatolian sites (even Tarsus?) may be referred to here. Similarly Kittim denotes similar coastal areas East of Rhodes (Rodanim, 1 Chron. 1: 7; so Samaritan and Septuagint read for Dodanim in Gen. 10: 4). If we then take the sentence, "from these were the islands of the nations separated off", it would imply that the more westerly Greek mainland and islands were later peopled from the Anatolian mainland, which accords with such little evidence as we yet have for the complex question of the origin of the Greeks.

The Sons of Ham

There is now general agreement over the location of the countries founded or taking their name from the sons of Ham—Cush (Nubia-Ethiopia), Mizraim (Upper and Lower Egypt), Phut (Libya) and Canaan. Despite ingenious attempts, made in a previous paper on this subject to the Victoria Institute,¹ archaeology does not furnish evidence that the Hamites are "ethnically Semites" who spring from the area of Kish (near Babylon). Nor does Ham designate in a general way the native stock in Babylonia and Arabia. A study of Near Eastern civilizations shows that the earliest traces in Egypt are of a non-Semitic people probably directly influenced, and even founded, by the non-Semitic Sumerians of Babylon and that it was a similar people who were the first inhabitants of Canaan. Verse 7 groups the sons of Cush who are to be identified with South Arabian tribes (and places) on both sides of the Southern Red Sea area across which there is now known to have been an early and active sea traffic. That the peoples of this area were correctly considered as a mixture of both Hamitic and Semitic folks is acknowledged by the repetition of some names (e.g. Havilah on the African coast) also under Eber (Semitic nomads). In these areas which were later overrun by Semites there still survive elements in the language and customs which are "Hamitic". The Hebrews themselves imply that Babylonia, Aram, Hittites and Canaan influenced the development of their language.² Finds such as early pottery, seals and statuary known to be "Sumerian" have been found in each of the areas listed under Ham.

The list of Hamites goes into more detail when the Babylonians and Assyrians are mentioned, for they were to play an important part in Hebrew history. The method of presentation now differs perhaps because the narrative is more expanded. The early civilization of Mesopotamia is

¹ G. R. Gair, "The Places and Peoples of the Early Hebrew World", *Journal of Transactions of Victoria Institute*, 68 (1936).

² e.g., G.R. Driver, *Problems of the Hebrew Verbal System*, p. 151.

described first as the kingdom of Babylonia belonging to Nimrod. The cities of his kingdom are significantly Babylon, Erech (Warka) and Agade. These, with Eridu and Ur, are some of the earliest cities in which civilization began and whose earliest occupations are in part known to us. Babylon was so extensively reconstructed by Nebuchadrezzar in the seventh century that our knowledge of its beginnings rests upon early documents found in other cities. It had previously been the centre of power under Hammurabi (1792–1750 B.C.) and even earlier was the seat of the worship of the sun-god. Erech (Warka) has been excavated by the Germans (1936–1939, 1954), who have unearthed there examples of the earliest writing, pottery and other arts which have led to the levels being styled “Early Dynastic” or “Early Literate” period (dated c. 3000 B.C.). The earliest finds at Djemdet Nasr near Babylon are somewhat later and in turn are followed by those at Eridu near the Persian Gulf. A theory once propounded that Erech, written Unuk or Urug in Sumerian, might be the first city mentioned in the Bible, founded by and named after Enoch, and that Irad, Enoch’s son, might be the founder of Eridu, may be correct (Gen. 4: 17–18). We know of early Agade only from early texts but by the time of its hero king Sargon (c. 2300 B.C.) it was the military centre of the whole of Mesopotamia. Calneh has been considered as (1) an old name for Nippur (another Early Dynastic site); (2) a site in the Habur region identified with the Sangara district, i.e. Shinar (Isaiah 10: 9); while (3) a large majority of Hebraists, perhaps influenced by these uncertain identifications, now interpret it as “all of them” (*kullānah*) and thus find a term to include the many other early settlements otherwise unmentioned! Others argue that Shinar stands for the Southern Babylonian plain. This is by no means certainly proved, though likely if “in the land of Shinar” qualifies all the cities and not just Calneh. “From that land (referring to Shinar) went forth Asshur” (v. 11), whose name, as belonging to a god, was given both to the land of Assyria and to the oldest city in it. Nineveh and Calah (modern Nimrud) near Mosul have been excavated and soundings or observations at the lowest (earliest) levels show the presence of remains (e.g. Ninevite pottery) which can be dated back to the Djemdet Nasr period, that is soon after the founding of Erech.

Excavation at other Assyrian sites shows that civilization, as early brought here, has close affinities with the southern kingdom (e.g. Obeid pottery). Rehoboth, “city square,” and Resen (Ras Ain?) have led to varied explanations—the most probable, despite its seeming fantasy and ingenuity, being that made by G. Dossin.¹ He thinks that while translating these early lists from Sumerian into a Semitic language a scribe has merely translated some of the rarer names. *Rehoboth-ir* he interprets as the equivalent of ASH-UR since ASH is Sumerian for the *ribatu*, “square”, and UR equals *uru*, “city”. By this means Assur, the

¹ *Muséon*.

earliest known Assyrian city, is to be found in our lists. Resen he finds to be an early name for Assur also. By a similar early transposition of languages he finds Babylon in Arpachshad (v. 22). We shall return to this question in discussing the occurrence of Asshur in the list of Shem's sons. Important to an understanding of the Hamitic list is the certainty resulting from archaeological discoveries that the earliest inhabitants and languages of both Babylonia and Assyria were, contrary to popular belief, non-Semitic. The civilization before 2600 B.C. in both is "Sumerian" and the racial types found are not true Semitic. There is a direct cultural link between Assyria, Babylonia and Egypt which extended to their polytheistic religious ideas. Sidney Smith believes the Assyrians originated among the western nomads in the Habur region which was noted for its hunting and which he, with others, believes to be the Shinar of Genesis 10. At this point it be may worthy of note that Lutz suggests that Nimrod may be the Hamitic god Nergal, whose Egyptian name means "the mighty hunter". After briefly listing a number of non-Semitic groups which include the Ludim (also mentioned under Shem), and Caphtor (Crete?) and other non-Semitic sea-coast dwellers in the Nile Delta, the Hamitic list gives details of Canaan.

The pre-dispersion area of Canaan is correctly given as from Gaza and Gerar to Sidon. The eastern border being marked by Sodom and Gomorrah, this section at least must pre-date the destruction of these two cities in the early Patriarchal period (1900-1700 B.C.), for no archaizing reference would make sense to a later reader. The omission here of Tyre must also point to a date earlier than its founding in the thirteenth century, for thereafter until the sixth century it was a powerful factor in Palestinian history. Excavations at Ras Shamra (Ugarit) and neighbouring Alalakh show that the population of Syria was largely Hurrian (Horite) in the same period and spoke that language, which is non-Semitic and akin to those known to us from the countries listed under Japhet. Canaan is referred to in these cuneiform texts as an area roughly corresponding to Genesis 10: 19. A further mixture of races in later Canaan resulted from Arameans penetrating southwards probably almost in the time of Abraham; but, as subsequent Hebrew history clearly shows, the native (Hamitic) population was never completely extinguished. By the thirteenth century this Semitic influence was markedly increased, and is soon reflected in the Hebrew history after the Exodus; but of this the present description of Canaan makes no mention, being therefore probably much earlier. Of the eleven groups of inhabitants mentioned as descendants of Canaan, five are known from early texts or excavations (Sidon, Jebus, Amurru, and Hamath) while the remainder are known only from the Old Testament narrative. As with the sons of Japhet, archaeology, so far as it has revealed evidence, corresponds with the Genesis 10 list and, as the colophon in v. 20 implies, shows that the list contains both

geographical, linguistic and ethnographical data which are to the ancient mind inseparable if not indistinguishable.

The Descendants of Shem

The list of Shem's issue contains difficulties apart from obscurities in identification (e.g. Arpachshad, Lud). So far as we know, Elam was originally a non-Semitic people. The groups entitled Aram and Eber, the nomads west of the Euphrates in what was later called *mat ebiru* ("the land across [west of] the River"), were always, according to our present discoveries, Semitic in language and racial type. Similarly the sons of Joktan, in so far as they are identifiable, are Semitic tribes inhabiting Southern Arabia, the Hadramaut (an area described in v. 30), and across the Red Sea, where they lived alongside peoples of Hamitic extraction. The only difference among the sons of Eber was probably between those who were semi-nomadic and cultivated irrigated land (*palgu-Peleg*) and the pure nomads (Eber). Asshur as son of Shem may denote the Semitic element which moved north to overspread the Sumerian civilization already established there by descendants of Ham under a leader of the same name. If this is so the capital city of Asshur itself may one day be found to be of Semitic origin (though present discoveries do not support this) and all theories which seek to find its name in the Ham list are unnecessary. Since, however, Elam like early Asshur is of non-Semitic foundation most scholars have been led to view this list as purely geographical ("the central group"). This tenet cannot be sustained, since places or peoples in the same general area have been already listed under Ham, e.g. the cities of Babylonia and Assyria (east of Aram and west of Elam, vv. 10-12), and Lud also has been included in that same genealogy. Another prevalent opinion is that the list includes those nations or areas which were early dominated by Semites, but if this were the case one would expect, for example, the inclusion of Canaan and the exclusion of Elam which never totally succumbed. The simplest solution is to believe that Semites early penetrated Elam even though they were later not the dominant racial and linguistic group, whereas in "Hamitic" Assyria (and Babylonia=Arpachshad?) they later inherited the Sumerian culture. From c. 2000 B.C. onwards the whole of the "Fertile Crescent" from the Persian Gulf to Canaan became semitized. Although a few centuries later there were incursions by the Kassites (of the same stock as non-Semitic Elam) and by the Hittites (Indo-Aryans from the area of Japhet) these were temporary dominations only. All this would fit in with the general picture given us in this chapter of Semites occupying a limited area at first. This area was, at the time the list was compiled, wider than Shinar which seems to be the initial home of the "Sumerian" group. Before the time of the confusion of tongues (Gen. 11: 2), the Sumerians seem to have moved there from the East (the Iranian plateau).

The above survey accords with evidence which, if increased by future archaeological research, may eventually show that the three dominant language-groups in the ancient Near East were the Semitic, Hamitic (Sumer-Egypt), and the Japhetic (Indo-Aryan), typified by Hurrian and Hittite.

The Geographical Horizon of the Early Hebrews

The general, if confusing, picture we have gathered from a survey of these three groups of peoples of the earliest Near East can be a little clarified by examining the potential and actual knowledge of geography possessed by the inhabitants.

The predominant feature of Sumerian civilization is that men dwelt in large walled cities. Archaeological investigation has produced no proof for a gradual evolution from village to town and then city. This means that they were industrialists and exported their varied wares, while importing other things necessary for their economy. Thus we find Sargon of Agade in c. 2300 B.C. on long expeditions into Asia Minor seeking for valuable raw materials. His successors Naram-Sin and Gudea of Lagash have also left us detailed records of similar journeys to collect metals, wood and stone from the areas now identified as Anatolia and Syria. In even earlier periods the results of trade between these earliest inhabitants of Babylonia can be traced in India (Moheno-Daro and Harappa) and in Egypt. One of the earliest Sumerians, Enmerkar, has left us the detailed text of his complex business relations with the land of Aratta, bordering on the Iranian plain. The literary evidence for this early trade is supported by the discovery of archaic Sumerian type vessels near Asterabad (N. Persia) while even farther off in Anau (Turkestan) figures, models, vases, copper work, seals and beads of the same period attest Sumerian trade or influence. Similarly in the West even the jewelry of Early Crete speaks of some contact with Ur and Kish, and other goods of this epoch have found their way to the Aegean Islands, the Anatolian coasts and even as far as Macedonia. Well before the Agade dynasty there is literary evidence of the merchant colonists from Mesopotamia working at Kanish in Cappadocia. With an increasing number of cuneiform texts we can now follow in some detail the numerous journeys taken by messengers or caravans in the 19th-17th centuries between Egypt-Canaan-Anatolia-Assyria-Babylonia and Elam. One detailed tablet published by Professor A. Goetze in 1953 gives the daily stages travelled by a merchant (c. 1750 B.C.) from Larsa (near Erech) via Assur, Nineveh and up into Anatolia as far as Kanish (less than 150 miles from the Black Sea) before returning via the Euphrates and Habur river routes. The diary nature of this document could well be compared with the detailed entries of Moses' itineraries in Numbers and Deuteronomy. Texts from Ur in the same period give details of a sea trade mainly in ivory, gems and spices

between that city and Dilmun (Bahrain) and other places on the Arabian coast (Ophir). They travelled to India itself if we can judge by the seals, ivories and other objects found at Ur. It will be obvious from these references, which could be multiplied, that before c. 2000–1800 B.C. the flow of trade, and therefore of merchants and their supporting caravans and military expeditions, is abundantly attested by contemporary documents and implies a knowledge of the very area outlined in Genesis 10. It would not be unreasonable to assume that the information in this chapter could therefore be known to Abraham himself.

Similar evidence from Egyptian archaeology shows how in Early Dynastic times that country colonized Byblos in Syria and boats from the Delta anchored in Cycladic ports. Their land trade-routes stretched towards Nubia (Cush), the Red Sea coasts and along the North African coast beyond the Libya (whence Crete [Caphtor] was founded), as far as Spain. Soon after the end of the Old Empire (c. 2400 B.C.) there were expeditions into Sinai (Pepi II) doubtless to exploit its mineral deposits, and Nubia was colonized. Contacts with, and knowledge of, Asia via Syria would be strengthened by the coming of the Asiatic Hyksos c.1730 B.C. About this time the early Indo-Aryan Hurrians are also found established in North Syria and as far east as the Tigris. A few found their way to Egypt. Thus contact with the east, in addition to a known steady liaison with Babylonia, was established. It is certain from the Telf El-Amarna tablets that Pharaoh's court in 1483–1380 B.C. was receiving letters and reports from allies in and near their newly conquered Asiatic lands, the Mitanni, Babylon and Elam, and would in this way have a wide and detailed geographical knowledge. Even before this the Egyptian painters distinguished the various races (including Negroids). Since, however, we know that the spread of civilization in Africa (as in Europe and across Inner Asia) did not come until later it is not surprising that Genesis 10 should be silent on these points. It may well be that, even if information of the early beginnings of these distant peoples had reached the highly-developed centres of civilization in the ancient Near East, the compiler who brought the three lists together, adding his own note in v. 32, sought to confine attention to the so-called "white" races. It is becoming increasingly clear that the geographical information in Genesis 10 could have been available to the Egyptian court when Moses received his education there in the fifteenth or fourteenth century B.C.

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**SECULAR RECORDS IN CONFIRMATION
OF THE SCRIPTURES**

By
By D. J. WISEMAN, O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C.
(Gunning Prize Essay, 1954)

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SYNOPSIS

THE comparative use of written records for the purpose of mutual illustration or confirmation is first discussed. This may result in "direct" or "indirect" proof of one or the other. The indirect relies on a comparison of general ideas, periods of history or customs. The principal instances of "direct" confirmation from contemporary documents are listed and include a new discussion or translation of a number of Akkadian texts, including those of Aššurnāširpal II, Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II and Nebuchadrezzar found in the last five years. To illustrate the more "indirect" corroboration of Scripture a brief comparison of the early narratives of Genesis with Old Babylonian records is followed by a first translation of a Sargonid inscription compared with Isaiah 13.

THE Scriptures are a historical collection of writings on a sacred theme—the divine revelation in history. Their setting is largely in those places and periods of time otherwise known to us as the ancient Near East. Since it was in this very area that man first compiled records which have come down to us in great quantity from c. 3300 B.C., it is to be expected that, in accordance with the canons of true literary criticism, comparison can be made between those secular documents and the Biblical texts which have related subject matter. Where the subject matter is closely defined, as in historical texts, some direct comparison may be expected and fairly made whereby the accuracy of Holy Writ can be adjudged. Where it is less close, and the relation is confined to ideological, linguistic or ethnographical matters, comparison may only result in an indirect confirmation of the view, words or custom in question, though an accumulation of such comparisons can result in virtual proof of the Biblical narrative provided that they focus on a narrow enough subject or time. In addition there is the more indirect proof which is the result of influence, though in the case of the Bible this is largely confined to the spiritual sphere which is outside the scope of literary proof. Comparisons of a literary nature should not normally rest solely upon *identity* if they are to be considered conclusive proof of the veracity of the Scriptures. There is often external evidence, usually of an archaeological nature, which backs up the literary argument. For the purpose of this essay it is proposed to confine attention to those direct or indirect confirmations which are generally accepted by recent scholarship. It is, for the present purpose, assumed that the substantiation of the Biblical text itself is by sacred records since lower-critical studies have long had an abundance of material for comparison of the

Greek text and, more recently, with the Dead Sea finds, of the Old Testament as well. With the discovery of texts of all the Old Testament books, except Esther, a new era opens in these studies which have had but scant external textual or palaeographical material on which to work.

I. "DIRECT" CONFIRMATION

Assyrian Records

The expansion of the Hebrew kingdom under Solomon was made possible by the weakness of the neighbouring major powers of Egypt and Assyria. However the latter revived under the energetic Aššurnaširpal II who sought to emulate his predecessor Tiglath-pileser I (c. 1100 B.C.) by reopening the western trade routes to the Mediterranean. From the days of his successor Shalmaneser III (859–824) constant military pressure against Syria resulted in the first direct contact between Assyria and Israel. In his annals he claims the defeat of the coalition in which "Ahab of the land of Israel" was a partner (1 Kings 16: 29; B.M. 88) and had provided the largest contingent of chariots. In addition to its value in confirming the reign and existence of Ahab at this time, this Assyrian record is noteworthy in that it commences a series of references to kings of Israel and Judah in the Assyrian state records and provides us with the first chronological point in Hebrew history which can be unequivocally fixed by secular texts. From these we learn that the Hebrew text accurately preserves the spelling and order of reign of the Assyrian kings, while the Assyrian annals themselves confirm the spelling and order of the Hebrew kings' names they mention. The same accuracy can be proved from comparison with the Egyptian, Persian and Achaemenid names referred to in the Bible.¹ In each of the languages concerned it is customary for foreign names to be spelled out in full. For two hundred and fifty years Akkadian and Hebrew history is closely connected and yields many such comparisons.

Following his reference to Ahab at the Battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C., Shalmaneser III mentions "the tribute of Jehu (*Ia-u-a*) son of Omri (*Humri*)"—i.e. an Israelite—brought to him during the campaign of 841 B.C. (B.M. 118885). This text is illustrated and is the only known contemporary portrayal of a person mentioned in the Old Testament. Though the submission of Jehu is not directly mentioned elsewhere, it is confirmed by another (now lost) impression of an inscription once held in the British Museum. Among the defeated was "Hazael, king of Damascus" (1 Kings 19: 15).

The weak successors of Shalmaneser did not venture so far west and the next relevant documents are those of Tiglath-pileser III, called in Babylonian records and 2 Kings 15: 19 by his personal (non-royal) name of

¹ Cf. R. D. Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*, pp. 75ff.

Pul(u). The latter name occurs in the text B.M. 33332. A further tablet of the same king gives details of his expedition in 734 B.C. through Galilee and down the coast of Philistia in response to an appeal by Ahaz (also called Azariah—a dynastic name? for help. According to 2 Chron. 28: 16–21, he was oppressed both by the Philistines and by the Edomites, who cut Judah off from its iron-ore supplies at Elath by Akaba. The account of 2 Kings 16: 7–9 (cf. Isaiah 7–9) mentions the coercion of Judah by Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus. In his annals Tiglath-pileser mentions both these opponents and by this tablet (ND. 400)¹ substantiates the historicity of the chronicler at this point and furnishes us with an explanation of 2 Chron. 28: 20. Following the account of the war he mentions the role of the prophets (*mahke*) in the affairs of state. They are shown to intervene and render advice much as did their counterparts in Judah from the days of Samuel to Haggai. Further, Tiglath-pileser insists on the erection of Assyrian religious symbols, altars and golden royal images, as a mark of Assyrian domination over captured cities. The altar erected by Ahaz comes in the same category (2 Kings 16: 10f.). In other texts the Assyrian monarch tells how he overthrew Pekah and how Hoshea usurped the throne. Further details of Tiglath-pileser's control of Palestine after the campaign of 734 B.C. are now known from the excavations at Nimrud² and, when published shortly, will give a similar background picture of contemporary conditions there as we have from the earlier Tell el-Amarna letters for the Exodus period.

In an earlier campaign of 738 B.C. Tiglath-pileser describes the tribute received from Menahem (*Minihimmu*). Even the amount of 50 shekels of silver extorted from the leading Israelites to meet this demand is attested by contemporary Assyrian contracts. Each man was, in effect, required to pay his equivalent value as a slave to avoid deportation (2 Kings 15: 20).³ When it is realized that the historical documents which survive for this Assyrian reign are the most incomplete and broken, the extent of these parallels in confirmation of Scripture is most instructive.

It was not long before insurrection in Syria brought Shalmaneser V to besiege Samaria in 724 B.C., but he died before the city fell, as is carefully recorded in 2 Kings 17: 4f., where it is implied that his successor Sargon II took over the operations. A recently discovered prism of Sargon gives variations from the earlier Assyrian accounts of the action at Samaria. The number of captives ([2]7,280) indicates that the figures were carefully compiled. In this connection records from the places to which the prisoners were carried (e.g. Guzana, Tell Halaf) confirm that Jews were later living there. Sargon further claims the capture of "the gods in whom they trusted", an interesting and corroborative allusion to the

¹ Published in *Iraq*, 13 (1951), pp. 21–26.

² See *Iraq* 16 (1954), p. 112

³ Published in *Iraq* 15 (1953), p. 135.

polytheism of Israel and Samaria at this time, which is the subject of much comment by the contemporary Hebrew prophets. Sargon also relates the resettlement of the city of Samaria with inhabitants from other parts of his empire, so 2 Kings 17: 26, etc.

With the disruption of Israel and its assimilation into the adjacent Assyrian provincial system Judah now faced the forces of Assyria alone. This was the inevitable consequence of her geographical position guarding the road to Egypt. Sennacherib, the son of Sargon, followed the successful subjugation of the Phoenicia-Philistia coast and the Arabs east of Syria and Jordan by an attack on Judah. The Taylor and Oriental Institute (Chicago) prisms agree with 2 Kings 18: 13f. (and Isaiah 36: 1f.) in reporting that many Judean cities were captured and that Hezekiah initially paid tribute. The variations in the weight of tribute agree when due account is taken of the twin system of measures then prevailing. Both accounts agree that Jerusalem was besieged, Sennacherib's claim being that he "shut up Hezekiah in his royal city like a bird in a cage." The absence of any claim or reference to success in the Assyrian history is acquiescence in the Judaeian claim to victory. There are some difficulties in aligning the Assyrian and Hebrew accounts chronologically, but this is largely due to the brevity of the former, which omits any reference to the defeat of the Assyrian army as recorded by the Hebrews and Herodotus. Sennacherib in person claimed the capture of Lachish in 701 B.C., according to both 2 Kings 18: 14 and B.M. text No. 28 (illustrated by a relief). The brevity of the Old Testament account, which avoids details of foreign affairs irrelevant to the main purpose of its history, may also contribute to our present inability to reconcile all points in the twin narratives. It records the murder of Sennacherib (681 B.C.) immediately following the relief of Jerusalem. His manner of death is exactly confirmed by the prism-inscription of his son Esarhaddon (B.M. 121005). Many of Sennacherib's efforts, according to his personal letters, were directed against the Chaldean rebel Marduk-apla-iddina II (Merodach-Baladan) whose emissaries sought the help of Hezekiah (Isaiah 39: 1ff.) in 703/2 B.C. during the brief period in which he held the Babylonian throne and when it therefore must have appeared that further war against Assyria would be successful.

Babylonian Records

The contacts with Akkadian records during the following years yield the same convincing picture of historical accuracy on the part of the Jewish historians. Some are indirect corroborations such as Josiah's clash with Necho at Megiddo. The movement of Egyptian troops to support the last stand of the Assyrians at Harran and Carchemish is told us in the Babylonian Chronicle. It will be observed that, as so often, the non-Hebrew text aids us in the historical interpretation of Scripture (2

Kings 23: 29 is an instance of 'al with the force of 'el). The fall of Nineveh (prophesied by Zephaniah), the battle of Carchemish which dominated the thoughts of Jeremiah, and even the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadrezzar II in 597 B.C. are specifically noted in the Babylonian Chronicle texts which, outside the Old Testament, are the most objective and accurate histories known from the ancient world. It is possible to check the Bible statements that the city of Judah fell "at the turn of the year" (2 Chron. 36: 10) and that Jehoiachin was carried captive to Babylon with the spoil from the palace and temples. Tablets from Babylon (VAT 16283 and 16378) show that Jehoiachin, his family, Jewish craftsmen, and even kings of countries whose fall to the Babylonians is predicted in the Old Testament prophecies, were prisoners there in the years 595-570 B.C., to which these documents are dated.¹ Such detailed reference to Judah in the extant Neo-Babylonian texts make it a fair assumption that should other chronicles of Nebuchadrezzar or Evil-Merodach (*Amel-Marduk*) be recovered we would find some direct reference to a major event like the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and to Evil-Merodach's change of heart towards Jehoiachin (Jeremiah 52: 31). Inscribed seals, important records of the past, attest Gedaliah in Judah; and Babylonian tablets explain the once controversial existence of Belshazzar, the co-regent with Nabonidus at the time of Cyrus' entry into Babylon in 539/8. That far-sighted Persian has left us details of his policy of religious toleration which encouraged the restoration of the holy places formerly destroyed or neglected by the Babylonians (B.M. 90,920).

Ancient Historians

For the period of history surveyed the Old Testament is supplemented and often confirmed by other secular records, notably the writings of Josephus. Since, however, his reliability has only recently been attested by those same texts which verify the Scriptures it would be perhaps out of place to examine his evidence in detail. Suffice it to say that if we can now accept his histories (*Antiq. Jud.* and *Bell. Jud.*), as scholars do increasingly,² we have a fruitful source of investigation, for even if he is basing his work on Hebrew manuscripts which underlie our own Biblical text, his notes and interpretations, not to mention addenda, are important. Another ancient historian who is being increasingly proved trustworthy is Herodotus, whose direct Biblical references are, however, fewer.³

The New Testament Period

Nor does the emphasis placed upon the Old Testament in the foregoing pages mean that a similar study of the New Testament would not produce

¹ Cf. *Journal of Transactions of Victoria Institute*, 82 (1950), pp. 11f.

² Cf. C. J. Gadd, *The Fall of Nineveh*.

³ Cf. O. E. Ravn, *Herodotus' Description of Babylon* (1942).

like confirmation of its historical reliability. Here the "purely historical" matter is less, for the main Gospel details have no place in secular records. At some points we find external help in checking chronology. Josephus names Herod Antipas as the ruler of Galilee in the days of Jesus Christ (Mark 6: 14-29). Light is thrown on the vexed question of the census at the time of our Lord's birth by the British Museum papyrus which indicates that a census for poll-tax took place in Egypt, and probably Palestine, every fourteen years. Taken with another naming P. Sulpicius Quirinius as legate in Syria in A.D. 6, we clearly have a census falling in the lifetime of Herod the Great. Similar cross-references can be made between Biblical and Greek texts (e.g. Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene, later than the king of the same name who died in 34 B.C.). A study of the writings of Luke, who paid attention to historical detail, reveals specific confirmatory contacts with secular texts.¹ For example, Gallio's proconsulship of Achaëa (Acts 18: 12) has been confirmed and dated by one inscription. The use of special terms, such as "politarch" at Thessalonica (Acts 17: 5ff.) and "asiarch" at Ephesus (Acts 19: 31), has been authenticated. Even inscribed Jewish and Roman coins are a testimony to the historical trustworthiness of the New Testament and its chronology.

II. "INDIRECT" CONFIRMATION

It has been my purpose thus far to lay some stress on those places where direct confirmation of the Scriptural narrative has been received. No allusion has been made to the places where it has not been possible to harmonize the Biblical with external evidence. Moreover, Sir Frederic Kenyon has reminded us that the discovery of Assyrian and Egyptian records aroused much criticism of the Old Testament narratives and gave occasion for attacks on religion in general (*The Bible and Archaeology*, p. 19). For this reason it is neither right nor logical to deduce that our present state of knowledge gives an over-all confirmation of the Scriptures. By far the largest part of the Bible is of such a nature (e.g. not confined to one historical setting or interpretation, and dealing with spiritual matters) that it will never be subject to what are called "scientific" correlations. However it still remains true to say that wherever the *facts* both of Scripture and of the related science are clearly understood there is no disagreement. Nor must we assume that most of the corroborations of the Bible are direct. Much of the mass of documents from the ancient Near East goes to build up our appreciation of the languages, customs and geographical backgrounds of the various races mentioned in the Bible. As a result it is increasingly possible to check the narratives with contemporary data and, where it is in keeping, we can deduce a general probability, often amounting to reasonable confirmation, of the veracity of the Bible itself. It is with this area of general or "indirect" confirmation that I now wish to deal.

¹ Cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (1951).

The Early Biblical Narratives

The first eleven chapters of Genesis, despite internal indications that they claim to be early written "histories",¹ are often lightly dismissed as "fables" or "myths". There is, however, a modern school of thought which sees in any myth supported by early and widespread evidence a true, if slender, historical origin. Akkadian literature has a definite story of Creation (the *enuma elis* series) in several versions from c. 1800 B.C., but probably stemming from a Sumerian original, of which fragments survive.² In this they relate their view of the origin of the universe and man. The whole is permeated by a crude polytheism. For them the whole creation was a divine act *e nihilo*. The earth when first made was covered with a watery chaos; light is mentioned before the existence of the luminaries; heaven and earth are a clear cut division of the firmament; the luminaries precede the creation of plant and animal life. Finally comes the special and deliberate creation, made from the earth's clay and blood and called Man, whose primary duty is the service of the gods. These similarities with the Genesis account have to be rescued from a host of irrelevant matter which clutters up the ancient poem. They have led to the baseless assumption that the Biblical version is in some way dependent on the Babylonian. It could never have evolved from it, for the differences are too great. The similarities could well result from the clearer Genesis version and the Babylonian "myth" relating back to a common element—the historical fact.

The hall-mark of civilization for the earliest inhabitants of Mesopotamia was the use of language and literature and of the arts. This is abundantly revealed as a result of excavations in which civilization is found to spring "ready made" (c. 4000–4500 B.C.). In the earliest (Proto-literate and pre-Agade) texts we already find reference to animal husbandry (cf. Genesis 2: 19–20; 4: 3), city construction (4: 17; 10: 11), musical instruments (4: 21) and the working of iron and copper (4: 22). Even the Genesis list of ten pre-flood patriarchs is paralleled by a document from Kish written c. 2000 B.C. (W.B. 444). The ten antediluvians are accepted, on the basis of their extant inscriptions, as historical by most authorities,³ though the ages to which they lived, totalling reigns of 431,000 years, are not! Similar traditions of longevity survive in Berossus' account of the same period and even in the Bible, though with more moderate figures. In our ignorance of the reason for the great individual ages, we must not overlook the historical support given to Genesis 5. For the seventh in the Babylonian list has a name which can be translated "the shepherd raised up to the heavens"—a reminder of Enoch, the seventh in the

¹ Cf. P. J. Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis*, chapters v–vi.

² Cf. A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (1951).

³ Cf. S. N. Kramer, *Emmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* (1952).

Biblical list, who was taken up to God. Both the Biblical and Babylonian lists agree in there being ten patriarchs, of whom the last passed through the flood.

As with the creation epics, the early Babylonians wrote their version of the Flood. For them the creation of their predecessors and of their environment was a historical act to which they could look back. Similarly the Flood, recorded in the eleventh chapter of the Epic of Gilgamesh, which set out an individual's search for eternal life, was to them, as to archaeological evidence also, an event which cut right across early history. As the story unfolds it is impossible not to be struck by resemblances with Genesis 6-9, even though the majority of the text is far different. Details are given of the construction of the ark to accommodate both men and beasts; the flood waters come from above and below; birds are released to test how far the waters have receded before the ark finally rests on one of the mountains of Urartu (so Gen. 8: 4). It can be argued along the same lines as with the Creation story that, coupled with the archaeological evidence found at Ur and Kish and interpreted by the discoverers to be the "Flood of Sumerian legend, which is also the Flood of the Book of Genesis", this "myth" also reflects the historic fact. Professor Heidel has concluded, "As in the creation epic we still do not know how the Biblical and Babylonian narratives of the deluge are related historically. The available evidence proves nothing beyond that there is a genetic relationship between the Genesis and Babylonian versions. The skeleton is the same in both cases, but the flesh and blood and, above all, the animating spirit are different. It is here that we reach the most far-reaching divergencies between the Hebrew and Mesopotamian stories."¹

The Patriarchal Period

The discovery of the archives from Nuzi and Mari has brought about a revolution of thought upon the Patriarchal period of the early second millennium B.C. Seventy thousand cuneiform documents have combined to give us a detailed view of the social and legal background of these times. Since they have been the subject of numerous detailed studies the evidence is not repeated here.² The conclusions of two leading Old Testament scholars may be taken to be the general verdict of modern scholarship on this part of Genesis. Professor W. F. Albright writes, "It is now becoming increasingly clear that the traditions of the Patriarchal Age preserved in the book of Genesis reflect with remarkable accuracy the actual conditions of the Middle Bronze Age, and especially of the period between 1800-1500 B.C." And Professor H. H. Rowley: "It is therefore

¹ A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (1945), p. 268.

² Cf. *Journal of Transactions of Victoria Institute*, 82 (1950), pp. 4f.

not because scholars of today begin with more conservative pre-suppositions than their predecessors that they have a much greater respect for the Patriarchal stories than was formerly common but because the evidence warrants it." More recently a study by Professor M. R. Lehmann¹ has shown how applicable are the Hittite Laws to a study of Abraham's negotiations for the cave of Machpelah recorded in Genesis 23. It has been customary to suppose that the negotiations centred round the price only and that the first polite rejection whereby Ephron, a Hittite, offered the use of part of the property was countered by Abraham's request for the outright purchase of the cave. Ephron, with oriental politeness, then offered it as a free gift; to this Abraham, requiring the title, shows his desire to make a money payment (v. 13). The negotiations are concluded when Ephron names his price of 400 shekels, which Abraham immediately and willingly pays. Now the current Hittite laws require any purchaser or inheritor of a *whole* estate to perform certain feudal services. It would appear that Abraham's second request was only for the cave "at the edge of the field" (v. 9). Lehmann therefore concludes that which while Abraham wished to avoid unnecessary obligations Ephron seized the opportunity to sell the whole property. The Hebrew *nathan* is used in its normal contemporary sense of "sell" throughout this chapter. According to this interpretation the negotiations revolved round the question of full title and consequent responsibilities, the exact details of which are omitted from the Biblical account as they are from contemporary legal texts, rather than over the price.

It has long been pointed out that this chapter remarkably preserves the correct legal terminology of the day with which we are now familiar from the many Old Babylonian real estate contracts which have been discovered. The purchase price was paid, or rather "weighed", since these were pre-coinage days, and designated as silver of the merchants (=Old Babylonian *kaspim sa tamqarim*). The transfer of ownership was made by the transfer of the silver before witnesses. The contract, which has probably been translated into our present Hebrew text, correctly designates the boundaries of the property and includes the trees within the area transferred—the latter is a distinctive feature of Hittite business documents. As Dr. Lehmann has rightly emphasized, "We have thus found that Genesis 23 is permeated with intimate knowledge of intricate subtleties of Hittite laws and customs correctly corresponding to the time of Abraham and fitting in with the Hittite features of the Biblical account. With the final destruction of Hattusas about 1200 B.C. these laws must have fallen into oblivion. This is another instance in which a late dating must be firmly rejected. Our study again confirms the authenticity of the 'background material' of the Old Testament, which makes it such

¹ *BASOR*, Feb. 1953, pp. 15ff.

an invaluable source for the study of all the social, economic and legal aspects of the period of history it depicts.”

Similar special studies have been made of various Old Testament subjects where there is external evidence to show that the presence of ideas or terms which are only valid for the historical setting in which they occur. Such studies as Yahuda on Egyptian words in Genesis 22–50, though not accurate in some details and over-stressed in others, help towards the cumulative corroboration of Scripture which is all that can be expected from these sources at the present time. Other studies may be termed as corrective corroboration: for example, the excellent study made by J. P. Free to show that the commonly accepted criticism of the mention of camels with Abraham in Egypt was inaccurate (Genesis 12: 16). Illustrated Egyptian records dated just after 3000 B.C. and similar evidence from Mesopotamia from 3200 B.C. bear witness to the camel's presence even though it is rarely mentioned in texts before the twelfth century B.C.

Assyrian Evidence

Another example of the way secular records illustrate and confirm the sacred text comes from an Assyrian inscription of Sargon II (722–705 B.C.) found during the excavations at Nimrud in 1953. The text is unique in that, unlike most royal annals, it disregards chronology and weaves the events of the king's reign into a literary composition of unusually high merit in early Semitic literature outside the Hebrew scriptures. Sargon's description of the desolation of Babylon is written soon after his operations against Merodach-Baladan in 710–709 B.C., that is, towards the end of Isaiah's ministry in Judah. I translate the relevant passage as follows:—

“ At that time the track which leads from . . . to approach Babylon, the cult-centre of the gods Enlil and Ninlil, was not open, the road was impassable. The country had become a desert from days long past and any passage through the centre of it was impracticable and the way most difficult and there was no prepared path. In the inaccessible tracts thorn, thistle and jungle prevailed over all. Dogs and jackals assembled in their recesses and bunched together in herds like sheep. In this desert country Aramaeans and Suti, tent-dwellers, treacherous fugitives and plundering folk had pitched their dwellings and put a stop to any passage through the area. There were scattered settlements which for a long time had been let fall into ruin. There were no channels or furrows over the cultivated ground which was criss-crossed (with dried up irrigation works) like a spider's web. Their rich meadows had become like a wilderness, their cultivated grounds were bereft of the sweet harvest song and grain was quite cut off”

The expression "thorn and thistle over all" uses an identical expression to the divine curse upon the ground as a result of sin, following the fall of man (Genesis 3: 18; Hosea 10: 8). How striking this is when read in connection with the almost contemporary prophecy of Isaiah concerning the fall of Babylon, which state was then but an insignificant part of the Assyrian empire! The translation of Isaiah 13: 19-22 is itself a testimony to the increased philological knowledge now possible after a century of work on the Semitic languages in which Hebrew has played its own part in linguistic interpretation, only to receive far more help and clarification itself from the comparative languages.

"And Babylon, the choicest of kingdoms, the most splendid of the Chaldean beauty-spots, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited nor be dwelt in from one generation to another: neither shall the Arab pitch his tent there, nor shall shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts shall lie in groups there and their houses be full of jackals, and ostriches shall dwell there; goats shall stretch themselves out there. Moles(?) shall be in their desolated places and lizards in their (once) luxurious palaces. Her appointed time is near to come and her days will not be prolonged."

The same excavations at Nimrud (Assyr. Kalhu=Calah of Genesis 10: 11) yielded a large stele inscribed by Aššurnasirpal II in 879 B.C. to commemorate the opening of his new palace and city. He records the population at the time as 69,574 persons living within the four-mile circuit enclosed by the city walls. This certainly lends credibility to the figure given in Jonah (4: 11) of 120,000 for the inhabitants of Nineveh who lived in a city whose walls can still be traced for nine miles.¹

III. CONCLUSION

The examples given to illustrate the close relation of early secular records with the Bible serve to show how the latter is thereby explained, illustrated and in many cases confirmed. The full force of the evidence which substantiates the "holy oracles of God" could only be realized or presented in a detailed study which combined with the instances of direct or indirect confirmation, on the basis of selected contemporary written records here given, other forms of records which have a bearing on the Scriptures. The ancient arts and sciences, the genius of Semitic language, the movement of God in the history of His people, the influence of the written Word on our civilization and its literature, and many other forms of records all combine to present a testimony which, were we to study it in detail, might bring additional proofs of the truth of God's Word. Withal the paramount proof will be a spiritual one, written in the lives of individuals and therefore to be "known and read of all men".

¹ See *Iraq* 14 (1952), p. 28.

927TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 14th FEBRUARY, 1955

REV. H. L. ELLISON, B.A., B.D., in the Chair

TRENDS IN NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

By

F. F. BRUCE, M.A.

THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

TRENDS IN NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

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SYNOPSIS

Some radical trends are mentioned, in particular that of the "demythologizing" school. Then, after a glance at such preliminary disciplines as New Testament linguistics, textual study and source criticism, the most striking trend of New Testament interpretation to-day is said to be that which discerns its basic unity in the saving message to which it bears witness. The implications of this unity are surveyed in their bearing on the Author of salvation, the way of salvation, and the heirs of salvation.

WHEN I was first invited to prepare this paper for the Institute, the suggestion was made that I should deal with *conservative* trends in New Testament interpretation. It seemed better, however, not to restrict the scope of the paper in this way, since exclusive concentration on one set of trends might give a distorted impression of the situation as a whole.

Conservative and Radical Trends

In fact, if we look at New Testament studies in this country during recent years, we do (with certain outstanding exceptions) get a generally conservative picture. But "the truth is that, while most British work is highly conservative . . . , on the Continent we are witnessing an odd combination—often in one and the same scholar—of a positively reactionary dogmatic theology and a New Testament criticism which is still very largely destructive."¹ In America, the older liberalism is still more firmly entrenched in Biblical studies than it is either in the British Isles or in Europe. A good popular example of the American position may be found in *The Interpreter's Bible*, which consists of the texts of the A.V. and R.S.V. with exegetical and expository commentaries, to be published in twelve large volumes, six for the Old Testament and six for the New.

¹ G. H. C. MacGregor in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 5 (1952), pp. 197 f., in a review of A. M. Hunter, *Interpreting the New Testament 1900-1950* (London, 1951). Immediately before the words quoted above, MacGregor says: "It is, e.g., only when most Continental work and much American is completely ignored that one can claim that 'most scholars would agree' that 'Acts is the work of Luke' (p. 111), or that in connexion with the Fourth Gospel 'the conservative position does not look nearly so indefensible as it did, say, twenty years ago' (p. 85)."

"The scores of contributors of introductory articles or of exegetic and homiletical commentary represent virtually every large Protestant church in America and Britain, as well as every critical position from extreme 'left' to right of centre."¹

Among those trends which are far from being conservative, the one which calls for first comment is the "demythologizing" school led by Rudolf Bultmann of Marburg.² This school maintains that the record of God's saving activity in the New Testament is presented in a form presupposing a mythological conception of the universe which obscures the true challenge of the gospel to modern man. This "mythological" conception is not simply a question of the three-decker pre-Copernican universe which supplies a framework for early statements of Christian faith; it involves the very essence of the saving message itself. Bultmann and others, anxious to remove from the presentation of the gospel every stumbling-block except the stumbling-block of the cross, propose to "demythologize" the New Testament *kerygma* and restate it in terms of contemporary existentialism. While Bultmann's personal faith in Jesus as the Word made flesh safeguards his own Christian position, it is not clear that the crucial decision to which his restatement of the gospel challenges modern man has any essential connection with historic Christianity. For all his evangelistic intention, the practical effect of his "demythologizing" treatment of the New Testament message is only too likely to be the throwing out of the baby with the bath-water. But it is salutary to be reminded that our presentation of the gospel, to be effective, must be intelligible and relevant to our hearers, although what we present will cease to be the gospel unless it retains not only the offence of the cross in an existentialist sense but also proper emphasis on the historic event which took place once for all "under Pontius Pilate".

Bultmann's name is associated also with a thorough-going historical scepticism which can find no certainty that the things recorded of Jesus in the Gospels took place as the narrative says, since the narrative reflects the faith of the early Christians rather than facts about the life and character of Christ.³ In this he commands the agreement of several English theologians who do not share his views on "demythologization". But this pessimism is unwarranted, and if it were not corrected its tendency would be disastrous. It is good to quote the forthright attack on this

¹ W. F. Albright in *BASOR*, No. 127 (October, 1952), p. 32. "Farthest to the 'right'," he says, "are the contributions of the reviewer and his pupils; farthest to the 'left' are contributions reflecting typical O.T. and N.T. positions a generation ago."

² See *Kerygma and Myth*, edited by H. W. Bartsch and translated by R. H. Fuller (London, 1953), containing essays by Bultmann and others. A brief account of the points at issue is given by Ian Henderson, *Myth in the New Testament* (London, 1952).

³ See Bultmann's *Jesus and the Word* (Eng. tr., London, 1935), p. 8.

defeatist attitude by such an old-fashioned liberal as the late C. J. Cadoux: "That the facts are unascertainable, or that they are totally indistinguishable from the beliefs held in the Church, I roundly deny—and I deny it on historical grounds, which any investigator can test for himself."¹

Quite different from this historical scepticism is such a radical reconstruction of New Testament history as we find, for example, in S. G. F. Brandon's *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (London, 1951). This work, brilliant in its learning and imaginative reinterpretation (but, in my judgment, too often brilliantly erratic), dates almost all the non-Pauline parts of the New Testament after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and traces the influence of that event in them one way or another. He finds that Alexandrian Christianity played a much greater part in the formation of certain New Testament books than is usually supposed; but if his conclusions are accepted, we must believe that most of the New Testament writings are thoroughly tendentious compositions which let slip the real truth of the matter only occasionally and accidentally. Those who dissent most wholeheartedly from his conclusions, however, will admit that such a challenge to conservative beliefs is a welcome and invigorating stimulus.

Preliminary Disciplines

Only the most cursory reference can be made in this paper to some preparatory lines of study on which New Testament interpretation must be based. The study of the language of the New Testament has been carried forward materially of late by the appearance of C. F. D. Moule's *Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge, 1953). The third volume of J. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*²—the volume dealing with syntax—has been entrusted, since Dr. Howard's untimely death in 1952, to Dr. H. G. Meecham, who is no novice in Hellenistic studies.

Textual criticism continues to be pursued by the small band of scholars who have the requisite aptitude and equipment. We are being given an increasingly clear picture of the state of the New Testament text in the second half of the second century. A fine example of the sort of work that is being carried on may be seen in the 1946 Schweich Lectures on the *Corpus Paulinum* by G. Zuntz, recently published under the title *The Text of the Epistles* (London, 1953). Special attention is paid here to the codex P 46, the oldest manuscript of the Pauline Epistles, which itself may be as early as the end of the second century. Whether it will be possible in the foreseeable future to press this research back into the first century is not

¹ *The Life of Jesus* (Pelican Books, 1948), p. 211.

² Vol. I (Prolegomena) was published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, in 1906, Vol. II in 1929.

certain; we must, however, always reckon with the possibility of further illuminating discoveries. The recent finds in the Judaean desert (to be precise, those from Khirbet Mird) have included some textual material for the New Testament, of date between the fifth and eighth centuries. Much later manuscript material has been made accessible in microfilm form as a result of American expeditions in 1949 and 1950 to the chief ancient libraries of the Near East.¹ The possibility of the survival of genuine readings in later manuscripts when they have disappeared from earlier and generally more trustworthy copies is taken seriously by textual scholars to-day; and the widest possible range of evidence is being covered by those who, on an international footing, are at present preparing a completely new and comprehensive critical apparatus to the Greek New Testament, using the Byzantine text as the most convenient base.²

It is impossible within present limits to say anything worth while about source criticism, another basic discipline. Both documentary analysis and form criticism make it plain that the main outlines of the primitive apostolic message, of the teaching of Jesus and of the doctrine of His person and work, had taken shape in the period before our written Gospels, and indeed before the earliest of the New Testament writings. Some new lines of approach, such as those which detect intricate (not to say fantastic) patterns in the Gospels³ or those which account for their structure in calendrical terms,⁴ do not command confidence. When Vincent Taylor's monumental commentary on *The Gospel according to St. Mark* appeared in the Macmillan series in 1952, some devotees of these newer lines of approach described it as marking the end of an era. It is safe to say that his commentary will be used and valued when much work of the passing fashion is forgotten.

The Unity of the New Testament Message

Let us leave these preliminary matters, and come to some main lines of interpretation. Among these, there is none so important (I think) as the increasing recognition of the unity of the New Testament.⁵ This in turn is coming to be recognized as part of a still wider unity—that of the

¹ See K. W. Clark, "Exploring the Manuscripts of Sinai and Jerusalem", *The Biblical Archaeologist* 16 (1953), pp. 22 ff. Microfilms of the MSS. photographed may be obtained at cost price from the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

² See the volume of *prolegomena* to this work, *New Testament Manuscript Studies: The Materials and the Making of a Critical Apparatus*, ed. M. M. Parvis and A. P. Wikgren (Chicago, 1950).

³ Cf. A. M. Farrer, *A Study in St. Mark* (London, 1952); *St. Matthew and St. Mark* (London, 1954).

⁴ Cf. P. Carrington, *The Earliest Christian Calendar* (Cambridge, 1952). A more persuasive calendrical approach, relating the order of the Fourth Gospel to the festival lessons in the triennial synagogue lectionary, is made in a thesis (thus far unpublished) by Miss A. E. Guilding; in this case we have the *datum* that the central part of this Gospel is constructed around the succession of Jewish festivals.

⁵ Cf. A. M. Hunter, *The Unity of the New Testament* (London, 1943).

whole Bible.¹ Such a unity can be recognized and maintained only when the writings of both Testaments are viewed in the sense of our Lord's words quoted in John 5 : 39, "these are they which bear witness of me." This recognition of the basic unity of the message of the Bible goes hand in hand with the contemporary revival of Biblical theology.² That this revival is in some degree dictated by the failure of the older liberalism to cope with the predicament in which mankind finds itself to-day is probable enough. "The climate of thought has so changed," as the Bishop of Durham has put it, "that theologians commonly see it as their function not to demonstrate the validity of the Christian faith by the methods of contemporary secular thought so much as to study the Biblical revelation in its own categories and to draw from it some light to guide our steps in a dark world where diabolical forces are seeking whom they may devour."³

The unitive theme of the New Testament is its recital of the good news of salvation, focused in the person and work of Jesus the Messiah—and the Old Testament has its own contribution to make to this recital.

In 1952 C. H. Dodd produced a book entitled *According to the Scriptures*, with sub-title "The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology". Here he examines the use of Old Testament quotations as "testimonies" in the apostolic preaching, and finds that, far from being a haphazard anthology of proof-texts adduced for their verbal aptness, these quotations exhibit "the rudiments of an original, coherent and flexible method of exegesis" which had regard to the historical Old Testament context and involved an interpretation of history as subject to the sovereignty of God, whose "impact upon human society reveals itself negatively as judgment upon human action, positively as power of renewal, or redemption. This two-fold rhythm of the pattern of history finds characteristic expression in terms of death and resurrection." And he suggests that if we look for the "creative mind of no ordinary spiritual and intellectual quality" from which Paul and John and the author of Hebrews alike received this "most original and fruitful process of rethinking the Old Testament", we need not look farther than the mind of Christ. The implications of this suggestion are of the most far-reaching importance.

Nearly twenty years ago Professor Dodd gave us one of the best-known works on the unity of the New Testament message in *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (London, 1936). There he demonstrated

¹ Cf. H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible* (London, 1953).

² Cf. the encyclopaedic *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, successive volumes of which have been published at Stuttgart since 1933; some of the most important articles have been translated into English as separate books in the series *Bible Key Words*, published by A. and C. Black, London. Other products of this movement are the series of *Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments* published by the Zwingli Verlag in Zürich and *Studies in Biblical Theology* published by the S.C.M. Press, London.

³ A. M. Ramsey, *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology* (Cambridge, 1951), p. 111.

that the main outline of the apostolic gospel—the *kerygma*—underlies the Gospels (providing in particular the thread on which the separate sections of Mark are strung¹), the primitive speeches in Acts, the Pauline letters, Hebrews, and 1 Peter. One corollary of this was the refutation of the view that the gospel of redemption by the death and resurrection of the incarnate Son of God was a Pauline creation, drawn in part from Hellenistic mystery cults. It confirmed Paul's own assertion that, so far as the record of the saving events was concerned, his preaching was in complete agreement with that of the other apostles². It implies, indeed, that this common proclamation rests upon the historic events themselves—and upon Christ's own interpretation of the events³.

Anything that can be said here about Dodd's major work, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1953), must be totally inadequate. It is one of those books which must be lived with to be properly appreciated. When he gave his inaugural lecture as Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1938, he said: "I am disposed to think that the understanding of the Fourth Gospel is not only one of the outstanding tasks of our time, but the crucial test of our success or failure in solving the problem of the New Testament as a whole. The Fourth Gospel may well prove to be the keystone of an arch which at present fails to hold together."⁴ But however we may or may not follow Professor Dodd in his endeavour to put the keystone in place, and whatever we may think of his view that John is concerned to commend the Christian message to "a wide public consisting primarily of devout and thoughtful persons . . . in the varied and cosmopolitan society of a great Hellenistic city such as Ephesus under the Roman Empire" in terms which would be familiar to them, this at least is plain throughout the work: that what John commends to his readers at the end of the first century is the authentic gospel. The evangelist remains true to the apostolic preaching; he "has deliberately set his feet firmly upon the ground of the common Christian tradition"; and he insists all the more on the *agape* character of the new relation into which believers enter with God and with one another

¹ This particular argument is developed in Dodd's article "The Framework of the Gospel Narrative", *The Expository Times* 43 (1931-2), pp. 396 ff. (reprinted in his volume of *New Testament Studies* [Manchester, 1953], pp. 1 ff.).

² 1 Cor. 15: 11. The summary in verses 3-7 appears to be an extract from the outline of the gospel as Paul first preached it at Corinth, nor did this outline originate with him; he himself had "received" it in turn. Cf. 1 Cor. 11: 23 for the beginning of another extract from the *kerygma*; there, too, the same terms for "receiving" and "delivering" are used.

³ Cf. A. M. Hunter, *Interpreting Paul's Gospel* (London, 1954), for the latest exposition of the view that Paul derived his gospel from Christ. This book presents the Sprunt Lectures for 1954, delivered in Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia; the same thesis was defended in the Sprunt Lectures for 1921 by J. G. Machen in *The Origin of Paul's Religion*—a work which ought to be better known on this side of the Atlantic.

⁴ C. H. Dodd, *The Present Task of New Testament Studies* (Cambridge, 1938), p. 29.

“because the crucial act of *agape* was actually performed in history, on an April day about A.D. 30, at a supper table in Jerusalem, in a garden across the Kidron valley, in the headquarters of Pontius Pilate, and on a Roman cross at Golgotha. So concrete, so actual, is the nature of the divine *agape*; yet none the less for that, by entering into the relation of *agape* thus opened up for men, we may dwell in God and He in us.”¹

Three Strands

In considering the unity of the New Testament in much contemporary interpretation, it will be useful to distinguish (as others have done) three strands. The threefold cord of the record of salvation which runs through all Scripture and holds it together comprises its witness to the Author of salvation, to the way of salvation, and to the heirs of salvation.

The Author of Salvation

At one time it was regarded as almost the inevitable duty of a student of the New Testament in general, and of the Gospels in particular, that he should crown his studies by writing a *Life of Jesus*. Some of these *Lives* of earlier days acquired great fame; a few, indeed, were accorded by the generation to whose condition they spoke something like the status of a fifth Gospel. More recently the tendency has been to agree with the late Dean Inge, who was once invited to write a *Life of Christ* for a popular series and replied on a postcard: “As there are no materials for a life of Christ, I regret that I cannot comply with your request.” No doubt he meant that, since we have practically no information for nine-tenths of our Saviour’s life, a biography in the ordinary sense is out of the question. Those who have succumbed to the historical scepticism mentioned earlier in this paper feel that biographical material is too scanty even for the remaining tenth. And perhaps others realize that the man who assays to write a *Life of Jesus* may divulge more of his inner self than he intends: “it may be said of all the theological schools of thought: By their *Lives* of Jesus ye shall know them”²—and, we may add, it may equally well be said of individual writers. Yet there are some who experience an inward compulsion to undertake the task. “There is nothing our world needs more than a fresh and truer vision of the Life of lives”, says A. M. Hunter,³ who has himself provided the groundwork for such an enterprise in *The Work and Words of Jesus* (London, 1950). And now Vincent Taylor, after many years of intensive and accurate Gospel study, has given us an affirmative answer to the question “Could a Life of Jesus be written?” in the

¹ On general questions raised by the Fourth Gospel see P. H. Menoud, *L'évangile de Jean d'après les recherches récentes* (Paris and Neuchatel, 1947).

² T. W. Manson, in *The Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. C. W. Dugmore (London, 1944), p. 92.

³ *Interpreting the New Testament 1900–1950*, p. 60.

enlarged version of the second series of his Speaker's Lectures at Oxford: *The Life and Ministry of Jesus* (London, 1954). These scholars believe, and rightly so, that it is not so impossible as others have maintained to base a consecutive narrative of the public ministry of our Lord on the New Testament records.

But, granted that this is so, how are we to interpret His life and ministry? Here the primary task is to discover what His own interpretation was, and it is impressive to mark what appears to be a growing body of opinion in support of the view that the prophetic portrait of the obedient and suffering Servant of Yahweh, sketched in various places in the second half of the Book of Isaiah, determined our Lord's understanding and fulfilment of His mission. For a recent exposition of this viewpoint, T. W. Manson's little book *The Servant-Messiah* (Cambridge, 1953) may be commended.¹ All the "messianic" figures and functions of Old Testament revelation and expectation meet in Him, but it is through His accomplishment of the mission of the Servant that they too find their fulfilment. It was thus, too, that He made possible the realization of the good news announced in His earliest preaching: "The kingdom of God has come near."²

A widely accepted interpretation of Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God represents His message as being from the outset "The kingdom of God has arrived" (rather than "has come near") and speaks of His ministry as "realized eschatology"—an expression first used, apparently, by C. H. Dodd in *Parables of the Kingdom* (London, 1935), p. 51. No doubt our Lord proclaimed, at the beginning of His Galilean ministry, that the time of fulfilment had come (Mark 1:15), and in their exposition of "realized eschatology" Dodd and others³ have taught us much that is helpful and illuminating in itself as well as being a corrective to an exaggerated futurism; but whether or not it can still be said that a wholly "realized eschatology" destroys "the cruciality of the cross",⁴ as it has been accused of doing in its earlier expression, this at least is true, that it fails to take adequate account of the part played by the Second Advent in the primitive apostolic preaching. For in that preaching the Second Advent is something more than mankind's "last frontier-post" where "we shall encounter God in Christ";⁵ it is the consummation of the series

¹ Cf. also V. Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London, 1937), J. W. Bowman, *The Intention of Jesus* (London, 1945), C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London, 1952), and J. Jeremias, *Servant of God* (London, 1955), for this interpretation. That most of the New Testament writers (not excluding Paul) interpreted the work of Christ in terms of the Servant seems plain; no O.T. passage has stamped itself so indelibly on the N.T. as the fourth Servant Song, Isa. 52: 13-53: 12.

² Cf. R. H. Fuller, *The Mission and Achievement of Jesus* (London, 1954), pp. 20 ff.

³ Cf. also J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (Eng. tr., London, 1954).

⁴ This charge is made by R. H. Fuller, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 ff. I do not believe it is valid against more recent statements of the theory.

⁵ C. H. Dodd, *The Coming of Christ* (Cambridge, 1951).

of Christ's saving acts, the one act of the series that remains unfulfilled in history, but an act which, because of what has already been accomplished, is as sure as if it were already history—the V-Day whose advent is guaranteed by the D-Day that is past, to use Oscar Cullmann's topical metaphor.¹

That the futurist element cannot be excluded from Christ's own eschatological teaching has been argued afresh of late by G. R. Beasley-Murray in *Jesus and the Future* (London, 1954), where the unity and authenticity of the eschatological discourse ascribed to Jesus in Mark 13 (and parallels) are conclusively vindicated. Recent attempts to reinterpret this discourse as a symbolical prediction of the Passion carry little conviction.²

The Way of Salvation

When we come to the second strand, the way of salvation, there is little room for disagreement.³ Entrance into the kingdom—which is synonymous with entrance into life eternal, the life of the age to come, to be anticipated and enjoyed here and now—is granted by God's grace, procured for us by the suffering and triumph of the Son of Man, and received by faith in Him. This was the teaching of Christ, as it was later of Paul and of the other apostles. That the basic principles of this teaching were proclaimed in advance by the Old Testament prophets is maintained by N. H. Snaith in *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London, 1944).⁴ And Snaith is in good company here, if we recall Peter's testimony to Christ in the house of Cornelius: "To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

The Heirs of Salvation

One of the most striking features of Biblical interpretation in the last quarter of a century has been the increasing recognition of the importance of the doctrine of the Church in the New Testament.⁵ The appreciation of the unity of the Bible has led to a fresh study of the relation of the people of God under the new covenant to the people of God under the old. The opinion, frequently expressed in the heyday of liberalism, that Jesus

¹ See his *Christ and Time* (London, 1951).

² E.g. R. H. Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message of St. Mark* (Oxford, 1950), pp. 48 ff.

³ This statement is an over-simplification; interpreters differ, e.g., on the question whether and to what extent the sacraments form an important or essential part of saving faith in the New Testament.

⁴ See especially the last chapter: "The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament as they appear in the New Testament".

⁵ Cf., e.g., R. N. Flew, *Jesus and His Church* (London, 1938); G. Johnston, *The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament* (Cambridge, 1943); K. L. Schmidt, *The Church* (Eng. tr., London, 1950).

never intended to found a church, is not so commonly voiced to-day. To be sure, the kingdom which He proclaimed is not to be identified or confused with the church which He founded. The kingdom of God is that new order of life in which God is loved and obeyed as Father and King and His regenerative blessings are enjoyed by His children; but such a new order of life can only be lived out in fellowship with others. The Church, that is to say, should manifest the Kingdom.

This principle of fellowship is insisted on in the teaching of Jesus, even if we cannot go all the way with T. W. Manson in his societary interpretation of the Son of Man.¹ As Christ Himself is the living bond which binds the old covenant-people to the new, so His first disciples by their union with Him are both the last faithful remnant of the old and the first faithful nucleus of the new. And it is by virtue of their union with Him that His people in this age, generation after generation, are bound together in the fellowship of His Church. The various New Testament expressions used to convey the union between Christ and His people have lately been subjects of special study—none more so than the conception of the Church as the body of Christ, in which some have found an ontological and not a metaphorical expression.² It is doubtful exegesis, however, to single out one of the expressions thus used for ontological status in preference to others. Yet this at least emerges from such a study: that as Christ on earth discharged His messianic ministry in “the body of His flesh”, so from heaven He continues to discharge it by His Spirit in His people, in “the church which is His body”. If there are serious objections to considering the Church as the extension of Christ’s incarnation, there can be none to viewing it as the continuation of His ministry.³

Conclusion

Much more might be added with regard to the Church’s ministry, apostolic or otherwise, with regard to Christian initiation, the seal of the Spirit, the sacraments and so on, for New Testament interpretation to-day is actively concerned with these subjects. But to do so would be to make completely unmanageable a survey which is getting that way already.

¹ *The Teaching of Jesus* (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 211 ff. The “Son of Man”, according to this view, is an “embodiment of the Remnant idea”; it is “an ideal figure and stands for the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth in a people wholly devoted to their heavenly King”. When the people did not respond to Jesus’ public appeal, and when even His chosen band of disciples proved unequal to the demands of the ideal, He fulfilled it alone in His suffering as the Servant-Messiah, becoming then in resurrection the head of the new humanity.

² Cf. J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body* (London, 1952); also T. F. Torrance in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 7 (1954), p. 245: “The Church is the Body of Christ—that is no mere figure but reality.”

³ Cf. E. Schweizer, *Das Leben des Herrn in der Gemeinde und ihren Diensten* (Zürich, 1946); T. W. Manson, *The Church’s Ministry* (London, 1948).

The conclusion of the whole matter is this: that present trends in New Testament interpretation show a determination to take these documents seriously as the written deposit of God's saving act in Christ, manifested in the fullness of time, and to look to them for a divine word of mercy and judgment, of wisdom and salvation, which will guide us in our present predicament as it has guided others in the crises of the past.

928TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 14TH MARCH, 1955

Rev. S. Clive Thexton, M.Th., in the Chair

NEOPLATONISM AND CHRISTIANITY

By

the Rev. Principal PHILIP S. WATSON, M.A., B.D.

THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

NEOPLATONISM AND CHRISTIANITY

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SYNOPSIS

I. Neoplatonism flourished from about A.D. 245 to 529. It influenced Christian thought directly through St. Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius, indirectly through Muslim philosophy. Renaissance "Platonism" was thoroughly Neoplatonic—as was also the "Christian Platonism" of the second century, which resulted from the same general movement of thought as Neoplatonism.

II. The presupposition of Neoplatonism is the "Alexandrian world-scheme", in which there is a descending scale of existence from God to matter, and an ascending movement of the soul from the material world to God. In Neoplatonism the descending scale comprises the Divine Triad of the One, the Intelligible World and the World-Soul, and also the sense-world, formed by Soul out of Matter. Matter is the principle of evil, and salvation consists in flight from the world, the mystical ascent of the soul through purification and illumination to union with God.

III. Christianity and Neoplatonism are basically incompatible. Christianity thinks of evil, not as matter, but as the devil, to whom man has fallen victim. Deliverance is found not through man's flight from the world, but through God's coming into the world; and the end is not individual disembodiment, but corporate resurrection and the renewal of the entire cosmic order.

I

NEOPLATONISM is the name commonly given in modern times to the last great philosophical school of antiquity.¹ It is distinguished as *Neoplatonism* from the older, more conservative Platonism of the Athenian Academy, although in their own day its representatives were known simply as Platonists. Originating at Alexandria, it flourished from about the middle of the third century A.D. to the early decades of the sixth, its main centres being in turn at Rome, in Syria, and at Athens. Its most outstanding representative was Plotinus (A.D. 205–270),² who is often regarded as the founder of the school, and who was certainly its most creative thinker. Other names of importance in its history are those of

¹ On Neoplatonism generally see: C. Bigg, *Neoplatonism* (1895), T. Whittaker, *The Neoplatonists* (1901), E. R. Dodds, *Select Passages illustrating Neoplatonism* (1923), E. Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers* (2 vols., 1900–1902), W. R. Inge, art. "Neoplatonism" in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.

² On Plotinus see: W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus* (2 vols., 1917–1918), S. Mackenna, *Plotinus* (a translation of the *Enneads*, 5 vols., 1917–1930), G. Turnbull, *The Essence of Plotinus* (mainly extracts from Mackenna's translation, 1934).

Porphyry (A.D. 233–304), the biographer of Plotinus and editor of his works; Iamblichus (died c. A.D. 330), who introduced a number of modifications into the Plotinian system; and Proclus (A.D. 410–485),¹ the “scholastic” systematizer and summarizer of Neoplatonism.

Plotinus, who was born in Egypt, was educated at Alexandria. There he devoted himself to philosophy, but found no teacher to satisfy him until, at the age of twenty-eight, he went to hear Ammonius Saccas (c. A.D. 160–242). Saccas, who is said to have been born of Christian parents, though he was not a Christian himself, is held by some to have been the real founder of Neoplatonism—not unreasonably, seeing that Plotinus studied under him for no less than ten years and must have been considerably indebted to him. He is reported to have made it his principal aim to reconcile Platonism and Aristotelianism; but little is known of his teaching, since he would neither commit it to writing himself nor permit others to do so.

At the age of forty, after a brief excursion to the Middle East, Plotinus took up his residence in Rome. There he opened a school, which soon became popular and even fashionable, counting the Emperor Gallienus and his wife among its patrons. Porphyry, who became a member of it nearly twenty years later, describes how the works of the great philosophers were read and discussed, essays were set for the students to write, and a lively correspondence was carried on with Athens and other intellectual centres. Plotinus, of course, expounded his own thought in lectures; but he wrote nothing for publication, and the fact that his work survives is due to Porphyry, who borrowed and edited his lecture-notes and essays. As these had been hastily and carelessly written in a very difficult style, and were in no sort of order, Porphyry had anything but an easy task. He arranged the material according to the topics treated, in six books of nine chapters each—“an arrangement for which only Pythagorean reasons can be found”,² but from which they derive their title, *The Enneads*.

The work of Plotinus was continued at Rome by Porphyry, and for a time by his pupil Iamblichus. Both were natives of Syria, where Iamblichus taught in his later years, and both were anti-Christian. Whereas Plotinus had attacked only the Gnostics,³ Porphyry published an important and lengthy work *Against the Christians*, of which unfortunately only fragments survive. Porphyry was a prolific and versatile writer, but Iamblichus was the abler philosopher and contributed more to the development of Neoplatonism. Much of his work, too, has perished, and his thought is chiefly known to us from secondary sources, especially Proclus, and from the semi-philosophical work *On the Mysteries of the*

¹ On Proclus see: E. R. Dodds, *Proclus, The Elements of Theology* (1933).

² Inge, *Plotinus*, I, 119.

³ In the 9th book of the 2nd *Ennead*.

Egyptians, which is traditionally attributed to him, and which certainly belongs to his school. He modified and elaborated the Plotinian system with the aid of Pythagorean number-symbolism and Oriental ideas reminiscent of Gnosticism.¹

It was the spirit of Iamblichus's Syrian Neoplatonism that found expression in the attempt of the Emperor Julian the Apostate (A.D. 332–363) to suppress Christianity and restore the pagan faith. When the attempt failed, paganism was thereafter on the defensive, but the story of Neoplatonism was far from ended. Towards the end of the fourth century it captured the Academy at Athens in the person of the then Diadochus, Plutarch (A.D. 350?–430),² whose successor Syrianus became the teacher of Proclus.

Proclus, who was born at Constantinople, studied at Alexandria before coming to Athens at the age of nineteen. In due course he became Diadochus, and held the chair of Plato till his death—though at one period his vigorous criticism of Christianity cost him a year's banishment from Athens. He was an energetic lecturer and voluminous writer, who besides commentaries on the Platonic Dialogues and a work *On the Theology of Plato*, produced astronomical, mathematical, literary and grammatical treatises, several essays in theodicy, and a number of hymns. His most important work is *The Elements of Theology*, in which he seeks to give a full and systematic account of Neoplatonism, including certain modifications of his own. Although he ranks as second only to Plotinus in importance, he was less a creative thinker than “a systematizer who carried to its utmost limits the ideal of one comprehensive philosophy that should embrace all the garnered wisdom of the ancient world.”³ None of his successors was of comparable significance, and the last of them, Damascius, went into exile with the rest when the Emperor Justinian, in an excess of Christian zeal, closed the philosophical schools and confiscated their endowments in the year 529.

But the expulsion of the philosophers was not the expulsion of philosophy. Over a century earlier, St. Augustine (A.D. 354–430) had been helped on his way to Christianity by reading, as he tells us in his *Confessions*, “certain books of the Platonists”.⁴ These were (or included) the *Enneads* of Plotinus in Latin translation, and they so thoroughly converted Augustine to Neoplatonism that his subsequent conversion to Christianity made little difference to the basic structure of his thought.

¹ Dodds, *Proclus* xxiii, quotes Olympiodorus as saying: “some put philosophy first, as Porphyry, Plotinus, &c.; others the priestly art, as Iamblichus, Syrianus, Proclus and all the priestly school”. What this means may be illustrated by a passage from the *de Mysteriis* (Dodds, op. cit., xx) which says: “It is not thought that links the theurgist to the gods. . . [but] the unspeakable acts correctly performed . . . and the power of the unutterable symbols. . .”

² The “Diadochus” was the “Successor of Plato” as head of the Academy.

³ Dodds, *Proclus*, xxv.

⁴ *Conf.*, vii. 9.

It was therefore a Neoplatonized Christianity that was mediated by his authority to the Middle Ages. Nor was Athenian Neoplatonism without its effect. Within a generation after the death of Proclus, his teaching was "dressed up in Christian draperies"¹ and passed off as the work of Dionysius the Areopagite, the Athenian convert of St. Paul (cf. Acts 17: 34). Although suspect at first, "Dionysius" soon gained an authority second only to that of Augustine. His works became the subject of a long series of commentaries extending over several centuries; they were translated into Latin by the schoolman and mystic, Erigena (A.D. 810-877); they influenced scholastic thought generally, and not least that of St. Thomas Aquinas (1225?-1274); and they exercised a powerful effect on St. John Damascenus (died c. A.D. 750), the Aquinas of the East.

In the meantime, however, the closing of the Academy had borne strange fruit. The exiles had migrated to Persia and Syria, where their influence reinforced that of Nestorian and Monophysite Christian schools in disseminating a knowledge of Greek learning through the Middle East. This was the chief though not the only means by which philosophy was introduced to the Muslim world, whose scholars studied Syriac and Arabic translations of Plato, Aristotle and the Neoplatonists, furnished for them by the Christians.² Then in due course, Latin versions of these translations, and of the works of Arabian and Jewish philosophers, were made available to the medieval Schoolmen. It is true that the Arabians regarded Aristotle as the philosopher *par excellence*; but they made little of the differences between the Greeks, and they read their Aristotle with more or less Neoplatonic eyes.³ What is more, certain highly influential books attributed to Aristotle were in fact of Neoplatonic origin: the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, for instance, and the *Liber de causis* consist of little more than extracts from Plotinus and Proclus respectively.

A more direct influence of Neoplatonism on scholastic thought resulted when, from the latter part of the twelfth century onwards,⁴ Latin translations of original Greek texts were gradually produced. Of particular importance among these were the works of Proclus, including the *Elements of Theology*, which appeared at a time when Plotinus and Plato were almost entirely unknown in the West, and which played a decisive part in shaping the later medieval conception of Platonism. The *Elements* was used by Aquinas, and it had considerable vogue among the German Dominicans, notably Eckhart (1260?-1327) and his disciples, Tauler, Suso and Ruysbroeck. (Neoplatonism is the primary source of western

¹ Dodds, *Proclus*, xxvi.

² J. W. Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology*, I (1945), 84-92.

³ This is important when we remember that Aquinas, for instance, interpreted his Aristotle with the aid of the Arabian commentator Avicenna (1135-1204). Inge, *Plot.*, I, 15, holds that St. Thomas is nearer to Plotinus than to the real Aristotle.

⁴ Especially after the capture of Constantinople by the crusading Latins in 1204.

mysticism!) Then, in the fifteenth century, there came a still more powerful wave of Neoplatonic influence, when Cosimo de Medici (1389–1464) founded the Platonic Academy in Florence under the inspiration of Greek scholars who had fled to Italy when Constantinople was threatened by the Turks. At the Florentine Academy, Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) transcribed his own copy of Proclus, translated and expounded Plato, Plotinus and Pseudo-Dionysius—and interpreted St. Paul's Epistles in the light of them all! Such was the "Platonism" that marked the Renaissance as a reaction from the Aristotelianism of the schools, and such was the fruit of Justinian's endeavour to deliver Christendom from the perils of pagan philosophy.

But there is yet another important source of Neoplatonic influence on Christianity, earlier than any so far mentioned. If Ammonius Saccas was the founder of the school, then there is a direct influence through Origen (c. A.D. 183–252), who like Plotinus studied under him. But even if not, the "Christian Platonism" of Origen—and indeed of his predecessor Clement (c. A.D. 150–212/5)¹—is of a thoroughly Neoplatonizing type. For both Christian Platonism and Neoplatonism may be said to be products of a wider movement of thought, typical of the age, which found expression supremely at Alexandria.

It was a movement that arose, broadly speaking, out of a threefold sense of need. Men wanted a unified philosophy, to supersede the weary rivalries of the schools; they wanted authority, to buttress failing confidence in their own unaided reason; and, above all, they wanted salvation, a way of deliverance from the ageing and decaying world in which they felt they lived. At Alexandria, the great cosmopolitan centre of late antiquity, schools and sects of every kind sought to cater for this need. Here Philo (c. 20 B.C.—A.D. 50) had claimed the authority of Moses for his synthesis of the Jewish and the Hellenistic spirit; here the Neopythagorean theosophy flourished, invoking the authority of a half-legendary name; here the Gnostics alleged secret tradition or special revelation for their mingled Christian, Greek and pagan lore; here Plato, Aristotle, Stoicism, Neopythagoreanism were indiscriminately drawn upon to form the eclectic philosophy of the day. The distinctions between the various schools had grown more and more vague, and that between philosophy itself and religion had become increasingly blurred. Alexandrian religion was philosophical and Alexandrian philosophy religious—and it was no doubt for this reason that Pythagoras and Plato were the philosophers most favoured among the Alexandrians generally.

Plotinus does not seem to have been directly indebted either to Philo—who has nevertheless been called "the Jewish founder of Neoplatonism"²

¹ On the Christian Platonists see C. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (1886).

² A. Wolf, "Philosophy, History of" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th edn., XVII, 749 b).

—or to the Christian Platonists. He is more closely akin to the Neopythagoreans and eclectic Platonists¹ like Plutarch of Chaeronea (A.D. 46–120) and Numenius of Apamea (fl. A.D. 150–200). But his own intention was to be purely and simply a Platonist, and he would have been delighted with St. Augustine's saying that "in Plotinus Plato lived again".² Greatly as he revered all "the ancient philosophers of blessed memory"³ (and not least Aristotle), Plato alone is for him the quite infallible authority;⁴ and next to Plato he ranks Pythagoras. A similar leaning to authority is found later in Proclus,⁵ who speaks of Plotinus and Iamblichus as "most divine", but who nonetheless gives Plato first place as definitely an inspired writer and a mediator of divine revelation. Alongside Plato, however, and of equal authority with him, Proclus places the *Chaldaean Oracles* as containing a direct revelation from the gods.

II

But let us return to Alexandria. Here there developed, as a result of the syncretistic tendencies indicated above, a distinctive kind of philosophy of religion, of which the characteristic features can be traced alike in Gnosticism, Christian Platonism and Neoplatonism.⁶ These features are comprised in what has been called "the Alexandrian world-scheme", which came to be the basic, unquestioned assumption of Alexandrian thought. In this scheme, a sharp contrast is drawn between the world of the divine and that of material existence—a contrast closely akin to that in Plato between the world of Ideas and the sense-world. The two worlds are now set over against one another in a way that makes it necessary to establish communication between them by means of a series of intermediate beings. This communication is conceived as proceeding in two directions: downwards from the divine to the material, and upwards from the material to the divine. The downward movement provides an explanation of the existence of the phenomenal world, while the upward movement is the way of salvation for the soul. Here—in a manner that is hardly Platonic—cosmology is wedded to soteriology, and theorizing about the world is subservient to the practical quest for salvation. And as with the Alexandrians generally, so with Plotinus, the practical, religious interest is paramount.

According to Plotinus, all forms and phases of existence emanate or radiate from the One, which is also called the First, the Good and the

¹ So Inge; but Dodds would give an important place to Poseidonius of Apamea (?130–50 B.C.), as "the first of the three dominant personalities who have left their individual impress upon Neoplatonism" (*Proclus*, xviii).

² *Contra Academicos*, 3. 18. 41.

³ *Enneads*, 3. 7. 1.

⁴ When he says in the *Enneads* "we read", he means "we read in Plato", and the phrase has about it something of the numinous finality of the N.T. "it is written".

⁵ Dodds, *Proclus*, xii.

⁶ A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (revised edn., 1 vol., 1953), 350.

Primal Beauty.¹ The One is "the possibility of all things: without whose existence all would be non-existent" (3. 8. 10). Knowledge of the One is possible only by the way of negation; we can say what it is not, but not what it is. It is beyond being, beyond activity, beyond thought (5. 4. 2; 1. 7. 1); it is the negation of number (5. 5. 6),² and is fundamentally infinite; in fact, it is ineffable. Nonetheless, Plotinus manages to say a good deal about it. It is the first and final cause, on which all things depend, and to which all aspire. From it, as the First, all things proceed by an inner necessity: the universe is a kind of overflow (5. 2. 1) from it. Towards it, as the Good, all things consciously or unconsciously strive: its unity is the goal of universal desire. As the Primal Beauty, it is the ultimate source of the beauty in all that is beautiful, whereby the love-longing of the soul is kindled that drives men on the upward way. Yet the One remains wholly independent of all else, entirely unaffected either by the outflow from itself or the aspiration towards itself.

Next after the One, and streaming forth from it like the rays from the sun, comes the Intelligible World, which comprises *Nous*, the *Noēta* and *Noēsis*³—the Mind, its Thoughts and its Thinking.⁴ The Thoughts are not the product of the Mind, but its objects: they are real existences which proceed together with the Mind from the One. There are, however, no Thoughts outside the Mind; for the Mind is so united with them as to be virtually identified with them by its own proper activity of Thinking. The Thoughts and the Mind are thus distinguishable but inseparable, and together they constitute the world of Being, the only truly real world, of which the phenomenal world is but an imperfect copy or shadow. But the Thoughts are also archetypes of objects in the sense-world: they are, in Platonic language, Ideas. There are as many Ideas "Yonder" (in the Intelligible World) as there are Forms "Here" (in the phenomenal world), and they are contained in the Mind as parts in a whole. This Mind is, of course, divine, and may be said to be God; for although the One is also God, Mind is as it were the revelation of the One, without which the One would remain hidden and wholly unknown.

Next in the hierarchy of existence comes Soul—the World-Soul.⁵ This is the offspring of Mind, generated through the Mind's contemplation of the One. For Mind has two acts: upward contemplation and (in consequence) generation downwards; and what it generates is patterned on what it contemplates. But the begotten is always inferior to the begetter, and the Soul is a son less perfect than its father (5. 1. 3). It shares in the

¹ On the One see esp. 6. 9. 1, 3, 4; 3. 8. 8–10. (References, except where otherwise stated, are to the *Enneads*.)

² It is, in effect, zero; cf. Inge, *Plot.*, II, 107 f.

³ *Nous* (with its correlatives) is very variously translated by interpreters of Plotinus, e.g.: Intellect, Intelligence, Intellectual Principle, Divine Mind, Spirit.

⁴ On the Intelligible World see esp. 3. 8. 8; 5. 5. 1–2; 5. 8. 7; 5. 9. 4; 6. 7. 12–15.

⁵ On the World-Soul see esp. 2. 9. 2–4; 3. 8. 4–5; 4. 8. 3; 5. 1. 2–3, 7.

nature of Mind, being eternal and timeless, indivisible and extra-spatial; but it differs from Mind inasmuch as it is the subject of unfulfilled desires. The Soul, however, has two aspects: in the first of them it dwells unchangeably Yonder, contemplating the glories of the Divine Mind; in the second it goes forth ceaselessly, as life streaming from life, and generates the phenomenal world after the pattern of its vision. The Soul is not in the world, but the world is rather in it, embraced and moulded by it—and very much inferior to it. For Soul is a divine thing, more precious than anything earthly; and although its energy descends as low as vegetable life, and even slumbers in inorganic nature, yet the Soul itself orders and governs the world from its abode on high without ever becoming involved in the world (4. 3. 9; 2. 8. 9).

Last in order of existence comes Matter;¹ and the meaning of Matter must be understood in the light of the Aristotelian contrast between Matter and Form. All existences that are capable of further development are "matter" in relation to whatever "form" it is possible for them to assume. The rough block of marble is "matter" out of which the sculptor cuts the "form" of the statue; the acorn is "matter" in relation to the seedling, the seedling to the sapling, the sapling to the oak. So in Plotinus, all orders of existence are "matter" in relation to those next above them, and "forms" in relation to those next below (5. 9. 4). Soul is thus "matter" in relation to Mind (5. 1. 3), but "form" in relation to what is beneath it; and what is beneath it is Matter pure and simple, since there is nothing still lower in relation to which it could be "form". This Matter, which is the common substrate of all bodies, is itself incorporeal; for it is prior to, and presupposed by, bodies, which are compounded of Matter and Form. It is not ponderable, extended stuff, but bare, abstract potentiality devoid of potency, the bare receptacle of Forms. It is "no thing", even though it is not absolutely "nothing" (1. 8. 3);² it is the infinite, the indeterminate.

But as possessing the lowest degree of reality, Matter also possesses the lowest degree of value, and it can be described both as the absence of Good and as the First Evil.³ It is the point at which the light that streams from the One runs out into darkness. As receptive of Forms, it is like a mirror that reflects the rays from the One that fall upon it; but it is also like a mirror in that it shows us, not Reality, but empty and deceptive shadow-images (3. 6. 7). Indeed, it seems actually to offer resistance to the "forming" activity of Soul (1. 8. 11), and is thus positively evil. Not that the Soul—and still less the Mind or the One—takes any harm from this. There is no evil in the blissful life of the Divine

¹ On Matter see esp. 1. 8. 3, 9; 2. 4. 6; 3. 6. 7.

² It is τὸ μὴ εἶναι, though not οὐκ εἶναι.

³ On the problem of evil see esp. 1. 8. 4, 7-8, 11-12, 15; 3. 2. 14-15.

Triad. But with individual souls the case is different, since they are connected with bodies that are compound of Matter and Form.

According to Plato, it is the greatest misfortune of the human soul, that it is enchained in the "cavern" of the sense-world, imprisoned or entombed in a body. Yet Plato also says that the Creator sent the souls into the world in order to make it the abode of intelligence and with a view to its perfection.¹ Plotinus finds it a little difficult to reconcile these two views of his master, and his own view is somewhat uncertain. He attacks the Gnostics, "who say that the Demiurge is evil and the world is bad" (2. 9), yet he undoubtedly regards the life of the body and the senses as a hindrance to the soul.² It is said of him personally (by Porphyry) that he seemed almost ashamed of being in a body. For the soul belongs by nature to the divine realm, of which it is a microcosm, having affinities with it in all its aspects. Like the World-Soul, it proceeds from the Divine Mind: not as part of the World-Soul, which is indivisible, but in some way united with it, participating in it. Unlike the World-Soul, however, the individual soul "comes down" into the body, leaving its true home Yonder to take up its abode Here.³

But why does the soul come down?⁴ The answer to this question lies in the principle which Plotinus sees running through the whole of existence: upward contemplation and creative activity downwards. Our soul before our birth, dwelling in the divine realm and contemplating the Intelligible World, conceived the desire to go forth and create according to the vision it beheld. Being thus in accord with a universal principle, the descent of the soul can be said to be both a matter of necessity and of the will of God; and since it is also what the soul desires, it can be said to be by choice. And there is no essential harm in this, so long as the soul does not forget its true nature and its true home. But there is great danger lest it should become bewitched by the charm of sensuous nature and become entangled and immersed in the material. It beholds itself in the mirror of Matter, and like Narcissus, falling in love with the mirrored image, plunges in after it. "This is the fall of the soul, this entry into Matter . . . the cause of the weakness of the soul and of all its evil is Matter" (1. 8. 11).⁵

¹ *Timaeus*, 30B, 34B.

² "Life in the body is itself an evil" (1. 7. 3).

³ Plotinus holds that the soul descends only in part; in its higher aspect it remains "above". Iamblichus and nearly all later Neoplatonists hold that it descends "entire". But in either case its essential nature remains divine and its true home Yonder.

⁴ See 4. 8. 1-8.

⁵ Cf. 6. 1. 1: "But what is it that has caused our souls to forget God, their Father, and no more to know either themselves or him? . . . Their evil state had its beginnings from frowardness, from entry into birth . . . from the will to be their own and not his. So soon as they had clearly known the pleasure of free choice . . . they hastened by the road that leads outwards . . . lost knowledge even of their origin from God . . . thought meanly of themselves . . . set store by other things . . . so that the cause . . . lies in the price we put upon sensible things, the small account we make of ourselves."

We have now reached the nadir of the soul's experience, and the point where its cosmological descent must turn into the soteriological ascent. The soul must find its way upwards through the stages passed on the downward way. The possibility of this is explained by Plato's teaching about the ascent of the soul from the beauty of sensible objects to the Absolute Beauty.¹ The sense-world, which can be so grave a snare to the soul, is most unquestionably beautiful; on this Plotinus insists again and again, often in quite lyrical passages. But the beauty of sense is only an image, a copy, a shadow of the true Beauty, which is Yonder, not Here. To pursue the beauty of sense is therefore to pursue a phantom. Yet the phantom is, after all, a reflection of reality, and even in pursuing it, it is the mirrored reality that the soul most deeply desires. For the reflection awakens the soul's slumbering memory of the Beauty it once beheld Yonder, and kindles within it a longing and yearning to return thither. But return is possible only when the soul is brought by this means to recollect its own true nature and home, and to recognize the worthlessness of the things it has valued so highly in this world. Then, beginning with beautiful things Here, it must mount up to ever higher forms of beauty: from the beauty of bodies to beauties of Soul, from Soul to Mind, and from Mind to the One, which is Beauty itself. These are the stages of the upward way, leading to that Beauty which is also the Good, that which every soul consciously or unconsciously desires (6. 7. 31), and that which every soul is in fact seeking even when it pursues the phantom reflections in Matter.

The upward yearning and striving of the soul is called *eros*, or "love".² It springs from the tendency of the soul towards pure Beauty, from her recognition of it and her kinship with it; or from the intention of the soul towards its best, towards the Good. According to Plato, Eros is the child of Penia and Poros, "poverty" and "resourceful energy", and it shares the qualities of both.³ For Plotinus, it is "of mixed quality", marked on the one hand by "the lack which keeps it craving", yet showing on the other that "it is not entirely destitute, since nothing void of good would ever go seeking the Good" (3. 5. 10). As "a thing of mixture," however, Eros can never be satisfied: true satisfaction is only for what has its plenitude in its own being, and where craving is due to a native deficiency there may be momentary but never abiding satisfaction (3. 5. 7). The soul, therefore, not having its plenitude in itself (but in what is above it), is always naturally accompanied by Eros—just as "in pictures and fables Eros and Psyche make a pair" (6. 9. 9). This applies to every kind of soul, so that the World-Soul contains the universal Eros and each single soul has its own particular Eros; and as the souls are eternal

¹ See esp. 1. 6; and Nygren, *op. cit.*, 173 f., 177 ff., 192 ff.

² See esp. 3. 5, 1-4.

³ *Symposium* 203.

existences, so Eros is eternally existent. Indeed, Eros can be predicated of God himself, and it can be said that "God is Eros".

Here Plotinus seems to go far beyond Plato, who denies that the gods can feel love (*eros*), on the ground that they are self-sufficient and suffer no lack. But Plotinus says of the divine One: "He is worthy to be loved, and is himself Eros, namely Love of himself, as he is beautiful only from himself and in himself" (6. 8. 15). Plato would agree that God is "worthy to be loved", for as the Highest Good he naturally draws to himself all longing and love; but what could God himself conceivably love and long for, seeing that he has in himself all that can possibly be desired? Plotinus's answer to this question would seem to be that God desires precisely nothing but what he has and is, nothing but himself; so that God's Eros is directed to himself, he is "Love of himself".¹

We must distinguish, however, as Plato does, between Heavenly and Vulgar Eros.² The former is the soul's desire directed towards the divine, towards God; the latter is the same desire directed towards earthly, sensible things. With reference to this distinction Plotinus says: "Because the soul springs from God, yet is other than God, she cannot but love God. . . . In her natural state she is hungry for union with God, entertaining towards him the noble love of a virgin for a father who is noble. But when she enters into generation . . . she leaves her father and submits herself to wantonness. Yet learning afterwards to hate the wanton dealings of this place, she journeys again to her father's house, when she has purified herself of earthly contacts, and there abides in well-being (6. 9. 9). Earthly loves and affections are not in themselves evil, so long as there is nothing unnatural about them; but in and through them all the true object of the soul's desire is not Here but Yonder, where alone the desire can be satisfied.

The final goal of all the soul's striving is the vision of God, union with God, participation in his nature, possession of God. "We must hasten therefore," Plotinus says, "to depart hence, to detach ourselves as much

¹ Nygren, op. cit., 568 ff., shows that there is a further development of the idea of Eros in Proclus. Proclus says: "Eros descends from above, from the Intelligible sphere down to the cosmic, and turns all things towards the Divine Beauty." This would have been incomprehensible to Plato, but Proclus asks: "Whence could come love among men, if it were not first in the gods themselves? For everything good and saving that is found in souls has its determinate cause from the gods." He then develops still further the Plotinian idea of a multiplicity of *erotes* corresponding to the multiplicity of souls. He fills the universe with *erotes* ("loves") of different kinds, which he conceives as links in a great Eros-chain that unites heaven and earth. By this means divine Eros streams down through the whole hierarchy of existence, enabling it to secure participation in the higher life towards which its desire is turned. This idea was subsequently of no little importance in the works of Pseudo-Dionysius *On the Heavenly Hierarchy* and *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*; and together with the theurgic notions deriving from Iamblichus (see above, p. 52, n. 1), it affected Christian thought about grace. The idea of an Eros that descends may itself indicate some influence of Christian thought on Proclus, of course.

² *Symposium* 180 D; Nygren, op. cit., 49-52.

as we can from the body to which we are unhappily bound, to endeavour to embrace God with all our being" (6. 9. 9). A man must "withdraw into himself . . . turning away for ever from the material beauty that he once made his joy. . . . You must close your eyes and waken in yourself that other power of vision, which all have but few use. . . . Withdraw into yourself and look" (1. 6. 8-9). Detachment from the body and the senses by a certain asceticism of outward life and by the cultivation of virtue in the soul and wisdom in the mind, is the method that Plotinus prescribes for attaining the vision of God. Proclus teaches similarly, that the knowledge of God begins with self-knowledge: recognition of one's own true nature is the pre-requisite of the ascent to the divine. The upward way then leads successively through purification of the soul and illumination of the mind to union with God; and the soul can travel this way because it is a microcosm of the divine world and itself essentially divine.¹

According to Porphyry, Plotinus claimed to have enjoyed the beatific vision only four times in his life; and Porphyry claims it for himself only once. Permanent and uninterrupted vision is possible only when, on the dissolution of the body, the soul is freed from the trammels of this lower world; and even then there is no necessary and automatic liberation. The Neoplatonists, like Plato himself, hold a doctrine of the transmigration of souls (4. 3. 5, 24; 3. 4. 2). Only those souls that have purified themselves and fitted themselves for the vision of God can escape the cycle of rebirth; the rest are sent each into the kind of body for which it is most fitted. But reincarnation even in the noblest of bodies is a doom to be shunned, and salvation means disembodiment. Proclus denies that the soul can ever obtain final and permanent release from embodiment; its periodic descent and ascent belongs to the very nature of things and the harmony of the universe.² Plotinus appears to believe that final release is possible; yet he maintains that the cosmic process is cyclical, and that when all things have streamed forth from the One and back to the One, everything begins all over again (5. 7. 3).³

Nevertheless, the vision can be attained even in this life; and when it is, Plotinus tells us, "then we can see God and see ourselves: ourselves made radiant, filled with Intelligible light . . . having become, nay rather being, God" (6. 9. 9). Here we have passed not only beyond sense, but beyond virtue and beyond reason; for "vision and the visionary power is not reason, but greater and prior to reason, as is the object of vision". In this state, "the seer does not see or distinguish two things", himself and God, for "he belongs to God and is one with him" (6. 9. 10); and this means that he has passed even "beyond being". "For the self of a man, in respect of its fellowship with God, is not Being, but beyond

¹ Nygren, 572 f.

² *Elem.*, prop. 206.

³ Cf. Inge, *Plot.*, I. 189.

Being": it is united, indeed identified, with the all-transcendent One. Admittedly, this blissful state cannot last; a man will lapse again from it. "But let him again awaken the virtue that is in him . . . and he shall again be lightened of his burden, ascending through virtue to the Mind, and thence through wisdom to the Supreme. This is the life of gods and of the godlike and happy men; a quittance from things alien and earthly, a life beyond earthly pleasure, a flight of the alone to the Alone" (6. 9. 11).

III

St. Augustine, whose own thought was cast in a Neoplatonic mould, believed that very little change in outlook was required of a "Platonist" who became a Christian.¹ Christianity did not set aside what the "Platonists" possessed, but rather supplied what they lacked. Their writings showed that they knew about God and man's deep need of God, and about the Word that was in the beginning with God, the Son co-eternal with the Father; "but," says Augustine, "that the Word became flesh . . . that he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . . that in due time he died for the ungodly . . . those books do not contain."² What St. Augustine did not see, however, since he read his Bible through Neoplatonic spectacles, was that in certain quite fundamental respects Christianity and Neoplatonism in their pure form are entirely incompatible. This fact may be illustrated by a consideration of the teaching of each with regard to the need for salvation, the way of salvation, and the nature of salvation.

(1) *The need for salvation.* Neoplatonism teaches that all existence emanates from the Divine One; but emanation is in effect degradation, since each succeeding stage is inferior in reality and value to its prior; and Matter, as the lowest, is the root of all evil. Empirical man is a double being: an immortal, divine soul in a mortal, material body, which is a drag and hindrance to the soul, and from which the soul longs to be free.

The Bible teaches that the world and man are the good creation of God. The basic biblical contrast is not between God and Matter, but between God and the devil; and not between body and soul, but between spirit and flesh.³ Flesh is human nature in its totality of body and soul, while spirit is the activity of God (or the devil). Flesh is not in itself evil, but dependent and frail. It can be "possessed", come under the control of spirits—holy or unholy. Man's tragedy is that he has yielded to the seductions of an unholy spirit (the devil), and is a sinner in rebellion against God. What he needs, therefore (whether he longs for it or not)

¹ *Ep.* 118, 21.

² *Conf.*, vii. 9.

³ See P. S. Watson, "The Holy Spirit and Man" in *Expository Times* LXI, 6, March, 1950.

is deliverance from the grip of the evil spirit and reconciliation to God.¹

(2) *The way of salvation* is, for Neoplatonism, the way of Eros; for Christianity, of Agape. These are two quite different kinds of love.

Eros is acquisitive, self-centred love. It is a hunger that I feel, a desire to get and possess an object which I conceive as "good", i.e. as capable of satisfying my wants and needs. It is evoked by the desirable qualities of its object, and basically it is always a hunger for God as the "Highest Good", which alone can completely and permanently satisfy the human soul. (When Plotinus says that "God is Eros", he adds, "that is, love of himself", and explains that God alone is a worthy object of his own desiring; here God's love is patterned on man's.)

Agape is self-sacrificing love that gives and forgives. It is primarily God's own love, shown towards us in Christ. "God is Agape" (1 John 4: 8, 16); and this means, not that he loves himself, but that he loves the world (John 3: 16). Agape is not evoked by the worthiness of its object, for it is shown to the ungodly, to sinners and enemies of God (Rom. 5: 6 ff.); indeed, it is prior to all objects, since it is the nature of God their Creator. It is, moreover, reflected in creation; for we are bidden to love as God loves, who lets his sun shine and his rain fall on the just and the unjust, and is kind to the unthankful and the evil (Matt. 5: 43 ff.; Luke 6: 35). (When Agape-love is attributed to man, it is derived from God's own; and it is directed to our fellow-men: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" [1 John 4: 11]).

The way of Agape is God's way to man: the way of the Incarnation and the Cross, by which God has proved his love to us. Agape means the "coming down" of God into the midst of the world's sin and misery, in order by his Spirit of holy love to break the grip that the unholy, loveless spirit, the devil, has obtained upon mankind.²

The way of Eros is man's way to the Divine: the upward way of flight from the world—for Eros is never directed to that which is beneath it. It is true that Plotinus says that the higher cares for the lower and "sets it in order and adorns it"; but it does so only by "passive rule" (4. 8. 2), and without ever leaving its heavenly height or issuing forth from its sublime repose (6. 7. 41; 5. 1. 6).³ There is no Incarnation here, no help

¹ While the Neoplatonizing St. Augustine describes fallen man as *curvatus ad terram*, "bent down to earth", the Biblical theologian, Luther, describes him as *incurvatus in se*, "bent upon himself". The contrast is instructive.

² St. Augustine thinks of man as needing to have his "love" (*amor*, i.e., *eros*) directed away from earthly things to God. Luther thinks of him as needing to have his self-love eradicated and replaced by true love: Eros must be driven out by Agape. The nature and purpose of the Incarnation are differently construed in each case.

³ It is true that Proclus speaks of Eros as descending (see above, p. 60, n. 1), and here he has almost certainly been influenced by Christian thought; but he is still remote from the Christian idea of Incarnation. G. Nygren, *op. cit.*, 569.

from on high; God cannot be allowed to come into contact with Matter.

(3) *The nature of salvation.* In Neoplatonism man strives upwards to escape from the world; the way of salvation is the way of world-flight, the quest for disembodiment. Its goal is a vision of God in which the distinction between seer and seen is transcended and the soul is one with the Deity. It is a way of self-salvation, leading not to a communion of persons, but to a state of the self; and it is purely individualistic—a “flight of the alone to the Alone”. But there is no final salvation; for when all things have returned to the One out of which they have emanated, the whole cosmic process begins again.

According to Christianity, God has come down in order to redeem the world, and has given us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. This “vision of God” we have even now by faith, and through him we already have a foretaste of eternal life. Salvation is something that begins here, but is to be consummated in the future. “Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be . . .” (1 John 3: 2). We look forward, therefore, not to the disembodiment of the soul, but to the resurrection of the body; for the whole man, and not merely part of him, is redeemed. The whole man, moreover, is no isolated individual; for the salvation he enjoys already is a salvation he shares with the whole company of the redeemed, and its consummation will mean a perfected community of persons—in a transfigured universe. For the whole cosmos is involved in the redeeming purpose of God, so that “we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3: 13).

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OF THE
VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL
WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

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Rev. C. T. Cook, D.D., in the Chair

**KARL BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF
INSPIRATION**

By

the Rev. G. W. BROMILEY, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.

THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

KARL BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

By the Rev. G. W. BROMILEY, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.

SYNOPSIS

The subject of the paper is the detailed teaching of Karl Barth on the subject of inspiration. Attention is first drawn to the general setting of his chapter on the Bible, and then to the narrower context of the section on inspiration. An account is given of the sub-sections on the Bible as witness of God's revelation and the Bible as God's Word. Special consideration is accorded to such crucial questions as the concept of witness, the notion of recollection and expectation, the doctrine of an objective "inspiredness", and the incarnational pattern of the doctrine. In a critical appraisal acknowledgment is made of the strong points in Barth's treatment, but some unsatisfactory features are also noted. It is suggested, however, that with his new and necessary emphasis on objectivity Barth himself would probably agree in part with certain criticisms.

I

IF A PROPHET may not always have honour in his own country, a theologian is often misunderstood abroad. In our own age this is particularly true of Karl Barth. Barth's theology underwent a rapid process of development before it began to acquire definitive shape in the massive volumes of his *Church Dogmatics*. But those who are dependent on translations know only the earlier Barth. Even those who have a smattering of German find the great bulk and the apparent difficulty of the *Dogmatics* far too formidable. There are some, indeed, who prefer the earlier Barth, and there are others who know Barth only as he is refracted through associated thinkers like Emil Brunner, from whom Barth himself has now radically parted. The result is, of course, that Barth is subjected to all kinds of generalized pronouncements and suspicions and enthusiasms and hostilities which have very little reason or foundation in his own writings. Even the writings themselves can sometimes be twisted and tortured into strange shapes, for from such a vast output it is not difficult to pick out individual statements or sections which can then be pieced together into an alien scheme. And without an intensive knowledge of the text it is not easy to know the true picture from the caricature.

In these circumstances, if we are going to speak at all about Karl Barth's doctrine of any subject, it is essential that we should study in detail the authoritative statement which he himself has given us in the *Dogmatics*. Even then the situation is not quite so simple as it might appear. It is all very well to look up the relevant section in the table of contents. But, like any genuine theology, the teaching of Karl Barth hangs together. It forms a coherent whole. Properly speaking, a subject like inspiration can be understood only in relation to the full doctrine, and especially the doctrine of revelation or the Word of God of which it forms an integral part. There is the added difficulty that in a theology

spread over so long a period—it is some twenty years since the *Church Dogmatics* first began to appear—there has been a certain shift of accent, so that if he were to say the same thing to-day Barth would probably give to it a different emphasis. Now obviously in a short paper it is not possible to set the specialized doctrine of inspiration against the background of the whole doctrine of the Word of God, to which Barth himself devoted two very substantial half-volumes. In the last resort, a full knowledge of the teaching can be acquired only from the text itself. What we can do is at least to try to see what Barth does actually say about inspiration and to attempt some estimate of the qualities and the possible defects or deficiencies of his work.

The doctrine of inspiration is treated in the chapter on Holy Scripture, which is to be found in the second half of the first volume, immediately after the very long second chapter (in three parts) on the threefold work of the Trinity in relation to the divine self-revelation. The chapter on the Bible is followed by a chapter on the Church's preaching which fulfils the three-fold scheme of the Word, the Word written, and the Word proclaimed, and in that way terminates the first volume. The chapter itself is a long one of over two hundred and fifty pages and is sub-divided into three parts, each of which consists of two sections. The first is on "God's Word for the Church", the second on "Authority in the Church", and the third on "Freedom in the Church". The parts on authority and freedom both develop important aspects of Barth's teaching on the Bible under the headings of "The Authority (and Freedom) of the Word" and "Authority (and Freedom) under the Word", but it is with the first part that we are more directly concerned in the present context. This consists of almost a hundred pages, and the two sections are entitled "Scripture as Witness of God's Revelation" and "Scripture as the Word of God".

Barth always commences his main divisions with a brief statement of the substance of what he wishes to say, and it may perhaps be helpful to reproduce this verbatim. "The Word of God is God Himself in Holy Scripture. For the God who once spoke as the Lord to Moses and the prophets, the evangelists and the apostles, now speaks through their written word as the same Lord to His Church. Scripture is holy and the Word of God as by the Holy Spirit it became and will become to the Church the witness of God's revelation." The long sub-sections which follow are an expansion of these basic or guiding sentences.

II

Barth opens the discussion by pointing out that we do in fact use the Bible as the normative Word of God and that our obedience in this respect is a practical answer to the doctrinal question involved. The doctrine of Scripture is not one which has to be argued or demonstrated, for either way this would mean a fundamental disobedience, but it is

one which we certainly have to explain (pp. 505-507). He has a short historical note on the importance of the doctrine, especially in the Reformation period, but even in the theological practice of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (pp. 507-509), returning then to his main contention that the doctrine of the Bible is a confession imposed upon us by the question of our attitude to the Bible. Its true content will be "a development of our recognition of the self-grounded and self-justifying law under which we stand," and it will take the form of exegesis of the Bible itself. We make this confession with the Church and as a personal act of obedience, but it is the Bible itself which we confess as the Word of God, and we do so because the Bible is self-demonstrative as the manifestation of the glory of the Triune God (pp. 510-511).

Already in this introductory section Barth raises a big issue and states one of his primary convictions. He does not believe that the Bible can be proved false or proved true by logical or empirical processes. Indeed, he thinks that it is treason not only to the Bible but to God Himself to suspend our acceptance of His Word written upon what are at bottom human factors. We are not to follow the Bible because it is proved true by the mind of man or the results of human scientific or historical investigation. We are to accept the Bible as God's Word in obedience to the Bible as God's Word self-authenticated. In principle, there is little doubt that Barth is right in this contention, and it is one which needs to be emphasized in an age which sets far too much store by the cleverness of man and the infallibility of his conclusions. In our dealings with God's Word the Bible must be the judge and not the judged. Even if the decision goes in its favour, it is wrong even to think of the Bible at the bar of human reason or scholarship. At the same time, we may ask whether Barth does not carry the point too far. If we accept the Bible in obedient faith, there seems to be no reason why it should not find a secondary confirmation in other fields. To remove the Bible as God's Word altogether from the sphere of human judgment may easily become only a device for maintaining a twofold allegiance: an allegiance to the Bible itself in the sphere of revelation and faith, an allegiance to reason and science and history in more mundane or human matters. But we will have to return to this question later.

On p. 512 Barth takes up his first main point, that we confess the Bible to be the witness to revelation rather than revelation itself. In a sense this argument can be understood only in relation to the previous chapter. The Bible is the glory of the Triune Godhead only as mediated through human words or human speech. But while this is true, while the Bible is not revelation as it comes directly to prophets and apostles, the Bible is certainly revelation as it comes to us who are not prophets and apostles. The witness is the contemporaneous representation of revelation, so that to receive the witness is to receive revelation itself. In this way Barth tries to do justice to the twofold truth, that since God has revealed

Himself in His Son, we cannot equate the Bible quite simply with the Word or revelation of God, but that all the same we cannot deny that the Bible is itself the word of life and power and therefore the Word of God. The word "witness" is a dangerous one if used in its ordinary sense, but if we think of the Bible as a witness in the way in which the Bible itself describes the prophets and apostles as witnesses—"he that receiveth you, receiveth me"—it is perhaps not quite so objectionable as some critics of Barth suppose. This at least is how Barth himself is thinking of it, and in this sense it has the merit of being a word which the Bible uses even about itself (cf. John 5: 39).

The next point is almost parenthetical, that in view of the mediation through human words and speech, it is right and necessary that the Bible should be studied as a human book and therefore historically (p. 513). Barth makes this point in a way which is almost reminiscent of the last century, but at once he goes on to make the next main point, which is very much of this century, that in studying the Bible in this way we have to take account of its content and therefore to read it theologically. A mere description of the background and circumstances is not enough. What matters in the Bible is that which is beyond itself: the message. And the message or content cannot be read in or read round: it can only be read from the actual text of the Bible itself. The exposition which disregards this fact can never be truly historical. That is to say, it is not possible to read the Bible humanly in an abstract way, or with a concentration on the human element. It is not possible to expound the Bible simply in the void, or without a knowledge or awareness of the thing revealed. In these circumstances Barth thinks that the notion of a scientific impartiality or detachment is merely comic when applied to the exposition of Holy Scripture, for it makes true and valid and genuinely historical exposition quite impossible (pp. 514-519). He emphasizes again, of course, that revelation can be only through revelation. We cannot come to a knowledge of the true content of the Bible as we would come to a knowledge of the contents of a historical or scientific text-book. But this fact does not allow a legitimacy of other accounts than that which the Bible gives of itself. There is only one truth, and this truth comes, not by soliloquizing on the Bible, but by listening to what the Bible itself has to say, by allowing oneself to be gripped and mastered and instructed by it. The peculiarity of the Bible as God's Word is that it can make itself heard and known in this way, but in so doing it is normative for human communication as well, which ought to be and sometimes may be received in the same way, which we learn to receive in this way when we are instructed by the Word of God (pp. 519-522). On this note the first sub-section concludes.

With the argument of this passage it is impossible to find any general fault, although there may be criticisms in point of detail. Barth has finely seen that the true weakness of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century

exposition is not so much in its attempted correction of the Biblical data as in the failure either to adopt or even to understand the Biblical message: the attempt to oppose to—or, even worse, to impose upon—the Bible an alien outlook and philosophy. But this fault has characterized the orthodox of different ages as well as the heterodox, for with all their faithfulness to the Bible text the scholastic theologians understood the Bible message in Aristotelian terms, and the sound dogmaticians of the later seventeenth century attempted to impose upon Scriptural doctrine a Cartesian framework. Indeed, even in our own day the temptation is strong to try to work in the Biblical message with current philosophical or scientific dogma, on the plea, perhaps, that the teaching of the Bible will in this way be supported or explained or interpreted. As Barth sees, a grappling with the historical and therefore the plain sense of the Bible in its proper context is fundamentally right so long as we are prepared to carry it through consistently and to receive the message which the Bible itself is seeking to deliver. If it is more necessary than Barth allows to answer the detailed literary and historical criticisms of the Bible, it is certainly far more important, as Barth suggests, to free the message of the Bible not only from the alien but also from the friendly reinterpretations and adaptations with which we so easily invest it. To do this, to expound the Bible not in terms of something else but in terms of its own message, is the primary aim of the so-called Biblical theology of our own day, as it was of the exegetical and expository theology of the Reformers. In so far as he has contributed to this movement and brought us all under the criticism of the Word of God itself, Barth certainly deserves our gratitude, for nothing is more destructive of the Bible than an inordinate concentration upon its form or a subjection of either its form or content to a non-Biblical view.

III

Having made this preliminary estimate, Barth turns in the second sub-section to a discussion of the Bible as the Word of God. Necessarily, he begins with some remarks upon the canon (pp. 524–531), for obviously we have to know what is meant by Scripture and why it includes these particular books and not others. In relation to the canon Barth maintains strongly the Reformation position that the canon is not made or determined but only recognized by the Church. Scripture is already there as such before the Church pronounces its decision. To the question of the canon Scripture has its own infallible and authoritative answer. But because our hearing of that answer is human and fallible the question of the canon still remains, and in theory if not in practice it is always an open question. There is no such thing as a canon closed by the decision of the Church. Previous decisions of the Church may prove to be wrong. It is possible, if not very likely, that new writings may be unearthed which authenticate themselves as Holy Scripture. Barth does not take this

possibility very seriously, nor does he propose, as Luther did, that there should be any definite alteration of the existing canon. But he wants to emphasize that in this matter as in all others it is not a ruling of the Church but the self-witness of Scripture which must be the judge, and therefore the canon of Scripture is not dependent upon a definitive ruling of the Church. With this principle all evangelical Christians would agree, and there are not a few who would be prepared to admit that individual passages like the present end of Mark do not have any very secure self-authentication as Holy Scripture.

The canon as self-authenticated and recognized by the Church consists of the Old and New Testaments, which Barth now considers in their inter-relationship and unity (pp. 533-536). In this respect he introduces two important principles, that the one consists of expectation, the other of recollection, and that they are divided by the act of redemptive revelation. The elements of expectation and recollection are also found in the two main divisions of each Testament, the Law and the Prophets in the Old, the Gospels and the Epistles in the New. Although there are great differences in the individual writings, Barth emphasizes that as the living Word of God they give to the Church to-day the totality of recollection and expectation, and that the Church has to hold to this totality as a unity. But the unity is not an idea or a principle which we can control, and the totality is not that of a Christian economy or philosophy. It is here, Barth thinks, that Reformed dogmatics went astray in the seventeenth century with its Aristotelian and Cartesian systematizing. The centre and presupposition of the Bible's unity is the person of Jesus Christ Himself. But again, since the Bible constitutes a unity, we are not allowed either to divide it or to approach it with arbitrary preferences, and whatever passage we read, we have to remember that it implies all the rest. Here, too, we must be grateful to Barth for some valuable emphases. The idea of expectation and recollection is obviously true in a general way. The unity of the Bible with its centre in Jesus Christ certainly needs to be brought out at a time when the pressure has all been in favour of division, and whether or not the seventeenth-century dogmaticians were guilty of the charge brought against them, it is obviously wrong, although sometimes very tempting, to unite the Bible in terms of an essentially non-Biblical principle or philosophy.

But is the doctrine of the Bible as uniquely Scripture itself a Biblical doctrine? Barth deals with this question in a third discussion (pp. 538-544), and he gives two main answers. The first is that the Bible understands itself as the witness to Jesus Christ, and supremely to His resurrection, which it is the function of the Holy Spirit to attest. It understands itself, therefore, as the self-attestation of God by the Holy Spirit. The second answer is that it was written either by or about those men who had a direct encounter with God, bearing witness to them as the men they were as created by Jesus Christ Himself. This leads Barth to

a consideration of the apostolate, and with the apostles he links also, as the Bible itself does, the Old Testament prophets. Passively the apostles were chosen as those who saw and heard revelation in its historical environment. Actively, they were chosen as those who had to proclaim it. This twofold function is most succinctly described in the opening verses of 1 John 1. It was in this function that the apostles wrote Scripture (or Scripture was written about them). Obviously, therefore, their writings are meant to be understood and can only be understood as unique Scripture. With these statements there can be little quarrel, for they are both Scriptural and Reformed. In their own way, however, they dispose of one common but misinformed criticism of Barth, that on his view any writing can be Scripture if the Holy Spirit chooses to make it such to this or that individual. Nothing could be farther from the truth than this accusation, for Barth insists in the strongest possible way that God's revelation is only in Jesus Christ, that the prophets and apostles have been selected as its witnesses, and that their writings and their writings alone are therefore Holy Scripture.

But this being the case, Barth goes on to point out in a further paragraph (pp. 545-548) that the content of revelation binds us strictly to its form. The form is a necessary one because this witness to revelation is the only witness. And it consists in the texts themselves, not in the so-called facts behind the texts. At this point Barth has some valuable remarks about the error of trying to arrive at the Biblical message by treating Scripture as a book of historical sources and reconstructing from it a history of Israel or a life of Jesus. It was one of the greatest mistakes of Strauss and Wellhausen and their innumerable progeny to try to separate between the texts of the Bible and the subject of the Bible, as though there were some historical truth to be found beyond Scripture. With this pertinent and trenchant criticism we can only express our fervent agreement.

IV

So far, so good. But now Barth comes to a more difficult paragraph (pp. 549-556) in which he considers the reverse side, the limitation of the uniqueness or particularity of Holy Scripture. The Bible is a book apart by its very nature. But it is so, Barth maintains, only by its nature as witness. Considered in other respects or on other levels, as a book of history or religion, it is like other books. The distinction is not just one of degree. It is the distinction of the book which instructs us in the revelation of the absolute God. The absoluteness of God can be known only in this way, as the divine favour in which God associates Himself with man. But because God does associate with man, mediating His revelation through human writings, we must not attempt to absolutize or divinize the Bible as such. As in the case of Christ, the Bible has both "divine" and human factors, but there is not in this case an actual unity of the person of God with the human authors. The identity is only

by virtue of God's decision and act. The same is true of preaching and the administration of the sacraments, and less properly of the Church, of dogmas, of Christian experience and the like. We cannot therefore equate the Bible in a strict sense with the Incarnation. We can say only that the latter does carry with it the former, that the fact of the Word made flesh involves the prophetic and apostolic word. In its own way, therefore, the Bible is true God and true man, giving the glory to God, but having authority over the proclamation of word and sacrament. Only when it recognizes this particular place and function of Scripture will the Church be strong and healthy.

The main drift of this paragraph is not so much to emphasize the humanity and therefore the fallibility of the Bible, as it seems from the opening sentences, but rather to safeguard the uniqueness of God Himself and especially of the Incarnation of the divine Son. In this respect we may agree wholeheartedly that the Bible is not God, and that there is no *essential* unity of God and its words or authors. Certainly the "inscripturation" of the Word follows the same pattern as the Incarnation, but it is only a reflection and it takes place only by a special act of association, not by a unification of person. On the other hand, it may be wondered whether any theologians of any school have ever seriously suggested that the Bible is absolute and divine in the way that God is, or the Incarnate Christ. It may also be asked whether the limitation of the peculiarity of the Bible is rightly found in its humanity on other levels, for it could easily be argued that Jesus Christ is like other men if viewed from the historical or religious, or more narrowly from the physical or intellectual standpoint, yet this does not in any way affect His uniqueness and deity. Surely if God does associate with the human authors by His own special decision, we cannot isolate this or that aspect of their work and say that it is excluded from the divine act. We can rightly say that even in virtue of this act the Bible is not God as Christ is God. We can also say that in so far as it does have a human "form", it can be studied as one book of history or poetry or religion with others, just as Jesus Christ as man can be studied as one man with others. But it is rather another thing to state baldly that in these respects there actually "is no difference between the Bible and other quantities and factors of our human cosmos" (p. 549). This involves a basic "Nestorianism" which is no less intolerable in the doctrine of the written Word than in that of the Word Incarnate. But in view of what he says later (p. 571), Barth can hardly have meant his statement to have quite this implication.

In the sixth paragraph Barth comes to grips with the critical question of inspiration as the decision and act of God by which the Bible has priority in the Church and is the Word of God (pp. 557 f.). He argues that we can make the statements, that the Bible has priority and that it is the Word of God, only in a context of recollection and expectation: that

it has had and will have priority, that it has been and will be the Word of God. He tries to prove this point by an exegesis of the two most relevant passages in the New Testament, 2 Tim. 3: 14-17 and 2 Peter 1: 19-21, in both of which he finds elements of recollection and expectation bracketing the statement that Scripture is God-breathed. The point of this insistence is to make it clear that inspiration is not a state but the free act of the Holy Spirit, but it is difficult to see why Timothy's past, present or future recognition of the Bible as God's Word should be necessary to enable us to say that God exercised His decision and act in the prophetic or apostolic author. It is valuable to be reminded that the inspiration is a dead thing for us if we have not read, or do not and will not read the Bible as God's Word; but surely the act of the Spirit in the authors cannot be suspended on the response of the hearers or readers, even though the work of the Spirit may not be completed until there is the true response. This is just the error in relation to Scripture which Barth now condemns in Bultmann in relation to the atoning work of Christ, and it is difficult to think that if Barth were to write this section to-day he would not make a complete shift of emphasis away from the subjective to the objective aspect of inspiration, as he does almost to excess in his most recent volume on the Atonement. But taking the chapter as it stands, there seems to be a regrettable hesitancy to accept the objectivity of the initial work of the Spirit. For fear of a lifeless orthodoxy Barth leaves the way open for a no less dangerous subjectivization.

V

He continues with a consideration of the statement that we believe the Bible to be God's Word, and in the first instance he emphasizes the word *believe*. This leads him to an attempted characterization of the work of the Spirit in the human authors. It takes place as the obedience of these authors to the revelation then given, and it is therefore their own thinking, acting, speaking and writing as embraced and controlled and impelled by the Holy Spirit. The resultant work is not a book of divine propositions directly imparted, but a witness which we have to recognize in faith to be the Word of God. At this point we see why Barth is afraid of a proper stress on the objectivity of the initial inspiration. He does not want our acceptance of it to be perverted or misunderstood as though it were something that we ourselves could manipulate or control. We cannot prove the Bible to be the Word of God by rational or empirical processes. Men may read it in other ways and even criticize or reject it, and by the ordinary means of argument we cannot bring them to the point of confession. It is only by the Holy Ghost and in faith that we can say that the Bible is God's Word. All this is, of course, very true. But it need not alter the fact that by that earlier act of the Holy Spirit what the prophets and apostles wrote is in itself the Word of God, however we ourselves or others may read it. Nor does it mean that it is

the Word of God in complete defiance of rational or empirical considerations. This is, however, the direction in which Barth's argument is leading, for separating again between the infallibility of the Bible on the divine side and its fallibility on the human he finds a stumbling-block to reason in the literary forms, the concepts, the mistakes, the contradictions and above all the Judaistic setting and spirit of Scripture. In this respect he forgets that it is only the fallen reason of man which is scandalized, as it will be in any case, not only by the form but by the whole message of the Bible. And while no one would argue that in all their thoughts and words and actions the prophets and apostles could not make mistakes, it is surely not too much to expect that at least where they were specially controlled by the Spirit according to the decision and act of God they would be preserved from gross blundering and self-contradiction. Is it not, perhaps, that at this point Barth's own reason was still in conflict with his faith?

But he returns on p. 568 to a more positive note with the insistence that, if we have to *believe* the Bible to be God's Word, we do have to believe it to be *God's Word*. This is not a quality or characteristic. It means that the Bible is linked up with the Word of God, not *vice versa*. But it is true all the same, for to live by the Bible is to live by the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Bible by the work of the Holy Spirit. This leads Barth to a definition of inspiration (p. 571) as the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Bible. To do justice to it we have to bring out the full reality of the union in the free act of the grace of God. As Barth sees it, the union has two moments or phases which he illustrates from the two passages, 2 Cor. 3: 4-18 and 1 Cor. 2: 6-16. The first has to do with the reader, who cannot understand the Bible apart from the hidden work of the Spirit. The second has to do with the writer, who cannot proclaim Christ apart from the work of the Spirit. In a historical survey (pp. 574-584) Barth then shows that the Reformation period is the only one which properly balances these two aspects with its full acceptance of the inspiration of the writers, but its relating of the Bible strictly to Jesus Christ and its stress on the inward work of the Spirit. The early Church maintained a firm doctrine of inspiration, but it concentrated attention on the inspiration of the writers, it was rather too interested in the minutiae of wording, and it ignored the human aspect. The result was a secularization of the concept in which inspiration became "inspiredness". The post-Reformation period repeated this movement, ignoring the human element, insisting upon the inspiration even of the vowel-points, trying to substitute an assurance of palpable human certainty for the assurance of faith. As Barth sees it, the tragedy of this view is that it diverts attention away from Christ to secondary factors, that it provides a certainty which is wrongly based and therefore vulnerable, and that it provokes the inevitable reaction away from a Docetic view of Scripture to an Ebionite.

VI

What are we to say to all this?

In the first place, we have to admit that there is a work of the Holy Spirit in the reader without which no amount of argument or demonstration or investigation will give to the Biblical text its life-giving power. In so far as orthodoxy is in danger of forgetting this, it is as well that we should be reminded of it again, although in our own day it seems that the main threat to the inspiration of Scripture is to be found in a different direction.

Second, we may again ask whether a proper emphasis on the human element of Scripture necessarily involves errancy in the historical or scientific material. It involves a general fallibility of the authors as such, i.e. apart from the special working of the Holy Spirit for this particular purpose. It also involves, perhaps, a limitation or restriction of knowledge. On scientific, historical, geographical and other factors the Bible only gives us such simple and largely generalized information as is necessary for its own purpose. Again, it definitely involves a use of such language, concepts, literary forms and even methods and materials as were in general use at the time of writing, although in the case of the first three there was a certain necessary adaptation, as, for example, in the New Testament use of a word like *agape*. But it is rather another thing to say that the Bible may and does contain definite error, or that because our recognition of the inspiration of Scripture does not depend on its human infallibility, therefore we have to say almost *de fide* that it is humanly fallible.

Third, it is just a question whether in the biblical sense the term "inspiration" ought strictly to be applied to the illumination in which the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to the truth of Scripture. By extension it often has been used in this way, as in Cowper's well-known hymn:

"The Spirit breathes upon the word,
And brings the truth to sight."

If we make the extension, Barth is no doubt justified in arguing that the twofold act of inspiration is not complete until the first phase is succeeded by the second, and the inspired authors find an inspired reader. But this question prompts the further one, whether in the strictest possible sense we are right to speak of an inspiring of the text itself and not only, as the Bible itself seems to do, of the authors, and later, perhaps, of the readers. Of course, in a sense this is a pedantic question, for men who spoke and wrote as moved by the Holy Spirit will give us inspired writings. But the point is that the act of inspiration takes place in the human writers, and later, if we like, in the readers, not primarily in the text. The text itself is a given thing: the product of the one act and the basic material for the other. But if this is the case, may we not be right to speak of the "inspiredness" rather than the inspiration of the Bible, so long as

we make it plain that this "inspiredness" is only in conjunction with the inspiration, the act of inspiring, of the Holy Spirit, primarily in the writers, and secondarily, if we like, in the readers? The doctrine of "inspiredness" is a dangerous one, for attention may easily come to be focused on a quasi-miraculous text instead of its ultimate Author and His act of inspiration. But the mere fact that a doctrine is dangerous does not mean that it is false. Almost all doctrines have been abused at one time or another. What is necessary is to prevent the abuse by relating this secondary doctrine clearly and strictly to the primary inspiring of the authors and the subsequent illumination of the hearers or readers.

VII

In the final pages (pp. 585-597) Barth brings his survey to an end with some positive statements or conclusions. The first is that the Bible is God's Word and therefore that it cannot be controlled by us. Second, it is the work of God and therefore an act and not a state, reminding us of the work which has been done in the past and kindling the expectation of new work in the future. Third, it is the miracle of God, a new thing which sets in train new events. Fourth, it is human in form, and therefore it involves the offence of the Incarnation and the Cross. Fifth, the presence of God's Word is not a quality inherent in the book, but that which, by the free decision of God, intervenes between recollection and expectation but is incomprehensible as time. Sixth, this intervention takes place only according to God's decision, but it is something which can and will take place, so that we are to search the Scriptures in expectation. In our approach to the Bible it is no less wrong to be unfaithful or indolent than to try to isolate God's Word from the rest of Scripture as though it were only "contained" in it, or to rest in recognized experiences in time past. We must move from faith to faith, in gratitude and also in hope. Seventh, there is a twofold actuality: God Himself who speaks, and the text in and through which He speaks. Although Barth dislikes the idea of the "inspiredness" or human infallibility of the text he insists most strongly that it is in and through the text, the actual words of the text, that God speaks. Therefore he argues that inspiration is in the true sense verbal, and that what is required of us is exegesis. Eighth, and finally, he recognizes the danger of pure subjectivity, as though it all comes back to our own experience or faith, as though the Bible is only the Word of God as we experience or believe it to be such. But the objective side is not so much the text itself as God's twofold action of inspiration in the writers and the readers. He brings the whole section and the first part of the chapter to an end by emphasizing again that the statement that the Bible is the Word of God is an analytical sentence, and that ultimately, as God's Word, it cannot be known by rational or empirical considerations but only in and through itself. He appeals to

Calvin to show that other factors are only secondary to the divine self-attestation, which must not be confused of course with our own experience or faith. This divine self-attestation is the work of the Holy Spirit, that is to say, of "God Himself in the free act of His turning to us". It means that in this doctrine too "we must be content to give the glory not to ourselves but to God".

VIII

Even from the short review of these conclusions, and indeed of the part as a whole, it is easy to see what is the real strength of Barth, what are his weaknesses, and the way in which he himself would probably wish to amend his work after an interval of seventeen years. At the risk of a certain amount of reiteration we will gather together our own comments and criticisms under these three heads.

(1) On the credit side, in spite of the lip-service that he pays to it, Barth sees clearly the weakness of the historical approach to the Bible and the irrelevance of most of its findings to a genuine understanding of the Bible. More than that, he perceives and states that the radical error in liberal work does not lie in the detailed criticisms or reconstructions of the Bible, but in the underlying deviation or alienation from the theological content of the Bible. In the same context, there is something to be learned from his criticism of orthodoxy in its attempt to vindicate the Bible along human lines and its only too frequent subjugation of the Biblical material to the current philosophical framework. The criticism is perhaps carried too far, but there can be no doubt that in their own way these friendly and well-meant efforts are no less humanistic and non-Biblical than the more hostile activities of liberals. We learn from Barth that the basic need of the day is not so much to counter this or that individual critical finding as to meet and overthrow the non-Biblical theology which is only too frequently expressed in orthodox no less than liberal argumentation. Once this is done, detailed historical questions will be seen in their proper perspective, and the main difficulties will disappear. Barth is surely right that it is an inversion to suspend our acceptance of the Biblical message on our ability to prove the historical accuracy of the Bible. A genuinely historical study ought to lead us to the message of the Bible itself, and it is in terms of that message rather than empirical or any other philosophy that the Christian will approach the Bible and everything else. But of course the Biblical message cannot be known only by historical means, and this leads Barth to its most valuable feature—the tremendous emphasis upon the primacy of God in everything that concerns what is after all His own Word. He maintains this primacy in many different ways: against the orthodoxy which wishes to control the Bible; against the liberalism which wants to historicize it, or to try to sift the divine factors from the human; against the rationalism which eliminates or depreciates the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit;

against the subjectivism which identifies that work with human faith or experience. At every point and in every respect Barth's effort is to reckon seriously with God Himself in His own Word, and it is because of this concern for the divine glory that he has a derived concern for the honour of Scripture as that which must be in all things the master and judge of Christian thinking and practice, both for the individual Christian and also for the Christian Church.

(2) For these insights and emphases our thanks are due to Barth, for although what he says is not basically new, he says it with a new freshness and authority. But there is a debit side as well. In a general way, he has, I think, a tendency to give rather too great a prominence to the dangers which he finds in orthodoxy, for although they are possible and indeed actual dangers, they hardly seem to be practical dangers for the majority of people today. Possibly the situation is different in Switzerland, but in this country the number of orthodox is frighteningly small anyway, and if they are at fault at any point a positive approach will surely do more good both to them and to others than a more or less consistent denunciation. The historical criticism, e.g., of seventeenth-century dogmaticians is fair enough, but the more generalized pronouncements tend to be negative, dogmatic and misleading. In detail, there are two main points at which the teaching of Barth seems to be neither right nor necessary. The first is in relation to the fallibility of the Bible, which he goes out of his way to emphasize as the correlative of its humanity. But in this respect his thinking is surely a little muddled. For one thing, he is accepting a historicist standard as the norm of inerrancy, which is to be guilty of the very error of judging the Bible by human philosophies which he rightly criticizes in others. Again, it is not really necessary to insist on errors in the Bible to maintain its true humanity. Quite apart from the human wording and forms and concepts, we can readily concede the limitation of the Bible and yet believe that in virtue of the special decision and act of God which is inspiration, it is preserved from actual error. In point of fact, in his own exegesis Barth takes surprisingly little notice of the supposed errors, so that his rather trenchant statements in this regard seem designed mainly to clear himself from the possible charge of obscurantism. The second point is in relation to the understanding of inspiration itself. It is right and proper that the work of the Holy Spirit in the reader should be given a greater prominence than in many statements, but it is just a question whether this can rightly be described as the second phase which completes the work of inspiration. The true work of inspiring was properly in the authors, so that in a derived and secondary but very real sense their works can also be described as inspired. And this is irrespective of the spiritual state of the readers, just as on an artistic level the works of Shakespeare are "inspired" irrespective of the appreciative capacity of those who read them. Therefore, while we have to insist strongly that the Scriptures can be properly

read only in the Spirit, and we cannot altogether divorce this fact from the primary writing in the Spirit, we merely confuse the doctrine by claiming that there are here two complementary aspects of the one inspiration. Nor have we any real reason to refuse to the actual text of the Bible an inspiration which certainly derives from the primary act but which is not dependent on the illumination of the recipients.

(3) The final question remains whether Barth himself might now wish to modify his presentation of the doctrine. To judge from the recent trend of his writing, it seems certain that he himself would not now be ready to give quite the prominence that he then did to the act of the Holy Spirit in the reader. For after all, events have shown that his safeguards against subjectivism are not really adequate if the dynamic view of inspiration is pressed to its extreme. It is all very well to say that we are dependent on God Himself speaking in His Word, but the fact remains that if inspiration is not complete until it takes place in the individual, then God does not speak unless He speaks to me, and this means in practice that the only real or important act of "inspiration" takes place subjectively in the recipient. For a true objectivity it is necessary to insist that although there has to be the speaking to me, God has in fact already spoken: "men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is noteworthy that in his doctrine of the Atonement Barth has swung over almost to the opposite extreme. There has to be an entry into the reconciling work of Christ, but it is still true that reconciliation took place once and for all when Christ died and was raised again from the dead. The reason for this swing is to counter the subjectivist extreme that the atoning death and resurrection of Christ takes place in the true sense, not in history at Golgotha, but inwardly in the individual movement of repentance and faith. But if this very strong objectivism is necessary in relation to the Atonement, it is no less necessary in relation to Holy Scripture. Inspiration is certainly an act of God like reconciliation. But like reconciliation it is an act which has taken place, and the results are still with us in the enduring form of the inspired writings. In the one case as in the other there has to be a personal entry into the act, so that it becomes an act for and to the individual. This can take place only by the Holy Spirit. But the fact remains that the act itself has already taken place. And there can be little doubt that, faced with a thorough-going subjectivization, Barth himself would admit the inadequacy of his earlier safeguards and be prepared drastically to alter the balance of his presentation.

This would mean necessarily the softening if not the removal of some of the less satisfactory features of the discussion, and the value of what is on any showing an instructive and stimulating contribution would be considerably enhanced.

930TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

FRIDAY, 6th MAY, 1955

ERNEST WHITE, M.B., B.S., in the Chair

THE LARGE NUMBERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY

R. E. D. CLARK, M.A., Ph.D.

THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

THE LARGE NUMBERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT—ESPECIALLY IN CONNEXION WITH THE EXODUS

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

SYNOPSIS

Previous attempts to explain the very large numbers of persons mentioned in the Old Testament (e.g. at the time of the Exodus) are considered and held to be inadequate. It is argued that the word '*eleph*'=*'alaph*, translated *thousand*, must often have had the meaning *captain, chief, leader, etc.*

To test the hypothesis, the Biblical numbers at the time of the Exodus and at the entry into the Promised Land are considered in detail. A consideration of the uneven distribution of the digits in these numbers indicates that the latter have been compounded from two lesser numbers, in conformity with the hypothesis. Assuming this to be so, all possible constructions are placed on each of the Biblical numbers and graphical representations are given to exhibit the frequencies with which various ratios of officers/men occur. The results are fully consistent with the Biblical statement that the Israelites had captains over thousands, over hundreds and over fifties and confirm the view that the word '*eleph*' was used for all three.

IF WE take them at their face value, the numbers that we find in the Old Testament are sometimes so large that they are altogether unbelievable.

Thus, according to Numbers 1, the number of males above the age of twenty who left the land of Egypt at the time of the Exodus was 603,550. This means that the total number of Israelites, including women and children, would have been rather over two million—a vast horde indeed. But two chapters later on it is stated that of these the total number of first-born males above the age of one month was only 22,273. If we allow that males and females were equal in number and that the Israelitish women who had families were on an average half-way through their

child-bearing life, this must mean that each such woman was destined to give birth to about 170 children in all—surely a quite impossible figure!

Other examples might be multiplied. Of the male inhabitants of the little village of Bethshemesh no fewer than 50,070 were killed as a result of their irreverent treatment of the ark of God (1 Sam. 6: 19). In 2 Chron. 17: 13 ff. we are told that Jehoshaphat had “men of war, mighty men of valour in Jerusalem”. Adding together the figures given we obtain a total of 1,160,000 and there at once follows the statement: “These are they that waited on the king, beside those whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah.” Again, a wall, in falling, killed 27,000 men (1 Kings 20: 30). What are we to make of these and many similar statements?

Difficulties of this kind have long been urged as evidence of the unreliability of the Bible. It is alleged that the Bible writers let their fancies run away with them, that they exaggerated grossly in order to increase the seeming importance of the events they described, and so on. On the face of it this explanation does not seem likely. A modern writer wishing to make his readers believe in a wholly imaginary disaster would not say that a motor-car contained 2,500 persons, all of whom were killed in a road accident, or that a bomb fell on a school and slaughtered five thousand teachers and a quarter of a million children. Remarks of this kind would not impress a reader, they would at once raise suspicions as to the truth of the narrative. In this respect the position can hardly have been different in ancient times. How came it then that the stories were carried down and revered from one generation to another? There can be but one answer to this question. The original stories in the Bible must have been believable, and they cannot, therefore, have contained the huge number that we find in them to-day.

What, then, were the original numbers? It has sometimes been suggested that the Hebrew word *'eleph* = *'alaph*, translated *thousands*, may have had another meaning. Sir Flinders Petrie, many years ago, put forward the view that the word might be translated *families* and four passages are commonly cited in support of this possibility:—

(i) Judges 6: 15—“My family (= *'eleph*) is poor in Manasseh.”

(ii) Micah 5: 2—“But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands (= *'eleph*) of Judah . . .” (R.V. marg. gives *families* here).

(iii) Numbers 1: 16—“They are the heads of the thousands (R.V. marg. *families*) of Israel.” The meaning *families* is supported by comparison with the context, especially vv. 2, 4.

(iv) 1 Sam. 10: 19—“Present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands.” Cf. v. 21, where it is the *family* of the Matrites that is taken.

If we take this view we reduce the total for the Exodus to 5-6,000 men or say rather more than 20,000 Israelites in all. This seems reasonable enough, but unfortunately the alternative translation throws little light upon the many other instances in which Old Testament numbers seem absurdly large. To read *families* in place of *thousands* in many of the other texts can scarcely be said to improve the sense.

There is, however, another way out of the difficulty. If we look carefully into the way in which 'eleph is used, we shall find that it often seems to mean not *thousands* or *families* but *captains* or *mighty men* or some similar equivalent.

A passage which strongly suggests this meaning is to be found in the story of how Israel came to make David king (1 Chron. 12: 23 ff.). It *might* be possible to suppose that over 310,000 men feasted with David, though the number seems very large. But what is more remarkable is that small and large numbers are mixed in a highly suggestive way. Thus Zadok took only 22 men (captains) but Manasseh 18,000. In addition some of the really large numbers seem to be described in a way that could hardly have reference to common soldiers. Thus, of the 50,000 of Zebulun it is said that they were "such as were able to go out in the host, that could set the battle in array, with all manner of instruments of war and that could order the battle array and were not of double heart" (v. 33) and the 40,000 of Asher were "such as were able to go out in the host and could set the battle in array" (v. 36). Similar descriptions are given of the Danites and of the 120,000 Israelites on the other side of Jordan who were also "men of war that could order the battle array" (vv. 37 f.).

From these repeated descriptions of the men concerned nothing can be clearer than that it was the *officers* who came to David, not the common rank and file of the army. Common soldiers do not go out in the host or set the battle in array. Fifty 'eleph, then, means not fifty thousand but fifty officers. The numbers are all quite reasonable and quite small.

In the account of Jehoshaphat's retinue at Jerusalem the meaning of 'eleph becomes even clearer still. Indeed, the meaning of the word is actually given: "'eleph, mighty men of valour" (2 Chron. 17: 16). If, instead of translating it, our translators had left it just as it was, its meaning would not have been in doubt.

If, then, we are prepared to accept the view that 'eleph can mean not only *thousands* but also *officers* or *mighty men of valour*, etc., we can at once make sense of most of the large number of the Old Testament. The gigantic numbers of those who fell in battle or as a result of plagues take on quite sober proportions. In some instances, of course, it is difficult to be sure whether the word used really refers to *thousands* or to *captains*, and in a few instances it is impossible after so long a lapse of time to be

sure of the original meaning, though this would have been obvious enough at the time. But such instances are exceptional.

With regard to the enormous numbers which are often stated to have fallen in battle we must bear in mind that for the most part ancient battles were unlike modern ones. It was not, as a rule, the ordinary men who did most of the fighting, but the mighty men, the captains, the charioteers, the knights in armour. The unusual feature of the fight between Goliath and David lay no doubt in the fact that the Philistines had but one prize champion instead of a dozen or so less formidable ones. We are reminded, too, of the king of Syria who commanded his men: "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel" (1 Kings 22: 31). It was the '*elephs*, the mighty men, who fell in battle rather than the common soldiers, though on occasions of course the latter suffered also.

Sometimes very large numbers are given for cattle. But here again the same principle may apply. The natural leaders of cattle were often marked in a distinctive way (as by a special operation producing unicorns from rams) and the term '*eleph* might well have been applied to them by analogy with human leaders.

How, then, we may ask, did it come about that the words for *thousands* and *officers* became confused? In answer to this we may remind ourselves that the meanings are closely allied. The ancients may well have thought that a chief among them was equivalent to a thousand; we even read that his loyal subjects said to David: "Thou art worth ten thousand of us" (2 Sam. 18: 3).

In a standard Hebrew lexicon we find the entry '*eleph* = '*alaph* = a *thousand*. And derived from this there is '*aluph* = '*alluph* = a *chief* (usually translated *duke* in A.V. but sometimes *captain*, *governor*, *guide*, etc.). Sometimes the Hebrew vowel letter *u* drops out of '*aluph* and, apart from the pointing (a late introduction) the words for *thousand* and for *chief* become identical in all respects. It is interesting to note that, in the modern Israeli army, the word '*alluph* is used as the equivalent for *colonel*.

In early days, of course, the '*eleph* or *mighty man of valour* would have gained his title from the fact that he actually was the captain over a thousand men. But as time went by, the strict etymological meaning of the word would have been forgotten (we have only to look at our own language to see many examples of this) and the word would have been used with a wider meaning—for *captain* in general, irrespective of the exact number of men under his command.

Originally, then, we may suppose that a word meaning *thousand* and an identical (or almost identical) word meaning *mighty man of valour* was used over and over again in the Bible. Relics of such repetition still remain, notably in Numbers 31: 32 where '*eleph* is repeated no less than

three times in the giving of a single number. At the time the meanings would have been obvious enough but in later years scribes, seeing identical words, would simply have added the figures together. Thus "five 'eleph and twenty 'eleph" would naturally have been turned into "five and twenty 'eleph" by a man who did not know that the two 'elephs had different meanings.

In principle, then, we can see how the difficulties connected with the immense numbers of the Old Testament may be explained, even though we cannot in all instances restore the original text. There is no question of the writers of the Bible having been in error—far less that they invented or exaggerated the numbers they record—but merely that later scribes misunderstood their meaning and did what any one of us might have done in like circumstances.

* * * * *

We may now turn to consider one case in some detail—the numbers given for the Israelites at the Exodus and before the entry into the Promised Land (Numbers 1 and 26). We have already noted that it is difficult to accept the numbers as they stand and several other arguments may be used to support our conclusion. (1) Only a generation before, two midwives sufficed for all Israel. To-day a village of 2,000 in Egypt needs the services of one midwife. (2) In the wilderness Moses at first judged all the people single-handed. (3) Many of the stories, e.g. of obtaining water from wells, would hardly be credible if a multitude of two millions were involved. Let us then examine the figures given for the twelve tribes more closely.

In modern population statistics we can detect inaccuracies in available figures by observing the randomness or otherwise of the digits. It usually happens that more than 20 per cent of people claim to have ages divisible by 5 which means that some people are giving their ages to the nearest five years—the man of 49 says he is 50 and so on. Similarly, a population of 23,689 may be given as 24,000 so that in a group of such figures the proportion of noughts exceeds the expected one-tenth of the whole.

We may examine the figures in Exodus in a rather similar way. In Numbers 1 and 26, twenty-four figures are given. Of these all save two end in "00", showing that the numbers are usually given to the nearest hundred. The other digits give us (a) the tens of thousands, (b) the thousands and (c) the hundreds.

Now in a group of units, all of them of similar size, we should not expect the first significant figures to be distributed at random. And in the Bible figures we find them distributed between 2 and 7 but clustering markedly

at 4 and 5 (see (a), Figure 1, p. 91). Digits (b) and (c) might, however, be expected to be at random.

It will be seen, however, that though the second digit is fairly well distributed between 0 and 9, the third (c) (see Figure 1) is distributed in a manner very similar to the first. Not one of the "c-numbers" is a 0, 1, 8 or 9; the smallest is 2 and the largest 7.

This shows, rather clearly, that each of the numbers given in the Bible has been derived from two numbers which have in some way been placed together. It is as if we read that the towns of about equal size in England, containing 30-50,000 inhabitants, always contained an odd two to seven hundred inhabitants in addition to a whole number of thousands and that this number was usually four or five hundred (38,400; 46,500, etc.). We should at once suspect such figures and would not be surprised to learn that they arose from an approximate total population given to the nearest thousand, combined with some other number, say the number of men serving in the police or fire brigade.

The similarity of the digits (a) and (c) suggests that they might be correlated with one another. But this is not so—the use of the standard formula for rank order correlation reveals no correlation at all. Another possibility is that (a) and (b) are correlated. According to Petrie's view this should definitely be so, for the number of fighting men would be expected to depend roughly upon the number of families which they represented. But here again there is no trace of correlation (indeed the coefficient is slightly negative but not significantly so). This lack of correlation would appear to be a sufficient disproof of Petrie's theory.

How then shall we understand the Biblical figures? The distinction between '*eleph*=captains' and '*eleph*=thousands' at once supplies the key, but not the total answer to our question. Thus, in Numbers 1, Ephraim had 40,500 men. Does this mean 40 captains and 500 men? Or could the two kinds of '*eleph*' have been added together by a scribe, making the original, say, 35 captains and 5,500 men? And if so how are we to know that it was not 36 and 4,500 or 37 and 3,500, etc.? Likewise the number for Reuben is 46,500. Does this mean 40 captains and 6,500 men or 46 captains and 500 men, or what?

Clearly we need to know the ratio of men to officers. Now the Old Testament tells us repeatedly—some seventeen times in all—that the army was normally divided into "captains of thousands and captains of hundreds". On a number of occasions we also read of "captains of fifties" but the rulers of ten, mentioned in Exodus 18: 21, 25 are not apparently mentioned again in connection with army organization. Every thousand men might then require (a) a captain of a thousand, (b) perhaps ten captains of hundreds, (c) or twenty captains of fifties, or (d) say five captains of hundreds and ten captains of fifties making an equal division between these two types of command. Thus the following

ratios of men to officers are possible.

Men per captain.

$(a)+(b)$	91
$(a)+(c)$	47.5
$(a)+(b)+(c)$	32
$(a)+(d)$	62.5

In addition, if contingents were not quite full, the ratios would tend to be a little smaller than the above figures.

Let us now take, say, the figure for Reuben—46,500. We consider in turn all the possibilities (46 officers+500 men; 45 officers+1,500 men; 44 officers+2,500 men, etc.) and work out each ratio of men to officers. We repeat the process with all the twenty-four figures. This gives us a series of numbers representing possible ratios and we might expect these numbers to cluster around the true ratio or ratios. Graph A in Figure 2 (p. 92) was obtained in this way. It shows the average density of clustering of the numbers plotted against the numbers themselves. (The total number of numbers clustering around nine digits, including four on each side of the number in question, was plotted against the number.) Clustering is seen to occur most markedly around 65 but also around 40 and perhaps also 85-90. There is no trace of it around 32 however. In graph B (Figure 2) the number of officers was reduced by subtracting one for each thousand men or fraction of a thousand men. It should represent, therefore, the ratios of men to the more junior officers. Here again we note clustering at about 40 and at 67 but there is no sign of it at 32 or 85-90.

These graphs suggest that some of the tribes organized their forces by appointing, in addition to senior officers, one officer for every fifty men and that others employed a mixture of captains of fifties and captains of hundreds. If the men were equally divided between the two kinds of captains we should expect peaks at 62.5 in graph A and 67 in graph B which is roughly where we find them. If there were captains of fifties only we should get peaks at 47.5 and 50 respectively. The fact that the peaks are rather lower may suggest that where men were divided into groups of fifty, it proved necessary to appoint a few senior officers, say 3 or 4 per thousand, to act as liaison officers between the captains of fifties and the captains of thousands.

We now take the Biblical figures for the tribes and decide on a figure for each such that the average number of men per officer fits in with one or other of the peaks on the graphs. Of the twenty-four figures fourteen give rise to no ambiguity, the other ten can be fitted to either peak. Adding the figures together we obtain:—

Numbers 1—Minimum, 26,550 men and 577 officers.

Maximum, 33,550 men and 570 officers.

Total, adding 'elephs together, 603 'elephs and 550 men
(Numbers 2: 32).

Numbers 26—Minimum, 28,730 men and 573 officers.

Maximum, 32,730 men and 569 officers.

Total, 601 'elephs and 730 men (Numbers 26: 51).

The numbers in each tribe are now quite small—eleven of the twenty-four numbers are around two and a half thousand. This may account in part at least for the uniformity of the third digits (*c* in Figure 1) of the Biblical numbers. Perhaps 2,500 was a nominal 3,000 so far as the higher command was involved—some expansion always being allowed for without the creation of a new “thousand”. This might account for the distribution of the third digits.

It may be noted that if we take a ratio of about 90 men per officer (corresponding to a complete absence of captains of fifty), both totals become approximately 48–49,000. This, then, would appear to give an extreme upper limit. If, on the other hand, we take a ratio of 9 or 10 the total would be much too small and the consistency of the scheme breaks down for it is only possible to ascribe this ratio in a few instances.

We have now obtained a rough estimate for the number of the Israelites. Have we any means of checking the correctness of our total?

One passage which raises an immediate difficulty is Exodus 38: 26. Here we are told that every male of Israel over twenty years of age gave a half-shekel when a census was taken. The total of the silver collected is recorded and it agrees exactly with the 603,550 men mentioned in Numbers 1 (3,000 shekels=1 talent). The census mentioned *apparently* took place in the wilderness nearly a year after the exodus from Egypt and there is nothing in the context to suggest that on this occasion the Levites were excluded. Naturally enough, the passage has puzzled commentators for many years. Ellicott, who accepted the traditional figures, took the view that the census of Numbers 1 was a protracted affair the completion of which is mentioned in Exodus 38. In the *Pulpit Commentary* (1882) the writer says: “Perhaps the number was lost in this place, and restored from Numbers 2: 32, without its being recollected that the Levites were not included in that reckoning.” Later commentators, so far as the writer has consulted them, appear to have nothing more to say and for the most part are apt to be content with the view that, since Bible figures are fictitious any way, no special difficulty arises in this place. Perhaps all that can be said is that, if we are convinced that the traditional figures given in Numbers are too large, then some such view as that suggested in the *Pulpit Commentary* would appear to be inevitable. When once the two meanings of 'eleph had caused con-

fusion, we could hardly expect scribes to have copied out Exodus 38: 26 in such a way as to result in self-contradiction. If the original text had mentioned, say, four (this would give 27,550 men) or five (33,550 men) talents of silver it is not hard to suppose that a single word might have been altered to restore self-consistency. Admittedly, however, this is pure speculation.

There are, however, good Biblical grounds for thinking that the total we have suggested is at least roughly correct.

The Bible states that about 40,000 men passed over Jordan under Joshua (Josh. 4: 13). If the number of men over twenty at his command was rather less than 40,000 it might well have been brought up to this figure by youths of (say) sixteen to twenty who would certainly have been willing to assist on this momentous occasion. It would seem that there is good agreement with the number involved in the Joshua campaign.

Another check on the order of magnitude of the number we have obtained is given by the number of first-born males—22,273 (Numbers 3: 43). This included all males above the age of one month. If the average age of the male population was about 50 (see Numbers 3: 39), the number of these in the army, i.e. over 20 years old, might be about 13-14,000. If we take 30,000 as the figure for the army, each first-born male would have an average of 1.1 adult younger brothers. Thus the average number of sibs alive above the age of 20 would be 4.2 or about 7 allowing for all ages. This means that an average Israelitish mother might be expected during the course of her lifetime to have 14 children. Though this computation is very rough and ready (the data given in Numbers 3: 39 are probably insufficient for the average age to be determined in any case) this appears to be a reasonable figure which confirms the view that the number of the army of Israel that left Egypt did not differ very greatly from 30,000.

To this figure, however, women and children and the rather numerous Levites would have to be added. Is it possible that confusion in the meaning of *'elep* has made the numbers of the Levites too large also? It seems difficult, though perhaps not impossible, to think so. If we take the Levite numbers as they stand, then we shall get a grand total of 140,000 men, women and children—a very great number, though small compared with the two million odd with which we started. But if the number still seems large, there are ample grounds in the Bible for believing that it *was* large. Pharaoh was fearful because the Israelites were fast becoming a nation greater and mightier than the Egyptians. Later, the sheer magnitude of the host—"this thy so great people"—is emphasized. The Exodus of the Israelites may well have been the greatest of all ancient migrations and we can be the more certain that, but for the good hand of God, it would have been a disastrous failure.¹

¹ The Author is indebted to the Tyndale Fellowship, members of which made useful contributions in a discussion held at Cambridge in the summer of 1953.

Figure 1.

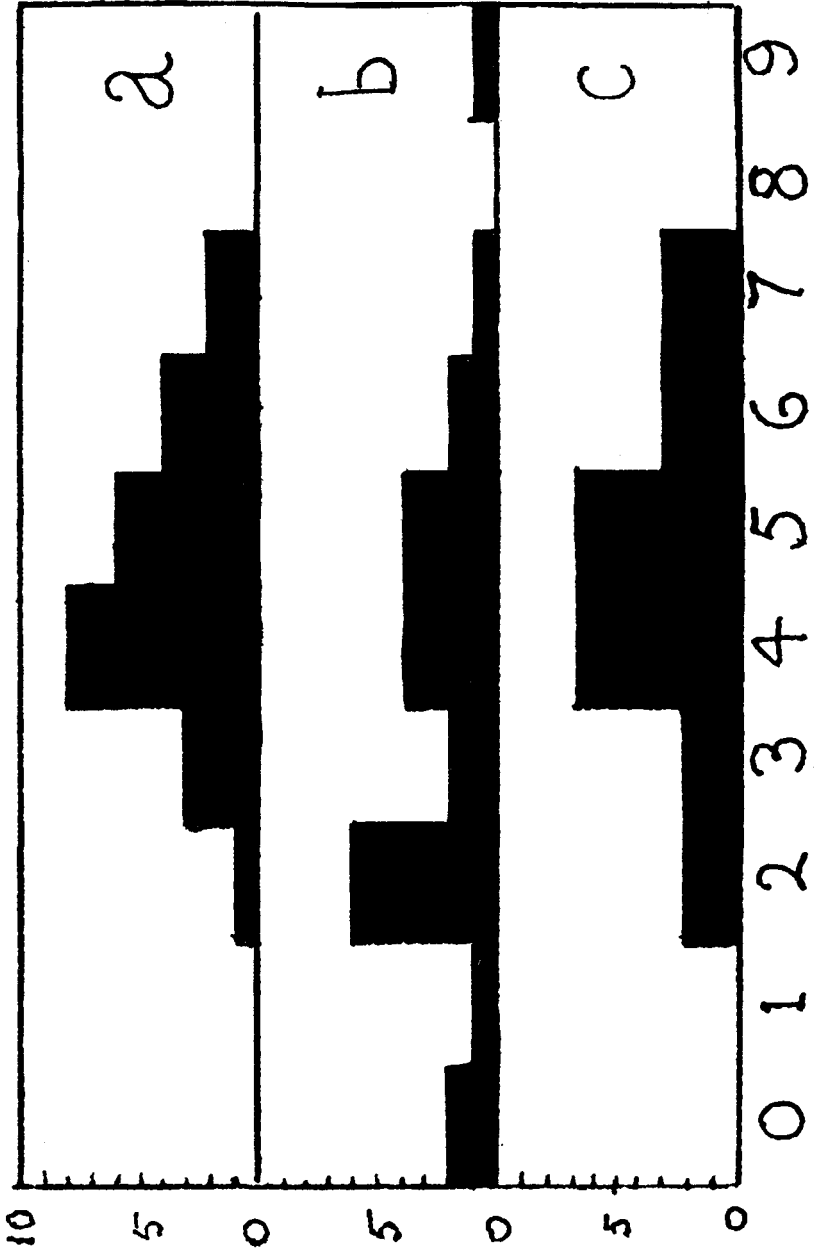
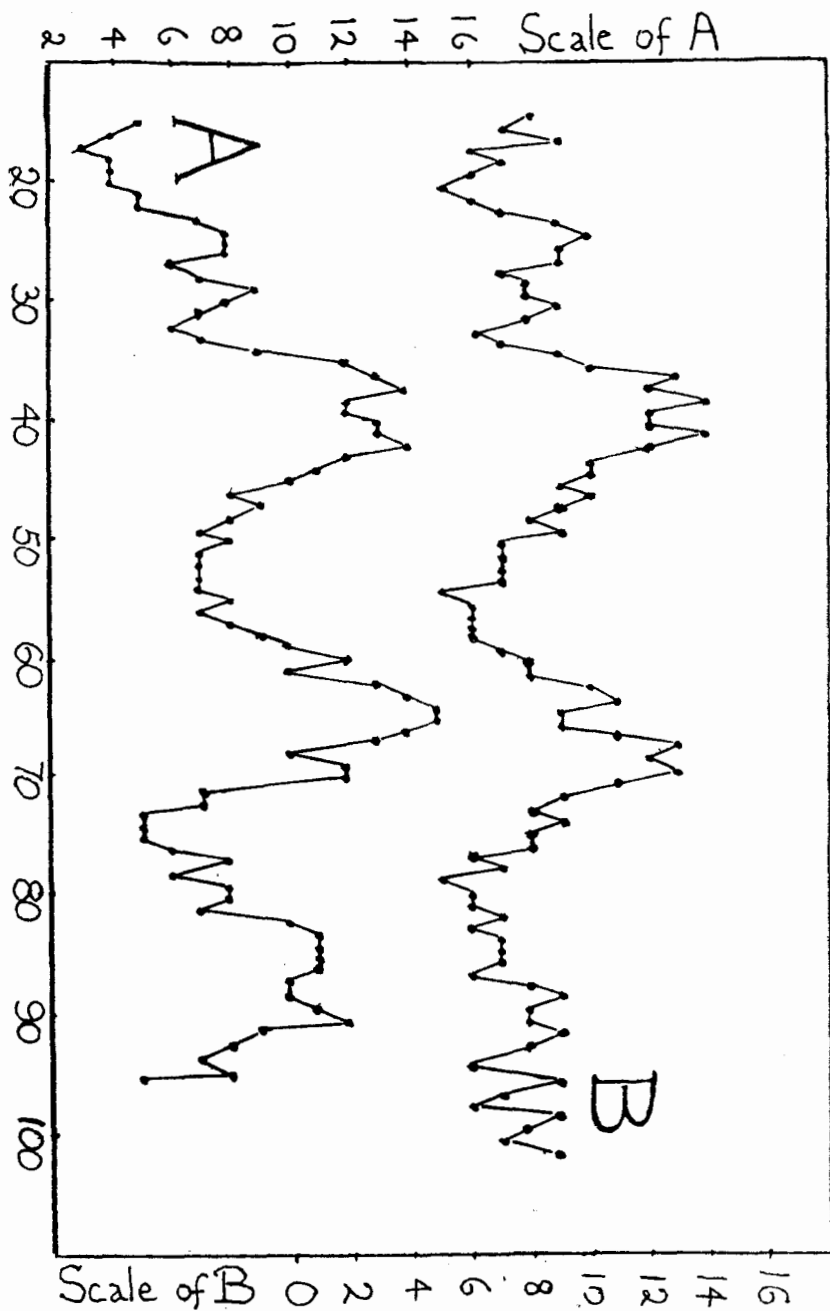


Figure 2.



931ST ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 23RD MAY, 1955

ERNEST WHITE, M.B., B.S., in the Chair

ANNUAL ADDRESS

FREEDOM AND THE CHRISTIAN MISSION

By

SIR KENNETH GRUBB, C.M.G., LL.D.

THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

FREEDOM AND THE CHRISTIAN MISSION

By SIR KENNETH GRUBB, C.M.G., LL.D.

THIS paper has been prepared in the conviction that the course of this world is ultimately determined by what men believe about God. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that men should be free to ascertain, believe and proclaim the truth, and that they should not be deterred from doing so by the deliberate actions of governments, by a structure of society which gravely impedes access to truth, or by the pretensions of religious authority itself. I am aware that my theme differs from those ordinarily selected for the annual lecture of this Institute. I do not apologize for this, for I am convinced of its importance. I shall not be concerned here to discuss the truth and accuracy of the Bible, but I hope to make it clear that only a Biblical approach can provide firm ground for the consideration of my subject.

Up to a few decades ago it would have been thought both unnecessary and presumptuous to voice again this familiar question of freedom of conscience—unnecessary, because in the great age of liberalism it was commonly held that such freedom really did exist with some degree of universality; presumptuous, because it was equally commonly held that man, by his assumed nobility of nature, would never decline from his devotion to freedom, but ever seek to enlarge its horizon. We can no longer count on this facile self-assurance which has become a self-deception. We live in a sterner and also a more confused age when the very foundations on which freedom was supposed to rest have been challenged, and the determining power of belief in moulding the institutions of human history is too often dimly perceived and only faintly acknowledged.

But I shall also argue that freedom of conscience is not enough: it must be completed by freedom of confession and of conversion. If men are ready either to dissimulate or to suffer, they can usually have freedom of conscience, although even that is not necessarily true to-day. It has never been true that liberty has been brightest in prisons, as the romantic poets have claimed, but it may be noblest there. What is at stake in the modern world is freedom to confess, to propagate and to convert; in a word freedom not necessarily of conscience, in the common sense, but of mission.

What on one side of the coin appears a freedom, on the other side bears the stamp of a human right. Human rights and freedoms are inseparably related. In these days the emphasis has come to be put upon human rights rather than freedoms, and there are sound reasons for this. But the difference is slight, for freedom is itself a human right. Human rights and human freedoms stand and fall together. To-day the struggle takes place over the issue of human rights, because the conception of freedom has been so much abused in the very experience of liberalism itself. Within that experience freedom has come to be regarded as something that just exists, that can, so to speak, be gathered from the air. This has altogether overlooked the truth that freedom is the result of healthy conditions in

society. Its existence implies certain conceptions about God, about the meaning of man's life and nature, and the functions of the state. It also demands a careful and generous understanding of the limitations of the economic order. Freedom without bread is simply liberty to starve. The realization that freedom and human rights must be considered in relation to the conditions of society has been a very healthy one for two principal reasons. It forces each generation to examine, define, secure and expand its freedoms anew, and it shows that freedom is, in practice, the product of a relationship between the different institutions and pressures that help to constitute a living society. As far as the Christian witness is concerned these institutions are mainly the Church itself and the State. But it should be carefully noted that Christians ask no freedom for themselves which they do not wish for others; on the contrary the struggle for religious freedom has not infrequently been the key to the general struggle for man's freedoms.

In developing this subject within the confines of a short paper I cannot do more than select certain leading aspects of it to the rigorous exclusion of others. I shall, therefore, devote myself, in the main, to examining briefly the following questions. What is the source of authority for maintaining and asserting human rights and freedoms for all men? From what quarters does the menace to full human rights and freedoms, particularly the right to maintain and confess the Christian faith, arise? And what is the present state of progress in the effort to secure and extend the observance of human rights, particularly in regard to the witness and life of the Christian Churches?

The first question, that of the authority for asserting human rights and freedoms, is obviously crucial. It has been instinctively recognized as such since the earliest days when man began to examine the meaning of his life, and to give intelligible voice to his tentative answers. The old Greek tragedians, in their endeavour to present, on the stage of Athens, the poignant drama of man's conflicts and sorrows, were fully aware of it, and Sophocles to whom, above all, it was a puzzle, poses the question as follows:

Oh may my constant feet not fail
 Walking in the paths of righteousness
 Sinless in word and deed—
 True to those eternal laws
 That scale for ever the high deep
 Of heaven's pure ether, whence they sprang. . .
 Mortal wisdom did not give them birth
 And howsoe'er men may forget
 They will not sleep.

The problem took a new turn when men began to toy with the idea of the natural law, an approach which was afterwards taken up and greatly

modified by the Catholic Church of the Dark and Middle Ages. Zeno, the Stoic, was the first to deal explicitly with it, and to argue that there was a natural law which was binding on all men, to which the laws of men must strive to conform. The undoubted truth of this famous conception became, however, rapidly obscured through the dangerous qualifications to which it was obviously subject. What was this natural law? Do men agree on its formulation? In what terms could it be expressed? Can it be other than a static conception? Were the celebrated laws of the city which, Socrates imagined, would arise to rebuke him if he availed himself of his friends' plans to extricate him from prison and death, really a reflection of the will to righteousness? If not, was there any reason why he should obey them and remain in prison? The argument continued across the centuries, and in modern forms it has become much more involved with the complications of society. Psychology came to throw new and sometimes perplexing light on the meaning of conscience and man's understanding of himself. The social and economic analysis of society showed that rights and freedoms which appealed to some men as natural were more or less meaningless to other men. All this has contributed to depreciate the authority and meaning of the idea of natural law, and debase its currency in the world of thought.

I think that much of this tendency to depreciation is due to the misleading nature of the phrase "natural law". What is surely at stake here is not really law at all. Law is the command of a sovereign, whether that sovereign be the sovereign people or anyone else. But when Rousseau, for example, speaks of the "conscience to love the good, means to ascertain it and freedom to choose it" as denoting an instinctive knowledge of natural law implanted in man by his Creator, he is not really dealing with law at all. He has in mind a natural pattern, or, if you like it, the natural principle of man's being. The concept of natural law can be supported from the Bible (see, for example, Rom. 2) and was early accepted by the Fathers of the Church. It was considered consistent with the old Biblical law, and with the law of the new Israel fulfilled in Christ. Indeed, it is implicit in the denunciations and appeals of the earliest Hebrew prophets from Amos onwards.

When men to-day speak of human rights and freedoms being derived from natural law, they are, therefore, thinking more of natural principles or an ideal pattern of which human law and institutions must strive to be an expression. Human rights are rightly called human, and, in the familiar language of constitutions, are rightly dubbed inalienable, because without them man would not be man, but something less than man, a beast: if you wish, a demon or even an angel, but not a man. The rights of man are nothing less than a direct derivation from the indispensable qualities of man. They are the supposed laws of his nature.

This, I think, would be generally admitted almost everywhere to-day,

even in the Communist states. The real dispute takes place over the origin and authority of these rights. So far from being an outmoded squabble of the philosophers, this is one of the crucial turning points of modern society, as was very evident in the final debates at the United Nations on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where the matter was brought into the open by several speakers. Briefly there are three views to be considered in this context.

There is the humanist view which largely coincides with what I have just summarized. The nature of man is discerned by a study of man himself. From this study it is evident that man possesses certain rights and freedoms which are indisputable constituents of his nature. He cannot be deprived of these without defacing it and thus relegating himself to some lower order of creation. He alone can define these rights, since they draw their authority from his own conception of his place in the universe, and the meaning of his life. If he is able to enjoy and pursue them, he is also capable of creating a civilization which will give them full and useful expression.

But there is a different view which holds that man's rights are vested in the State. He does not possess them as an individual, still less as one who has been created in the image of God. Since the State is man's sovereign, and law is the command of a sovereign, rights and freedoms are defined in law and decreed by the State alone. They are not possessed by persons by virtue of any natural claims, but conceded by the sovereign. There is no right to rights as of right. It follows that as the State has power to define and grant human rights and freedoms, it can abrogate or withdraw them just as readily, and in practice it not infrequently does so. This view is held in Communist countries quite explicitly, but it is apt to become implicit in the policies and sometimes the actions of other than Communist states. There is a tendency here that always needs to be carefully watched.

Finally, there is the view that man's rights are derived from the fact that he is a child of God, created in His image and likeness. This view takes two forms, the first of which leads, in practice, to much the same position as the purely humanist approach. Man has been endowed by his Creator with inalienable rights which are self-evident, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is his task to discover the meaning of these rights in the light of his own nature, as a child of God. Since he does not have access to any further self-disclosure or revelation by God, he must do that by studying to discover what are the principles by which he can live in a community of peace and justice with his fellows, his freedom being limited only by the corresponding freedoms of others. This is, roughly, the position taken by Locke, and Montesquieu, by the Deists and Encyclopædists, by the authors of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, and of the American constitution. Nor should it be

lightly dismissed as inadequate, since it has led to much happiness and freedom, and has been at the basis of the great liberal tradition of western European history.

But I submit that the Christian cannot be satisfied with this. He too will accept that since God has created man in His image, his rights and freedoms must reflect the sanctions of the divine law and must, as far as possible, be expressed in a human law which will be a reflection of it. But he will insist that this is an inadequate basis in itself, on which to rest a theory of human rights. The Christian must take a Biblical view. Natural law or natural principles only gather any full or concrete meaning when they are directly related to a self-disclosure or revelation of God, in the light of which the nature and meaning of man's life can be understood. It is the Christian claim that this revelation is recorded in the Bible, and receives its complete expression in Jesus Christ. Three consequences of utmost importance follow. One is that the nature of the divine law, and, therefore, the form and expression of those rights and liberties which must be defined in human law, can be perceived. The second is that the conception of rights is inevitably bound up with that of duties since, if man can perceive that the law of his nature is in fact found to rest in his obedience to the command of his absolute Sovereign, he has a duty, indeed, an obligation, to obey the will and word of that Sovereign. And the third is that the meaning of man's proper use of his rights and liberties is illustrated for him in the life of Jesus Christ.

I conclude, therefore, that although the claim to human rights and liberties can be made very cogently from the background of natural law alone, particularly if it is associated with the sanctions that derive from the conception of a Supreme Being, it is only Christianity that can sustain an adequate doctrine of rights. Similarly it is Christians who feel the claims of the law of God upon them most deeply, and the obligation to respond with duty and service. But since the Christian understanding of the authority, origin and nature of rights and freedoms is only partially acknowledged in human society, or not at all, it is not surprising that the Church has frequently been involved in conflict with the civil power. This is not to say that the Church has invariably been in the right in such conflicts, has always proceeded wisely, or has itself not abused its own powers. Alas! it has committed many of the faults from which history is unwilling to exonerate it. But it none the less remains true that the Church, in fighting for the right to believe, to confess and to welcome and permit change of belief and confession, has been defending the rights of all. It is, indeed, a liberal Catholic, Lord Acton, who has insisted that the theory of liberty demands the independence of the Church. Liberty cannot be left at the sole mercy of the State, even the democratic state; indeed it must not be left at the mercy of any purely human institution, for the sanction of the people is no higher than a human sanction.

Liberty must depend on obedience to God, whose law is the ultimate guarantee of freedom. "In Thy service," as the Anglican Prayer Book says, "is perfect freedom."

I now turn to the question of the contemporary threat to freedom and rights, and in particular the threat to the confession and propagation of the Christian faith. If it be true that the safeguard of freedom lies in the independence of the Church, it means that once again we must fight in the hard-trodden field of the relations of Church and State. What is comprised in the somewhat dangerous words that I have used, "the independence of the Church", is a spiritual independence. The Church as an organization can exist in various forms of association with or separation from the State, but it can never agree that its doctrine be determined by the State or its order and worship altered to oblige the peremptory demands of rulers. In these matters it owes obedience to its divine Head. For that reason it cannot live a full and satisfying life under regimes where rights and liberties are regarded as the perquisites of the State, to be loaned out to citizens or corporations as convenience may require. In such cases it may profit from a measure of conceded freedom, but it is a freedom not of right, but of sufferance. This is the situation in Communist countries to-day.

But if it be granted that the independence of the Church is essential to its freedom and its witness, it must be admitted that this implies a kind of dualism in history, at least in all that history that we dub "A.D." There is the Church, and there is the State: throughout the centuries they have entered into relations with one another, sometimes fruitful, sometimes false. Almost every historic country of Western Europe, not least our own, can illustrate this. It was a problem well perceived by St. Augustine and even more clearly by Dante in his prose work, *De Monarchia*. It belongs to the very stuff of European history. So far from being solved at the Reformation, or by the modern formula of the separation of Church and State, or by Mazzini's motto of a Free Church in a Free State, it has continued to exist even where such attempts at solution have been bravely adopted. This is due to the simple fact that all these formulæ ignore the overwhelming pretensions created by the possession of power, whether civil or ecclesiastical; they presuppose a moral and spiritual void within which freedom can float as a shadowy wraith. The truth is that the very tension in which Church and State must exist to the end of time is a part of the price which must be paid for the preservation of man's rights and liberties. There have been times in history, as in the Middle Ages or Czarist Russia, when the Church has acquired far too much power. And there are times, such has to-day, when the State, in many countries, has been able to do the same. In either case, freedom is threatened. To-day, with certain important exceptions, the threat comes from the side of the State.

When the Church has to survive in a total state like Soviet Russia, the nature of the threat is unmistakable. But it should not be supposed that the menace is limited to situations of such clear and overt opposition. Democracy itself contains the seeds of the same peril. The highest repository of power in democracy is the *demos*, the people. It is said that you cannot deceive all of the people all of the time, but they can do so themselves for as long as they like. Those who understand this will not in the least be surprised that modern democracies are unable to resist the concentration of power, albeit almost imperceptibly, in the hands of the State. Do we not see it going on all around? The Christian conception, once again, is that power belongs unto God, who alone is the final Judge of men and nations. The Church, as much in democracy as in any other form of State, must insist on its freedom to declare and obey the counsel of God. If it does so faithfully, then it will be found, as has happened before, that it has been defending the rights and freedoms of all.

But the Church itself has its own temptation to power, and does not always resist it. So the Church, in its turn, becomes a threat to human rights and freedoms. This is unfortunately apt to be true of the Roman Catholic Church when it possesses a dominant position as in Spain or in Colombia. What actually occurs is that a *mariage de convenance* is consummated between an anxious Church and a willing State, and in such cases, the independence necessary to freedom, and the freedom indispensable to independence are alike submerged. The resultant position of religious minorities is often distressing. The situation is not very dissimilar when a non-Christian religious system, such as Islam, works in close association with the State. But the assumptions on which such an alliance rests are often different, because the theory of the State, held by these religious systems, is different.

The readiness with which the Church itself, or any other religious system, succumbs to the temptation of power, and enters into an alliance with the State as the executor of power, leads to particular dangers for the Christian mission. The conception of "mission" implies the diffusion of a belief by means of a message and witness designed to effect change and conversion to that belief. When religion enters into an association of power with the State, it is a minimum assumption on both sides that the *status quo* be preserved: that is, the Church shall be guarded from heresy and the State from non-conforming citizens. This is evident if it be remembered that it is the first instinct of power to seek its own preservation. The consequences of this conservation of power in Church and State are two-fold. Firstly, even if, because of the presence of historical minorities, such as the Waldensians in Italy, it has to be admitted that freedom of religious belief be allowed as a basic human right, it is sought to prevent that their numbers be extended by preaching and the receiving

of converts. In other words the right of some men to manifest and others to change their beliefs is denied.

Secondly, since the State has its own pretensions of power, the self-consciousness of modern nationalism is very alive to the dignity of its own prerogatives. It is, therefore, very easy for the modern State, especially if it is moved thereto by the leaders of a dominant religion, to limit or forbid the right of foreigners to engage in a religious ministry of a relatively novel kind. This sort of restriction is a serious blow to the work of missions. But it cannot be regarded in the same light as the denial of fundamental human rights and liberties. In the modern world the national state is the only real political sovereign, and its sovereignty is limited to a very minor degree by its international obligations and by such documents as the Charter of the United Nations. A solution may eventually be found through the development and wider application of international law, and the enlargement of reciprocal facilities and obligations between the nations. No freedom, not even the freedom of Christian witness, is unlimited, and what is in question here is not the right to witness to and spread one's faith, but the right to do so in particular ways and places. Restrictions of this kind should not be complacently accepted, but they are not to be regarded as in the same category as the denial of more fundamental rights.

Christianity is a witnessing faith: it survives only by growth. The testimony to Jesus and the Resurrection was the impelling force behind the expansion of the early Church. On the other hand, the modern world, with its conveniently relativist views of the coexistence of cultures, and its concentration on technical progress to the depreciation of the quest for truth, is not sympathetic to the idea of conversion. For this reason alone, it is essential to the freedom of the Christian witness that the Church should understand the front on which the battle is being waged. The Church cannot be content with anything less than the freedom of witness and teaching, and the right to change belief.

I hope that I have now somewhat cleared the ground for answering my third and last question. Where do we stand to-day in the effort to secure rights and freedoms adequate for the life and witness of the Church? You will not, I hope, expect me to deal with this, country by country: if so, this paper would become something like Homer's catalogue of the ships, or, to change the metaphor, we would be unable to see the wood for the trees. It must be patent, I think, for the reasons I have summarized, and for others that I have not been able to cite, that the struggle for freedom of belief and witness is with us to-day in acute form. Communist theory and practice, other forms of dictatorship, extreme nationalism, the pretensions of dominant religious groups, the new Leviathan in the form of the highly organized progressive state with all its merits, and the sensitive pride of men in their own scientific and technical

progress—all create a novel and difficult, but not intractable, world situation.

A first attack on the difficulty has been made in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations. The Declaration is a document adopted by the United Nations—at the final vote there were 48 in favour, none against, and 8 abstentions. It is not a document which has to be ratified or adopted by the nations; it stands only as a declaration of principles to which the nations give their general assent; it has no legislative or binding authority. It may be hoped that, in course of time, it may come to have an influence on the outlook of men such as has been accorded to the principles of the Magna Carta, or the American Declaration of Independence, or the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. The question of how to strengthen the Declaration by Covenants which will be submitted for formal adoption by the nations is under consideration. It must be always remembered, however, that all procedure by legal enactment demands a certain sincerity and good faith between men, and the State itself is bound to define the limits of freedom in the interest of public order and morality.

Article 18 of the Declaration reads as follows: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." It will be observed that this article is formulated so as to include not only the right to worship, but the right to teach; not only the right of individuals to do these things, but the right to do them in association with others; and not only the right to believe, but the right to change one's belief. If this last provision is taken in conjunction with the right of manifestation and teaching, it is a clearly expressed sanction of the maintenance of religious missions and the use of reasonable persuasion, for example by means of witness or manifestation, teaching and practice, in order to convert.

The actual form of this article, in the redaction of which the Churches, through the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, have had considerable influence, is satisfactory. But the situation in the world is anything but satisfactory. Indeed, it is hardly open to question that religious intolerance is a pressing problem of our time; and of the complaints which reach the United Nations on violations of human rights, the vast majority relate to alleged interference with religious freedom. But the importance of establishing a standard should not be overlooked. Probably further advance will not be achieved by international action alone, but by States incorporating the principles of the Declaration into their domestic legislation.

But although I cannot here enter into the reasons and conditions of

intolerance in say, the U.S.S.R. and the Communist states, Spain, Colombia, Italy, certain parts of the Moslem world, or elsewhere, I must go on to show what seems to be the main line of approach in the endeavour to secure wider freedoms.

We must recognize the positive achievements of nationalism in developing the solidarity and progress of the newer nations especially. It ill becomes a nation with a long and continuous history like our own to belittle this. But there is an intense and fanatical nationalism to-day which has no place for diversities of free outlooks. When nationalism is Communist or fascist, or purely dictatorial in the personalist sense, it is apt to be hostile to religious freedom, freedom of witness, and the religious practices of minorities. A nation infected with this kind of nationalism will only allow it to subside to a reasonable emotional level when it can lay aside suspicions that its existence and foundations are being threatened by other nations, and enter into free reciprocal relations with them. That means the breaking down of barriers, and it is a contribution to the better observance of human rights and freedoms according to standards internationally accepted. But I do not think the mere formula of peaceful coexistence, so popular in the modern world, really indicates an international fellowship of the free and open kind that is here envisaged. It is not a genuine and willing living together, but a limited tolerance imposed by a frail balance of power and interests. It solves, in a certain crude and immediate manner, the problem of peace, but not that of justice. It means that if you commit a murder, I, your neighbour in the street, can do nothing about it, since there is no law and no police, but only an unstable agreement that I will coexist with you, in other words, live next door—until, perhaps, my own turn as victim comes round.

A true international order, in which freedom and rights are no longer threatened, requires at least a minimum of agreement on a common set of guiding principles. These cannot be expressed in specifically Christian terminology, since in this matter we are dealing with many who are not Christians. But such principles ought to be of Christian inspiration. We tried to wrestle with this in a preliminary way, at the recent Assembly of the W.C.C., under the heading "Towards an International Ethos" and we tentatively advanced the following considerations as constituting the foundations of such an ethos:

1. All power carries responsibility and all nations are trustees of power which should be used for the common good.
2. All nations are subject to moral law, and should strive to abide by the accepted principles of international law to develop this law and to enforce it through common actions.
3. All nations should honour their pledged word and international agreements into which they have entered.

4. No nation in an international dispute has the right to be sole judge in its own cause or to resort to war to advance its policies, but should seek to settle disputes by direct negotiation or by submitting them to conciliation, arbitration, or a judicial settlement.
5. All nations have a moral obligation to ensure universal security and to this end should support measures designed to deny victory to a declared aggressor.
6. All nations should recognize and safeguard the inherent dignity, worth, and essential rights of the human person, without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.
7. Each nation should recognize the rights of every other nation, which observes such standards, to live by and proclaim its own political and social beliefs, provided that it does not seek by coercion, threat, infiltration or deception to impose these on other nations.
8. All nations should recognize an obligation to share their scientific and technical skills with peoples in less developed regions, and to help the victims of disaster in other lands.
9. All nations should strive to develop cordial relations with their neighbours, encourage friendly cultural and commercial dealings, and join in creative international efforts for human welfare.

Obviously, we are a very long way from all that, and the road winds uphill to the very end.

Finally, and by far the most important, is the growth and development of the Church itself. By its extension throughout the world the Church provides a form of association between men whose lives have been subordinated to the obedience of Christ. Thus the Church offers a loyalty in fellowship which transcends the loyalties of nationalism, and mitigates the sharper acerbities of natural antagonisms and tensions. It does not follow that the higher loyalty must conflict with the loyalty to the nation-state, since, as we have seen, the Church and the State are both necessary to man's full life in community. But insofar as the existence of the Church mollifies the asperities of national confrontations, it contributes to the growth of that understanding in which human rights and freedoms, including the Church's own freedoms, can flourish.

And it is in the Church, and by the teaching of the Church with its authority in Holy Scripture, that the conception of rights and freedoms can be put on the only sound and enduring basis, since the Church derives them direct from the law of God and the revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. Here we stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and advance from that to give it full meaning, in all charity and understanding, in the witness and life, individual and corporate, of Christians in the world. Here we have stable ground beneath our feet, and sure standards to which to appeal. Thus, while freedom is essential to the Christian mission, it is from that mission that it derives its ultimate sanction.

It is not to be supposed that full freedom of Christian witness can be secured in any age without suffering, and, maybe, martyrdom. In opening this lecture I remarked that the course of history is determined by God and by what men believe about Him. I might well have added that this is more than ordinarily true of those beliefs for which men are prepared to suffer. This lesson is writ large across the pages of man's long history. If belief is worth living for, it is worth dying for, and the readiness to accept sacrifice is a test of the truth of mission.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES

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DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN (REV. ERASTUS EVANS) said: I am very grateful to Dr. White for giving me this opportunity of taking the chair while his valuable paper is being discussed. I may say at once that in a certain sense I agree with everything that he says in the paper. I think that he has kept throughout in the safe territory of Christian experience and has stressed the permanent elements within it. At the same time I should like to congratulate him on his courage, as the direct approach to New Testament material, with the aid of psychological technique, is very rare. The Jungians have done a great deal of this kind of work on the Old Testament but for the most part they have eschewed the New. Dr. White has been very well aware of the partial nature of what he is doing and knows that there are vast areas within the New Testament, to which psychological categories could be applied, that he is leaving untouched. This is very true of the Pauline Epistles. Now it seems to me that we are living in an age when the Christian revelation is being criticized and tested from every angle. During the last half century the struggle for a re-assessment of the nature and value of that revelation has turned largely on the scholarly criticism and examination of the Bible documents. This process was very unsettling and much resisted, but in the end it has brought to light something much more living and more capable of being assimilated into the modern consciousness. Now that an examination of the New Testament is beginning from the point of view of the depth psychologist, I think that it is going to raise problems that go to the roots of things, and that it will be some time before the shock of the process is over and the results can be taken into the Christian consciousness. Dr. White has opened a new door for us, but to me it is a door on a wild and difficult prospect, which ends it in a range of mountainous problems. I hope that Dr. White will forgive me if I review some of the things that he has said in his paper in the light of this realization. It seems to me that throughout he is keeping within the safe territory of the modern Christian conviction and experience, but that beyond the things that he touches upon there lies depth upon depth of complicated and difficult substance.

I agree with him when he compares the intellect to a sieve or the driving wheel of a car, and says that the motive powers of the soul are elsewhere. I suppose that we would agree with him when he says that the intellectual acceptance of a historical fact *per se* has no driving force because it leaves the emotional life untouched. He quotes Dean Inge with approval that the revelation cannot be purely historical or static or external, but must be given

to and through "the Christ-like elements in our consciousness". But it is precisely with this last phrase that it seems to me that the difficulties begin. What are the Christ-like elements within consciousness, and is the term *within consciousness* adequate to describe them? Could they not be better described as elements that are within the *unconscious* of man? Is there a Christ-image somewhere in man that is beyond the range of his consciousness, and is only at times called up into his consciousness? Is the Christ-image an archetype in the Jungian sense, and does this explain its tremendous power over the human mind? Or is the Christ-image something more than this, is it something that is even deeper than the archetypes, and somehow arises from the wholeness of man that is behind them? Is there great significance in the fact that Paul seems comparatively uninterested in the early life of Jesus? Is the Christ-image simply something introjected, as Dr. White seems to imply, or is it somehow always at work with the depths of the soul? Is Christ simply in the Gospel story? Is the thing that works in the depth of the soul the same as the historical Jesus? Does it need the historical Jesus to direct and control it, or is the historical Jesus but a partial symbol of something that is continually in process in the human soul? What does Dr. White mean when he says that faith is faith in a living person? Does he mean that there is a real communion with the historical Jesus, or that there is something living within the soul that takes on the rôle of Guide and Saviour? If so, what is the place of the historical revelation in all this? Dr. Jung seems to make it clear that he regards the historical Jesus as a somewhat inadequate symbol of the Self, the basic human being, for the real power is the *anthropos* figure that is in the depth of the soul and embodies all that the individual should be. This may seem remote and academic to those who are not familiar with this realm of psychology, but it seems to me to be nothing less than a new struggle for understanding the divinity of Jesus, this time on issues raised by psychology. Anyone who has tried to explain to a group of young people what is meant by an experience of communion with Christ will know that it is no mere academic question. In any case I do not think that the theory of introjection is sufficient and we must face deeper issues.

Then Dr. White tells us that fear played no part in the deeper experience of Paul, but admits that the eschatological element within the Epistles does border on a territory ruled by fear. But with that word *eschatological* there has entered at one stride something that separates the psychology of the Pauline Epistles from that of modern man. In spite of the hydrogen and cobalt bomb modern man does not live in hourly expectation of the end of the world and the coming of Christ. Why that strange expectation in the time of St. Paul? Was it some strange uprush from the unconscious? It is idle to deny that it controlled most of his thinking, and that his message is presented in that framework, and that fear of the end and the judgment conditioned a great deal of the expression of his thought. What validity has

it, if we are still to cling to the form in which it was first expressed? Is it right to study the psychology of St. Paul as though he were a modern man easily fitted into our categories? With the notion of the approaching end of the world and a last judgment, does not a whole mythology which is not that of modern scientific man come into view? Are we as moderns bound to that mythology? This is the question raised by Bultmann. Does not the whole thing need understanding afresh in the light of the way the modern understands life? Can psychology help us to do this?

In his section on thought, Dr. White compares the release in prayer to God with the Freudian catharists. But this seems to me to raise a vast question, namely whether the early Christians were in the modern psychological sense anything like fully conscious. The scientific attempt to understand the depths of the soul is surely something new, in the West at least, and its presence is something that involves a new assessment of many things. Whether the early Christian attitude to sex was in any way like that of the modern Marriage Guidance Council is something perhaps that some of us would doubt, but then the modern Marriage Guidance Council is much more scientifically conscious of sex, and is not merely concerned with the thought of sin, and the approaching end of the world. This new evaluation is bound to bring in other ideas than that which a foreshortened view of the world might bring. This may have serious effects upon the Christian understanding of life as compared with that of the New Testament. Is it true to say that while the early Christians were controlled by a mythology, the modern does make an attempt at psychological understanding?

Dr. White does speak of a continuing struggle which arises for the Christian. The fact that he is a Christian calls forth a new conflict, the struggle between the old man and the new, the flesh against the spirit and so on. He speaks also, very helpfully, of the escape from the tyranny of conscience. But there is a question from the psychological point of view as to whether a division of man into black and white is helpful. It seems that the modern psychologist sees many helpful things in the side of man that Christianity has regarded as dark, Paul wishes to be delivered from this body of death. Jung says: "What if I myself am the least of these my brethren and need to be loved and cared for?" Is there really a contradiction here? Or has the psychological doctrine of self-acceptance something radically in common with the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and the free acceptance of the whole man, *simul justus et peccator*, by God? Jung has drawn my attention to a commentary on the Ephesians where the point is made that Christ is the reconciler of the opposites, and perhaps a reading of Christianity from the viewpoint of psychology might result in this somewhat Blakean vision.

A great deal of criticism of revelation is going on. Berdyaev considers the whole framework of Paul, who is conditioned by the metaphor of the law-court, inadequate. Bultmann questions whether Christianity is always to

be tied to one mythology. Jung asks whether the dark side of man is to be taken into consideration. A paper such as this shows the need for a psychological reassessment of revelation.

MR. E. W. CRABB, referring to the Chairman's remarks, asked whether modern man's attitude to eschatology was not founded on a basic unbelief in a future life at all.

In his views in regard to conflict, is Jung a representative of modern man?

DR. BURNETT RAE asked whether the eschatology of St. Paul was so closely associated with his psychology.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

PROFESSOR F. F. BRUCE wrote: Dr. White is to be congratulated on the illuminating way in which he has treated his subject. It was but reasonable and wise that in a single paper he should have confined himself to one aspect of such a many-sided theme as Pauline psychology; but we hope that on later occasions he will give us similar treatments of other aspects. Among these may be singled out as of prime importance for our understanding of Paul, his teaching about the reciprocal relationship between Christ and His people, in which He is in them and they are in Him. An examination of this relationship from the viewpoint of Dr. White's special studies, coupled perhaps with a critical appraisal of Dr. Albert Schweitzer's handling of the subject in *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, and of Dr. J. A. T. Robinson's more recent exposition in *The Body*,¹ would form a worthy addition to Dr. White's many services to our Institute.

I am inclined to think that the Pauline opposition between *pneuma* and *psyche* is not characteristic of the other New Testament writings, where indeed the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably (compare, for example, John 12: 27 with 13: 21); and Paul himself, where he is not dealing expressly with the *pneuma-psyche* tension, can use the terms in a more indefinite sense. But this tension is certainly a most important element in Pauline psychology. With this distinctive use of *pneuma* there is bound up the further problem that it is not always easy to distinguish it from the use of the same word to designate the Spirit of God. And then, when we think of Paul's use of the adjective *pneumatikos*, does it ever mean something like "controlled by the Spirit (of God)"? In practical application these difficulties of discrimination are not so great as might be supposed, for it seems plain that it is upon the spirit of man that the Spirit of God works. The spirit of a man who is unresponsive to the Divine Spirit is dormant (not to say stunted or dead); he is self-centred, self-dominated, *psychikos*. But the man whose spirit is *en rapport* with the Spirit of God, and is responsive and obedient to every prompting of the latter, is liberated from self-thralldom and is truly *pneumatikos*. But this is probably just saying over again what Dr. White has said, and not saying it so well.

¹ I should now add E. Best, *One Body in Christ* (S.P.C.K., 1955)

Dr. White's examination of the problem—passage Rom. 7: 14–25 throws welcome light on what I believe to be the true exegesis of these verses.¹ The conflict which they describe was set forth as follows in the lines entitled *The Paradox* by Joseph Hart, a Particular Baptist minister of London early in the eighteenth century (better known as the author of the hymns *Come, ye sinners, poor and needy*, and *This, this is the God we adore*):—

How strange is the course that the Christian must steer!
 How perplexed is the path he must tread!
 The hope of his happiness rises from fear,
 And his life he receives from the dead.
 His fairest pretensions must wholly be waived,
 And his best resolutions be crossed;
 Nor can he expect to be perfectly saved
 Till he finds himself utterly lost.
 When all this is done, and his heart is assured
 Of the total remission of sins,
 When his pardon is sealed and his peace is secured,
 From that moment his conflict begins.

AUTHOR'S REPLY

I am very grateful to Mr. Evans for taking the chair for me. He is a very busy man, and I know that it meant some sacrifice on his part to come here to-day.

In the remarks he has made he has raised a number of important questions which I should be foolish to attempt to answer. No doubt further psychological research will throw further light on the New Testament revelation.

There are two points on which I disagree with him.

Firstly, I should not accept his statement that the hourly expectation of the end of the world and the coming of Christ controlled most of St. Paul's thinking. This appears to be an exaggerated and one-sided view.

Secondly, there are still multitudes of Christian men and women who do expect the coming of Christ to the world to set up His Kingdom on earth. Apart from this hope, what is there to look forward to in the onward march of events? Are the nations to go on indefinitely in the present unhappy state of fear and hatred, with wars and rumours of wars ever in their minds? As a friend of mine once remarked, the nations will know no peace until they submit to the rule of the Prince of Peace.

Mr. Evans asks what I mean when I say that faith is faith in a living person. I mean that as Christians we believe that Christ is a Divine Person Who appeared on earth incarnate in the Jesus of history, who was crucified and rose from the dead. We believe that by His Spirit He is near us, and is with us, as He Himself said He would be. It is this living Christ and Saviour in whom we confide.

¹ I should like to draw attention to three able papers entitled "Romans VII Reconsidered," by Dr. C. L. Mitton, which appeared in *The Expository Times* 65 (1953-54), pp. 78 ff., 99 ff., 132 ff.

I agree with Mr. Evans that the theory of introjection is insufficient, and that we must face deeper issues.

I also agree with him that there is a need for a psychological reassessment of revelation.

I should like to thank Mr. Evans for the trouble he has taken in his criticism of my paper, and for the profound questions he has raised. They deserve much thought and meditation, and will no doubt act as a stimulus to further research.

In reply to Mr. Crabb, I find it difficult both in his question and in Mr. Evans remarks to know exactly what is meant by modern man. We know that many modern men are unbelievers. I am sure we agree that for the Christian the words of Christ are truth, and we accept Him as the infallible Guide and Teacher. The opinions of men vary and change; the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.

I have answered Dr. Burnett Rae's question in my reply to the Chairman's remarks.

I am grateful to Prof. Bruce for his kind remarks about my paper and for his illuminating comments on *pneuma* and *psyche* in the Pauline Epistles, with which I find myself in entire agreement. His suggestion for a further paper dealing with Paul's teaching about the reciprocal relationship between Christ and His people is interesting. It is a profound subject, needing much careful thought. I recently read Dr. Robinson's exposition in *The Body*, and found it a valuable contribution to thought on this subject.

GENESIS 10: SOME ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

By D. J. WISEMAN, O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C.

DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN (REV. S. C. THEXTON) said: We are indebted to Mr. Wiseman for his scholarly examination of this difficult chapter of Genesis, the detailed analysis and assessment of which can be carried out only by one with considerable technical and linguistic equipment. In addition to the wealth of detail he has given us on particular points, it would seem that Mr. Wiseman has given us impressive evidence for his two main contentions. In the first place he has demonstrated that the threefold grouping of the peoples of the Ancient Near East under the names of the sons of Noah can be shown to correspond with what archaeology can tell us of the relations between them, even though these must be understood in a wider sense than that of blood relationship. In the second place he has pointed out that the geographical and ethnological knowledge, implied in these lists of Genesis 10, might well have been available to a Hebrew writer living prior to the Exodus.

What further observations I have to make are mainly in the form of questions, on which I should be grateful for any further clarification Mr. Wiseman can give.

No mention has been made of the view taken by most commentators that the lists are made up from two or more sources. Although we have been told that a merely geographic classification is inadequate, it is true that so far as vv. 6-7 are concerned, the Hamitic list does comprise a southern group of peoples. Yet with the mention of Nimrod in v. 8—the point where the source critics claim to discern a different strand of tradition—we find our attention transferred to Babylonia and Assyria. Is there any support for the view of some who suggest that since vv. 6-7 and vv. 8 ff. were not from the same hand, it may be that whereas in v. 7 "Cush" stands for Ethiopia, in v. 8 it stands for the Kassites? Those who take this view point out that while we know the Kassites did for a long period gain control in Babylonia, there is little positive evidence for the implication of vv. 8 ff., that its great cities were founded by an Ethiopian king.

When Mr. Wiseman states that the three colophons are comments on, but not parts of the list, he presumably means comments by the editor of the passage as we have it. If so, while accepting the point that the word *mish-pahoth* may stand for political as well as blood relationship, does this help us greatly in deciding what precise relationships the actual compiler or compilers of the lists themselves intended to convey? Is there not still some truth in the words of Driver quoted by the lecturer, that the chapter is "an attempt to show how the Hebrews supposed they were related to the other principal nations"? It has been demonstrated that in pursuing this attempt the com-

plers of the lists drew on a much fuller knowledge than some have supposed, of the relationships between the peoples of their time. They are not concerned, however, merely with the description of these, but with an interpretation of them which can be fitted in to their preconceived notion that only the family of Noah survived the Flood, and that therefore the repopulation of the earth must have taken place by actual physical propagation through his sons.

DR. A. RUTHERFORD asked the meaning of the expression in Gen. 10: 25, "the earth was divided".

MR. HEBERT OWEN said: Could Mr. Wiseman give any information as to the connection, if any, between the "Nimrod" of Genesis 10: 8 and the "Merodach" of the Babylonians? Merodach was, of course, Marduk, worshipped among the Babylonians as the king and champion of the other gods. It does not seem impossible that he was an early warlike hero who was later worshipped as a god. "Nimrod" contains the same three consonants as "Marduk," MRD, these being preceded in the one case by N, and in the other case followed by K.

REV. H. L. ELLISON said: I should appreciate clarification on two points, for the paper seemed to contradict statements commonly made.

i. While I recognize the difficulties raised by the archaeologist's inability to excavate the earliest levels of Babylon, I have been given repeatedly to understand that even if Babylon may have existed in the Sumerian heyday, it only rose to a position of importance when the hegemony of Lower Mesopotamia passed to the Akkadians.

ii. It is always affirmed that the Canaanites—not the pre-Canaanite inhabitants of Palestine—were typical Semites in language, appearance and religion. If this is true, how is it to be accounted for? It cannot be answered by referring to the pre-Canaanite stratum of society, or by seeing certain Hamitic traits among the Canaanites. What was the powerful assimilating element?

CAPTAIN A. L. PERRY said: May not the Cush which appears on some maps as being situated on the west bank of the Caspian Sea be the original country set up by the eldest son of Ham, and the Cush in Africa be but a province of the same? This would seem to agree with Gen. 2: 13, whose marginal reading for Ethiopia is Cush, which is also included in the text of the R.V.

If this is so, it enables one to see the connection of Ethiopia with the Northern Confederacy referred to in Ezek. 38: 5 (Of course the same difficulty applies to the mention of Libya.)

MR. TITTERINGTON said: The late Air Commodore P. J. Wiseman, in *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis*, expressed the view that the recurring phrase, "These are the generations of . . .", forms a colophon at the close of each section, which could very well have been compiled by the person named in the colophon. On this view, Genesis 10 would fall into the section relating to Shem, and would thus date not later than 500 years after the flood. Taking the Bible figures as they stand, this would accord very well with the date Mr. Wiseman has suggested. This would seem to strengthen the view that we have here an actual record of lineal descent. It would also indicate that only the main groups or branches of the nations are given, the minor branches developing subsequently. I should be interested to know whether Mr. Wiseman cares to offer any comments on this.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

PROFESSOR F. F. BRUCE wrote: There is no member of our Institute, and there are few people in this country, who could have summed up the present state of archaeological knowledge in its bearing on the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 with the authority or up-to-date information which Mr. Wiseman possesses, and we may congratulate ourselves on having him to enlighten us on these matters.

I should be grateful if Mr. Wiseman would say something by way of answer to the following questions suggested by a reading of his paper:

i. What comments may be made, from an archaeological point of view, on the "Japhetic" theory propounded by the late Nikolai Marr and others, which envisages a primitive "Japhetic" ethnical and linguistic stratum from the Caspian Sea to the Atlantic, which was later overrun by the Indo-European migration?

ii. Could some fuller statement be made about "such little evidence as we yet have for the complex question of the origin of the Greeks" which suggests that "the more westerly Greek mainland and islands were later peopled from the Anatolian mainland"? I have in mind the commoner view that the Greeks entered their historic homelands in three successive waves from the north—(1) the Ionians, who in historic times are represented on the Greek mainland only by the inhabitants of Attica, as they were compelled to move out to the Aegean islands and Anatolian coastland by (2) the Achaeans (including the Aeolians and Arcado-Cypriotes), who in their turn had most of their territory on the Greek mainland overrun and occupied by (3) the Dorians, the last Greeks to arrive from the north, two or three generations after the Trojan War. As the Ionians were the first Greeks (on this view) to come into contact with the peoples of S.W. Asia, it is not unnatural that the latter should have called all the Greeks Ionians (just as the Romans called them all *Graeci* from the name of a tribe in Epirus with whom they came into early contact).

In any case, if Genesis 10 is to be dated so early as Mr. Wiseman suggests, the Ionians would have been the only Greeks known at that time within the boundaries of Eastern Mediterranean civilization.

iii. Would the lecturer express an opinion on the view which connects Cush the father of Nimrod with the Kassites (possibly to be identified with the Cossaeans of classical writers)?

iv. Would he express an opinion on the view which connects Arpachshad with Arrapha (possibly to be identified with Arpachitis or Arrapachitis of the classical writers)?

Archaeological knowledge advances so rapidly that some of these equations, popular no long time ago, may now be generally abandoned. No one is better able than Mr. Wiseman to keep us up to date.

AUTHOR'S REPLY

I am deeply grateful for the criticisms and comments made on my paper, for one of my objects in selecting this difficult chapter of Genesis for study was to provoke discussion and thus seek to further the objectives of the Institute.

The analysis of the chapter on pp. 15 ff. deliberately avoided a discussion of the commonly held hypothetical division into fragments, since this ignores the modern research done on ancient Near Eastern literary methods. I have, therefore, sought all too briefly to show how the various components of the chapter can be better explained on the basis of the use of editorial colophons to join copies of ancient and reliable texts so as to form a historical list. Most ancient Semitic texts of this nature are compilations of facts rather than personal interpretations and for this reason among others I regard S. R. Driver's view, that the chapter is a tentative ethnological interpretation, as belittling the historical evidence and outmoded by recent discoveries.

The Chairman and others have raised the question of the identity of the land of Cush.

i. The usual view is that Cush is the Babylonian *kušu*, Egyptian *k'š*—terms which regularly represent ancient Nubia, roughly equivalent to the modern Sudan (T. Säve-Söderbergh, *Agypten und Nubien*, and A. H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, have useful references).¹ Cush was thus referred to by monarchs who had dealings with the lands south of Egypt but made no pretence to control the regions of Elam or E. Anatolia where others would site Cush.

ii. Cush is sometimes equated with a little-known district of Kusu (N.E. Armenia?), mentioned in the Cappadocian tablets.

iii. An identity with a possible Kash or Kasdu, "Chaldaea", is improbable since this term was applied only to a small district near the Persian Gulf.

¹ Cf. also A. Malamat, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 13 (1954), pp. 231 ff.

iv. The equation of Cush with the Kassites implies that Elam, the area from which these peoples infiltrated into Babylonia, once bore the name of *Kus(h)u*, but this is unattested. Moreover it is not certain that Elam was the region where the Kassites originated. Further, no form of the word for "Kassite" is known to me which drops the middle (doubled) radical (cf. classical "Cossæans"). Any identification of Cush proposed must agree with Genesis 2: 13, Numbers 12: 1, etc., unless we follow the possible line, that there was more than one place covered by the Hebrew name. In view of unpublished cuneiform texts known to me which might imply some connection of a Cush with Persia I feel unable at present to be more precise in giving my reply to a complex question which merits further study. It should perhaps be stated that the modern "Cushites" are a mixed race, dark but by no means black, who seem to be in origin migrants from Canaan. Like the Canaanites they may have been "semiticized" after their arrival in the Sudan. The up-to-date ethnological and archaeological information can be gathered from the Sudan Antiquities Service journal, *Cush*.

Mr. Owen has raised the old problem of the identity of Nimrod. While the philological equation of Nimrod with Marduk, through his Sumerian name AMAR.UTU, has often been proposed and is not impossible, it must be remembered that this form of the name of Marduk is not found in the early texts. Marduk was, however, given the attributes of earlier gods during the second millennium B.C. I favour the equation with Ninurta, the god of hunting and war, whose origins are, however, obscure (see p. 21). A good case has been made out that Nimrod was the same as Lugalbanda the pre-flood king of Erech whose historicity has been recently confirmed (Popplcha, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 49, p. 303).

Mr. Ellison asks for clarification on two points.

i. As for Babylon, the reason for the city's late rise to *political* power was that in the earliest period it was overshadowed by the powerful city states of Agade and Kish. Šarkališarri of Agade (c. 2200 B.C.) refers to Babylon, but as a *religious* centre. When the more powerful neighbours of Babylon declined for economic reasons, political power shifted to the more southerly cities of Erech and Larsa, and as a result Babylon, under its vigorous First Dynasty (c. 1800 B.C.), was free to grow as an independent political and religious centre and gradually to absorb the southern states. Thereafter Babylon became the chief city, and "Babylonia" a unified state.

ii. Our knowledge of the Semitic language, appearance and religion of Canaan is largely based on late second-millennium texts and reliefs. If the view that Canaan was originally inhabited by non-Semites is correct (see p. 22), then the "mixed races" of Canaan, of which there is much evidence now accumulating, would be explained by Semitic infiltration (as, e.g., the Abraham and Exodus migrations). The powerful assimilating element was perhaps the racial adaptability and religious fervour of the virile nomads who

entered Palestine much as we know from Syrian texts they had moved in further north.

I am in no position at present to give a fair criticism of Marr's Japhetic theory. The whole problem of origins in Anatolia requires a new study. I have, however, followed the views of a number of such scholars as R. Dussaud (*Civilisations Préhelléniques*), J. Vercoutter (*Égyptiens et Préhellènes*) and several Etruscologists and archaeologists in seeking for Greek origins in Anatolia in the light of evidence which points to an early north-westerly movement into Asia.

My only hesitation in following the common identification of Arpachshad with Arrapha (modern Kirkuk) is that little is known of this site in the earliest time, partly due to the impossibility of excavating the ancient site. I put forward Dossin's view (*Le Muséon*, 47, pp. 107 ff.) merely to bring it to the attention of others.

It will be seen from the many questions raised and from my inability to answer some of them that much further study of this chapter of Genesis is called for. If I have been able merely to show the need of this and perhaps in a very small way to point the way along which other research workers may look for a solution, it would be most gratifying.

Erratum, p. 20, line 24: For *kullanah* read *kullenah*.

SECULAR RECORDS IN CONFIRMATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

By D. J. WISEMAN, O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C.

DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN (MR. E. W. CRABB), after congratulating Mr. Wiseman on receiving the Gunning Prize, remarked that those who deal with records at second hand are often handling material that is out of date.

DR. ADAM RUTHERFORD said: I am pleased to have the opportunity of expressing my very high appreciation of Mr. Wiseman's splendid essay and am most grateful for all the valuable help I have received from him; and I desire to thank him most cordially for all the trouble he has taken in condensing such a wealth of information into such space. May I have the privilege of asking a few questions on one or two matters dealt with, wherein I would be most grateful for further enlightenment?

i. On the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III mention is made of the overthrow of Pekah, King of Israel, and the usurpation of power by Hoshea. Do these inscriptions state in what year of Tiglath-pileser's reign this occurred?

ii. I understand that on Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions the ninth year of his reign is mentioned. What were the events recorded in that year?

iii. On p. 30 Mr. Wiseman says that, according to Tablets VAT 16283 and 16378 from Babylon, Jehoiachin and family were prisoners from 595 to 570 B.C., to which the tablets are dated. Whilst it appears that the year 570 B.C. was the last date on the tablets, are we to infer that 595 B.C. was the first dating or does Mr. Wiseman mean that the Tablets show 595 B.C. as the date that Jehoiachin's captivity began?

iv. Are the datings on these tablets (VAT 16283 and 16378) shown as years of Nebuchadrezzar's reign, and if so, what was the precise year given for the beginning of Jehoiachin's captivity in Babylon?

v. Does the expression "at the turn of the year" (2 Chronicles 36: 10) refer to the Vernal Equinox?

REV. H. L. ELLISON, after congratulating the winner of the Gunning Prize, pointed out that though the material for the establishment of a scholarly text of the Old Testament had increased manifold in the last few years, yet we still await the advent of those who will do for the Old what Westcott and Hort did for the text of the New Testament. This may be seen from the frequency with which the Revised Standard Version refuses to follow the suggestions of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, the only readily available critical text of the Old Testament. Yet no one would maintain that the Revised Standard Version has said the last word in fixing even an approximate text. Though many of

its deviations from the Massoretic Text are undoubtedly correct, it is sometimes too timid, sometimes too rash, sometimes outmoded by the most recent evidence from Qumran.

MR. G. W. ROBSON said: In view of what Mr. Wiseman has said about the accumulation of documents and the paucity of scholars competent to decipher them, is there anything which the Christian public can do—for example by way of finance—to ensure that a sufficient corps of scholars can be assembled, or maintained, to enable the work to go forward?

Also, what action can the Christian public take to ensure that the facts which Mr. Wiseman was able to disclose to the Institute can be brought to the notice of the public, in view of recent publicity given to historically baseless attacks on the faith?

MR. W. E. FILMER said: An Assyrian record of Tiglath-pileser throws light on an apparent discrepancy in 2 Kings, where we are told first in 15: 30 that Hoshea began to reign in the twentieth year of Jotham, i.e. the fourth year of Ahaz (margin)=735 B.C., and second, in 17: 1, that he began to reign in the twelfth year of Ahaz=727 B.C. A marginal note to 15: 30 tries to make out that the first date, twentieth Jotham, refers to the death of the previous king Pekah, after which there was an interregnum. But Pekah died in the nineteenth year of Jotham (third Ahaz), 736 B.C. as may be shewn from either 2 Kings 15: 32 or 16: 1 and the fact that Pekah reigned twenty years (15: 27). (See Martin Anstey's *Romance of Bible Chronology*.)

Now the Annals of Tiglath-pileser (A. H. Sayce, *Assyria*, 1926, pp. 176-8) state that in his ninth year, which was 736 B.C., he put Pekah to death and appointed Hoshea as governor, thus making Hoshea's first year of rule 735 B.C. which was the twentieth year of Jotham. We have further from the Assyrian records that after a reign of eighteen years Tiglath-pileser was succeeded by Shalmaneser in 727 B.C., the very year in which Hoshea is said to have begun his reign for the second time. This suggests that on the occasion of the death of his overlord Tiglath-pileser, Hoshea set himself up as an independent king, and 2 Kings 17: 4 suggests that he had done this with Egyptian support.

MR. HERBERT OWEN asked if the scope of the paper permitted of a few words from its author as to the recently reported discoveries by excavators under native directorship of monuments and inscriptions not far to the south or south-east of the ancient Nineveh. Could he also say what was the name of the king whose palace or inscriptions were involved?

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

PROFESSOR F. F. BRUCE wrote: While we congratulate Mr. Wiseman on winning the Gunning Prize, we should also congratulate the VICTORIA INSTI-

TUTE on securing for its Transactions so authoritative and up-to-date a paper on this subject. Mr. Wiseman is rapidly establishing for himself a world-wide reputation as an Assyriologist, and it is a matter for great satisfaction to us that he takes such an active part in our counsels and proceedings.

There are several points in this essay on which I should like him to enlarge: I will restrict myself to four:

i. Near the top of p. 28 it is mentioned that Ahaz is also called Azariah—possibly a dynastic name. We are already familiar with his designation as Jehoahaz (Ya-û-ha-zi) in contemporary Assyrian texts. Could Mr. Wiseman please give some further information about the place or places where he is called Azariah? Is there any link with Azriyau of Yaudi, also mentioned in Tiglath-pileser's records? (I see that E. R. Thiele maintains the older view that the southern Judah is intended here.)

ii. What is the Babylonian form which can be translated "the shepherd raised up to the heavens" (p. 32, foot)?

iii. I gather that nowadays the general view about the Ur and Kish floods (p. 33) is that these were not contemporary with each other, that neither can be identified with the Biblical deluge, but that they are examples of the kind of inundation to which the Mesopotamian basin was liable, and thus illustrate rather than corroborate the Biblical narrative (cf., e.g., G. A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* [1937], p. 41; M. Burrows, *What Mean These Stones?* [1941], pp. 26 f., 70). I should be grateful if Mr. Wiseman would comment on this.

iv. On p. 30 Mr. Wiseman mentions that Herodotus is being increasingly proved trustworthy by the new discoveries. I should be glad to have his judgment on Herodotus's account of the Scythian invasion of the Palestinian seaboard (*Hist.* i. 105), a matter of some Biblical relevance because it has been viewed as a background to the prophetic ministry of Zephaniah and the younger Jeremiah.

CAPTAIN A. L. PERRY wrote: I should like to have some enlightenment on the subject of the Patriarchs. On p. 32 of Mr. Wiseman's paper he speaks of "the ten pre-flood patriarchs," and on p. 33 "the patriarchal period". I would suggest that correctly speaking there are only fourteen true patriarchs according to the Scriptures, who are named in Heb. 7: 4, Acts 2: 29 and Acts 7: 8. In each case it must be observed that they were all *chief* fathers, or heads: Abraham, chief head of the house of Israel; David, chief head of the royal house; and the Twelve, chief heads of the twelve tribes. Did the word "patriarch" or its true equivalent appear in the document from Kish written c. 2,000 B.C., or is Mr. Wiseman merely using the term loosely?

MR. J. K. MICKELSEN wrote: If it is in order, I'd like to add another illustration of the indirect confirmation of the Scriptures by secular records to those already given by D. J. Wiseman. In the May 1949 issue of *The Biblical*

Archaeologist, an Aramaic letter (dated about 603/2 B.C.) written to a Pharaoh of Egypt is described. It illustrates the international importance of Aramaic at this early date. It also sheds some light on the Aramaic portions of Scripture. As John Bright, the author of the article, says (p. 52), "The Aramaic of Ezra . . . takes on a more authentic flavour Again, that courtiers should address Nebuchadnezzar in Aramaic, as the story in Dan. 2: 4 has it, no longer appears at all surprising".

AUTHOR'S REPLY

I am very grateful for the comments made upon my essay and only wish that time and space had allowed a fuller treatment of some of the important issues raised. A number of questions concern the records of Tiglath-pileser III. These tablets are very broken or badly preserved so that to date many of the quotations which relate to the Old Testament it is necessary to reconstruct the order of events which survive only on undated fragments. For this reason and the consequent possibility of error it is, in my opinion, unwise to enter into detailed chronological discussions. It will certainly be safer to await the outcome of current excavations at Nimrud, which have already (Spring 1955) produced further parts of the royal annals of Tiglath-pileser III. The record of his ninth year is less broken and gives details of military operations north-east of Assyria (cf. D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria*, i. 277). It was because of the poor state of these records that I suggested that the broken section referring to Azariau of Yaudi was an allusion to Ahaz. This would, as I wrote, imply that Azariah was a dynastic name such as was common in contemporary texts. There is insufficient evidence for any certain distinction to be made between Yaudi as a North Syrian state, otherwise not well known, and Yaudu for Judah, the latter being clearly written in the Annals of Sargon II.

The dates given for the texts from Babylon mentioning Jehoiachin are those on the tablets as given by Dr. E. F. Weidner. These follow the normal practice and cite the regnal year of the king (here Nebuchadnezzar). The dates given are for the earliest and latest tablets in the group and confirm only that Jews were held captive in Babylon during these years. They do not, of course, relate to the commencement or termination of the captivity itself. This began in 597 B.C. "at the turn of the year," i.e. the months Addar-Nisan when the Babylonian year changed from the seventh to eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 2 Kings 24: 12).

Mr. Bruce raises some interesting problems. The Sumerian text translated by Professor A. T. Clay ". . . the shepherd raised up to the heavens" is *sib zi an-na*. In this and parallel texts relating to the pre-Flood dignitaries they are always called LUGAL, a term which has a wide range covering kings, both great and small, and even local rulers and tribal chiefs. Captain Perry points out rightly that I use the term "patriarchs" (which has a special

Biblical connotation) loosely. The question of the archaeological evidence for the Flood deserves a special and full treatment. This must however await the full publications of the archaeological evidence from the sites of Ur and Kish as well as the neighbouring cities of Eridu and Erech. The authors of the quotations cited by Mr. Bruce are certainly wrong in deprecating the Flood evidence because the clay deposits do not "at either place mark a division between two different civilizations" (Burrows, p. 70). Both the Bible and the Babylonian literature on the Flood emphasize that continuity of culture was maintained by the very people who were placed in the ark that they might preserve it. Moreover there is no geological or archaeological evidence that the Flood deposits are "examples of the kind of inundation to which the Mesopotamian basin was liable . . ." The normal action of the rivers and seasons in the area is well known to such experienced field workers as Sir Leonard Woolley. Many of the theories which have been put forward, usually in contradiction to the Genesis narrative, have been examined by A. Heidel in his excellent book *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*. Most people in approaching this subject forget that the Bible and the Sumerian and Babylonian versions of the Flood story agree in stating that the waters were deep enough for the ark to be carried by the receding waters to the lofty mountains of Urartu (Armenia).

I have discussed the Aramaic papyrus relating to the approach of Nebuchadrezzar's army to Ashkelon in 603/2 B.C. and some aspects of the difficult Scythian problem in a work due to appear shortly.

The discoveries at Nineveh made in 1954 revealed part of the palace of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon on Nebi Yunus. Fragments of Egyptian statues inscribed with the name of Tirhaqah were found. Full details are being published in the 1955 issue of the journal *Sumer*, published by the Directorate-General of Antiquities, Iraq.

Mr. Robson has touched upon the insufficient number of scholars qualified to work on the large mass of cuneiform literature. One reason for this is that it takes many years of preparatory study before productive work can be undertaken in this field. There are few appointments even for the qualified and so a strong sense of vocation, coupled with a wide vision, is demanded even before embarking on so risky a career. Unfortunately the science of "Assyriology" has not had the same popular appeal, and thus financial support, as the older classical studies and Egyptology. In America and France private and public finance is available to endow research, for Assyriology is thought of as an "expanding universe", but little has been done in our country where there are also very few academic appointments designed to cover Biblical archaeology in the broad sense in which that subject is conceived in this paper. There is opportunity, however, for anyone, even if not highly qualified, to undertake research in a limited sphere and to popularize a subject where the scholars themselves have insufficient time or inclination to do so. Although there is no equivalent in Britain of the excellent American

periodical *The Biblical Archaeologist* it would, I believe, be only fair to say that the major results as summarized in my essay have been, or will be, made known in such a form and ways that they are readily available to any diligent Bible student.

Errata

- p. 27, line 25: for "Achaemenid" read "later".
- p. 28, line 16: for "iron-ore" read "copper-ore".

TRENDS IN NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

By PROFESSOR F. F. BRUCE, M.A.

The Rev. S. Kunsie Craig Memorial, 1955.

In accordance with the terms of the Trust the Council have selected for the 1955 Memorial the Paper on "Trends in New Testament Interpretation" read before the Institute on 14th February, 1955, by F. F. Bruce, M.A., as being strongly confirmatory of the Christian Faith.

DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN (REV. H. L. ELLISON) said: I regret that not more stress has been laid on the swing from interpreting the New Testament in terms of Hellenism to interpreting it in terms of the Old Testament and early Rabbinic thought. It is true that this is perhaps not so very recent, but owing to the fact that much of the standard literature behind it (e.g. Strack-Billerbeck's *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, and Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*) is in German, the movement has had inadequate impact in this country, Davies' *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* being one of the few works that has really made the basic material available to the English reader.

Then I could wish that there had been room to mention with more than a passing glance the bastard offspring of the classic studies on the Synoptic Problem and the "*formgeschichtliche Methode*", by which any statement about our Lord or any form of His teaching which cannot be found in more than one source is automatically suspect. As those views gradually become popularized, we are in real danger of seeing the J, E, D, P of the Pentateuch and their subdivisions paralleled by Mk., Q, M, L, etc., with similar deductions being drawn.

DR. E. WHITE said: Does Prof. Bruce believe that the Synoptic Gospels are based on oral tradition which took shape during the first few years of the Church's history, or does he think it possible that the words of our Lord were written down at the time of their utterance or shortly afterwards? I believe it has been suggested that St. Matthew might have taken down some of Christ's sayings in shorthand.

Would Prof. Bruce agree that some, at least, of the Epistles were written before the Gospels? If so, is it not strange that they quote scarcely any of our Lord's words uttered during His ministry? They deal with His death and resurrection, but they hardly refer to His ministry on earth. Neither His teaching whilst on earth nor His miracles find any place in the Epistles. Would Prof. Bruce comment on this?

THE REV. DR. C. T. COOK said: I should like to ask if the dating of the Synoptic Gospels has been affected in any way by these recent trends.

MR. TITTERINGTON said: Referring to Prof. Bruce's remarks on page 40 concerning the study of the language of the New Testament, could he recommend any useful work dealing with this subject? Moulton and Milligan is not accessible to all of us, and is too monumental for general use, whilst Deissmann's works are scrappy. I do not know whether the works mentioned by Prof. Bruce would fill the gap.

When Dr. Dodd speaks of the Old Testament quotations in the New as exhibiting a method of exegesis, does he mean that the quotations are made with reference to their context, and that their use in the New Testament constitutes a method of exegesis of the passages from which they are taken?

I should welcome some further enlightenment on Bultmann's theories, if Prof. Bruce could be kind enough to expand his remarks on them a little.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

MR. G. W. ROBSON wrote: In what respect does the demythologizing of Bultmann differ from the similar efforts of Strauss a hundred and twenty years ago?

MR. DONALD GUTHRIE wrote: In speaking of C. H. Dodd's *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (pp. 43 f.), Prof. Bruce gives the impression that Dr. Dodd attributes to the Gospel a greater degree of historicity than is actually the case. No doubt this is due to the extreme conciseness of his reference to this work. I mention the matter to avoid any possible misunderstanding. It is true that Dr. Dodd claims that John bases his work on the primitive κήρυγμα, but in treating this theme he leaves little that can be regarded as historical. It would be helpful, I think, if Prof. Bruce could give some indication of this trend away from the historical, while at the same time basing the revelation itself in history.

I greatly enjoyed Prof. Bruce's admirable survey.

MISS MARY COSTON sent extended comments on the section headed "The Heirs of Salvation" (pp. 46 f.), in which she emphasized the relevance of John 1: 7, Rom. 11: 5 and Heb. 13: 8-14 for the question of fellowship, and criticized the conception of the Church as the continuation of Christ's ministry as follows: "since the Ascension and specifically from Pentecost till today the Holy Spirit is now ministering in person here on earth. . . . Christ cannot be continuing in His ministry here on earth when it was finished at the Cross (John 19: 30), and He is now resting at the right hand of the throne of God."

AUTHOR'S REPLY

I should like, first of all, to thank Mr. Ellison for sparing the time to honour me by taking the chair, in the midst of his active and useful life. English evangelicals have in Mr. Ellison a Biblical scholar for whose gifts they should be very thankful. I myself have profited greatly at various times by the spiritual insight and mental acumen evinced in his spoken and written ministry; and London Bible College may well congratulate itself on having a man of his qualities on its teaching staff.

I am glad that Mr. Ellison has repaired an omission in my paper by emphasizing the swing away from interpreting the New Testament in terms of Judaism to interpreting it in terms of Old Testament and later Jewish thought. This has, for example, wrought a welcome change in the approach to the Fourth Gospel, both in its *logos* doctrine and in its general presentation of the apostolic message. The work by Dr. Aileen Guilding mentioned on p. 41, n. 4 (soon, I hope, to be published), is but one of several attempts to understand this Gospel in terms of a Hebrew background and environment.

On the source-criticism of the Synoptic Gospels, I have little worth adding to the report I made to the VICTORIA INSTITUTE twelve years ago ("The Sources of the Gospels", *JT VI* 75 [1943], pp. 1 ff.). I doubt if any real progress can be made beyond the point to which B. H. Streeter, Vincent Taylor and T. W. Manson have led us. While the "four-document hypothesis" affords a solid basis for trust in the main Gospel tradition, it provides no justification for scepticism with regard to elements in the tradition found in one document only (even if that document be M). Whether the Gospel material be classified according to documentary sources, "forms", similarity of subject-matter, original audience, or what you will, the witness to Jesus as Messiah remains unshaken.

In reply to Dr. White, I should say it is quite conceivable that some of our Lord's teaching may have been taken down in shorthand; in any case, much of it was given in an easily memorized form. We should remember that the New Testament epistles were written to people already acquainted with the Gospel story and with the rudiments of Christian teaching. Even so, while the references in the Epistles to explicit sayings of Jesus are relatively few, the ethical teaching of the Epistles is in essence the teaching of Jesus. We have only to compare Rom. 12: 1-13: 14, for example, with the Sermon on the Mount to realize Paul's dependence on the teaching of the Sermon, although the Matthaean and Lukan versions of the Sermon are later in date than Romans. (Paul was probably familiar with the Sermon and other teaching of Jesus in some collection of His sayings.)

In reply to Dr. Cook, I should say that the trends I have discussed have little bearing on the precise dating of the Gospels. Mark's Gospel has usually been dated after A.D. 64 on the strength of the statement in Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* iii. 1. 1) and the anti-Marcionite prologue to Mark that Mark wrote "after Peter's departure". But T. W. Manson has suggested that, while

most interpreters have understood Peter's "departure" (Gk. ἔξοδος) to be his death, the original form of this statement referred to his departure from Rome some time between A.D. 55 and 60 (*BJRL* 28 [1944], pp. 130 ff.). This suggested earlier dating of Mark, of course, has a bearing on the dating of the other Synoptic Gospels. As for Luke, C. H. Dodd demolished a common argument for dating his Gospel after A.D. 70 when he showed that the mention of Jerusalem's being surrounded by armies in Luke 21: 20 (in place of the Markan reference to the abomination of desolation) is not coloured by the Roman siege under Titus but by Old Testament language ("The Fall of Jerusalem and the 'Abomination of Desolation'," *JRS* 37 [1947], pp. 47 ff.). On the other hand, I think that Matthew's Gospel contains certain indications, both in ch. 24 and elsewhere, that it was written after (but not long after the destruction of Jerusalem).

In reply to Mr. Titterington's first question, it must be said that, if one leaves on one side as too technical such works as Moulton and Milligan's *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* and Moulton and Howard's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, or Professor Moule's recent book, the more popular works on the language of the New Testament are even scrappier than Deissmann's. Dr. H. G. Meeham has a useful little introduction to the subject entitled *Light from Ancient Letters* (Allen & Unwin, 1923).

The answer to his second question is "Yes". Unlike the late Rendel Harris, who did much valuable pioneer work in the study of early Christian "Testimonies" from the Old Testament, Dr. Dodd maintains that it is not proof-texts, but whole passages in their proper historical contexts, that underlie the thought of the New Testament writers. He recognizes that the New Testament understanding of many of these passages involves a considerable development of meaning, beyond what was explicitly in the minds of the authors. But this is inevitable: "the meaning of the writings cannot remain static while the life to which they belong changes with the centuries" (*According to the Scriptures*, p. 132). And in various examples which are examined (more particularly from the Psalter), "reflection will show that the development of meaning is a living growth within the given environment, and that the doctrines associated with these passages by the New Testament writers gain in depth and significance when we have regard to the original, historic intention of the psalms they cite. Without pursuing this problem further, I would submit that, while there is a fringe of questionable, arbitrary or even fanciful exegesis, the main line of interpretation of the Old Testament exemplified in the New is not only consistent and intelligent in itself, but also founded upon a genuinely historical understanding of the process of the religious—I should prefer to say the prophetic—history of Israel" (p. 133).

As for the questions about Bultmann, I can only say within the limits at my disposal here that his "demythologizing" of the apostolic message differs from the efforts of earlier "demythologizers" such as Strauss in that he is not at all concerned to recover a "merely human" Jesus with a simple message of ethical monotheism as the older liberals were, but is anxious rather

to remove from the path of modern man every obstacle presented by the first-century formulation of the gospel in order that he may find himself directly confronted with God and with His challenge to abandon his frustrating "confidence in the flesh" for that trust in God's grace which liberates him from insecurity and "vanity" (in the sense of Rom. 8: 20) and makes him a new man in Christ. But Bultmann's procedure is radical in the extreme: he not only "demythologizes" the literal phraseology of such a statement as "He came down from heaven" (which we all accept as pictorial), but the very belief in the pre-existence of Christ which such a statement implies. Bultmann's personal faith in the Word made flesh secures his own Christian position, but for all his eagerness to enable others to share his personal faith (Ronald Gregor Smith has called him "an evangelist looking for a language"), the effect of his teaching on those who have not this vital relationship with Christ can be that they are left with nothing that is distinctively Christian.

Mr. Guthrie's question underlines one of the most puzzling features of Professor Dodd's book on the Fourth Gospel. When Dr. J. E. Davey, a liberal theologian, discussed it on the B.B.C. Third Programme, he described it as "a book which breaks with the conservative tradition of British works on the Fourth Gospel", and thought, indeed, that "it goes too far in the surrender of historicity" (*The Listener*, November 12, 1953). On the other hand, Professor N. B. Stonehouse, a distinguished conservative scholar, pays tribute to Dodd's "relative conservatism in many respects," while concluding (rightly) that he "adopts an essentially mediating position" with regard to the historical aspect of this Gospel (*Westminster Theological Journal*, 16 [1953-4], p. 68). Dodd admits that "it is important for the evangelist that what he narrates happened" (p. 444); my own feeling is that, if only he could have seen his way to give more weight to the Gospel's claim to be based on the testimony of an eye-witness, his book would have been even more valuable than it is and would have rid itself of a curious ambiguity in regard to the historicity of the Gospel. One can treat seriously the Gospel's claim to be founded on first-hand evidence and at the same time do full justice to the characteristic interpretative element which pervades it.

To Miss Coston I would point out that while one phase of our Lord's ministry was completed by His death, the New Testament describes Him as continually active during His present heavenly session, both in His high-priestly ministry on His people's behalf and also in the extension of His kingdom on earth by His Spirit in His followers.

In closing, let me express my appreciation to all who attend the meeting and took part in the discussion or sent in communications, and not least to the Council of the VICTORIA INSTITUTE for repeating the honour which they did me twelve years ago by again selecting a paper of mine for the Runsie Craig Memorial.

NEOPLATONISM AND CHRISTIANITY

By the Rev. Principal PHILIP S. WATSON, M.A., B.D.

DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN (THE REV. S. CLIVE THEXTON) said: We are grateful to Mr. Watson for his very lucid survey of a movement of thought which, as he has so clearly shown, has profoundly influenced the development of Christian theology.

That staunch protagonist of Neoplatonism, the late Dean Inge, has lamented the fact that so many critics of Plotinus have done him scant justice through evading the discipline of studying his writings, but relying instead on the interpretation of others. Mr. Watson has shown, both by numerous direct quotations, and still more numerous references, that he has gone to the fountain-head for his information.

If, as we have been told, the medieval Arabian philosophers—and the great “Angelic Doctor” himself—read their Aristotle through Neoplatonic spectacles, it is, I think, also true that it is very possible to read Plotinus through Christian spectacles. And when we do so, there is a great deal to which we feel we can say “Amen”, and a strong sense of treading familiar ground, of “having been here before”. Indeed, it is possible to feel that “with but little persuasion we could make him a Christian”. We are especially grateful therefore, for Mr. Watson’s incisive conclusion to his paper, in which he reminds us that between Neoplatonism and Christianity there is a great gulf fixed.

A decisive point of division, it would seem to me, is in Neoplatonism’s implicit denial of the Christian doctrine of creation. Mr. Watson has shown us the wide divergence between the two systems in regard to the nature of salvation. One might well ask the question whether for Plotinus there is really anything to be saved. For this pre-existent individual soul emanating from the Divine Mind, whose “fall” is marked by its entry into matter, is a purely speculative concept. Not only does it seem to bear little relation to what we understand as a human being, but its end apparently is a return to the One, and an absorption which would seem quite to extinguish whatever faint spark of existence it may have had. In what seems to me its denial of real selfhood for the individual soul, I feel the teaching of Plotinus falls more nearly in line with the pessimism and negation of Buddhism, than with Christianity.

All this, I would suggest, is because of this pernicious insistence that the hierarchies of existence and of value must correspond. This is quite opposed to Christian doctrine, which can assert even of the humbler orders of creation that “God saw that they were good,” and that the angelic spirit can become the Prince of Darkness. One imagines the Neoplatonist could find little

meaning in the injunction of our Lord which I have always taken to mean: "Be perfect men, as your Heavenly Father is perfect God".

The basic Platonic view that only universals are real must inevitably tend to reduce human beings to mere broken lights of the One, whatever intermediate stages or other complications may be postulated. Christian orthodoxy can go a good deal of the way with Aristotle's criticism of that view, which underlies the Thomist assertion of a real delegation of independent being to man—something irrevocable, as when one pours molten metal into a mould and allows it to harden. The mould—or "form"—finds its real expression in the particular. Man is created, for better for worse, here and hereafter, a body-soul. He is to find his ultimate beatitude in the contemplation of God, but not in reabsorption in God, for he is not God, but creature man. And this is why, as Mr. Watson has reminded us, we assert our faith in the "resurrection of the body"—a dogma, one imagines, almost horrific to the Neoplatonist. If not horrific, it is also embarrassing to those who, infected (as I suspect) by the Platonic strand in Christian thought, are constantly seeking to "spiritualize" those disconcertingly material elements in the Christian faith, which obtrude themselves most strikingly in the incarnation and resurrection of our Lord.

DR. E. WHITE said: There are three questions I should like to ask Mr. Watson.

Firstly, how far is the modern theological conception of the soul influenced by the teaching of Plato and his followers? The Bible seems to regard the soul as the life of man, whether mental or physical, and it belongs to the spheres of time and space. The Apostle Paul speaks of the "psychic" man, translated "natural man" in the A.V., as "receiving not the things of the Spirit of God". The Platonic conception of soul would seem to be more like the conception of spirit.

Secondly, is it possible that the Platonic conception of matter as evil contributed to the ascetic practices of the early and medieval Church? If the body, being composed of matter, is essentially evil, this would lead to a belittling of the body. This contrasts with the New Testament teaching that the body is for the Lord, and the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Thirdly, do modern theologians believe that the Logos of St. John's Gospel was derived from Platonic sources, or was it derived from Hebrew thought?

MAJOR C. W. HUME said: Would Principal Watson agree that such progress in physical science as the Greek philosophers were able to make was killed, by the end of the second century A.D., not by Christianity (as Sir James Jeans and others have suggested) but by Platonists, with their endeavour to solve scientific problems *a priori* like geometrical problems? It would seem that the mentality required for scientific research is in many ways congenial to Christianity but uncongenial to Platonism.

Could Principal Watson say whether the Neoplatonists expressed any active compassion for the lower animals? Professor Harold Smith has attributed to revived Aristotelianism the narrowing of sympathies in this direction which came over Christian theology in the later middle ages, but *prima facie* one would expect this to have stemmed from the Neoplatonists' contempt for the body, and from the "acquisitive, self-centred love" (in the speaker's words) which constitutes *eros*.

MR. W. B. GRANT asked whether the expression, "The Way", in John 14: 6, owed anything to Hellenistic sources.

MR. TITTERINGTON said: The views of Plotinus as set out on pp. 55 f. regarding the nature of the One remind one forcibly of the Moslem doctrine of God, the Unknowable: if we can postulate anything concerning Him, our postulation is *ipso facto* false. I see that Mr. Watson states (p. 53) that Neoplatonism made an impact on the Moslem world. One wonders whether this is the source of this particular doctrine.

It would be interesting, and I think helpful, if Mr. Watson could give us a little fuller information as to the precise contribution of Neoplatonism to the thought of Augustine and Aquinas (pp. 52 f., 62), and in particular, whether any of the Neoplatonist elements of Catholic theology have spilled over into the theology of the Reformed Churches. We do need to be on our guard against foreign elements in Christian thought, and any help in this direction will be valuable.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

MR. F. F. BRUCE wrote: The Institute may well congratulate itself on having secured Principal Watson's paper as a contribution to its Transactions. I have never seen such a lucid account of Neoplatonism. But Principal Watson deserves our thanks not only for describing the main features of Neoplatonism in a form which the interested non-specialist can grasp, but also for showing so clearly the basic incompatibility between this world view and that of Biblical Christianity. My own studies in this field have chiefly centred round the writings of Marius Victorinus (c. A.D.300-375), who did his best to restate the faith of Nicaea in Neoplatonic terminology. The "books of the Platonists" in Latin dress which Augustine read (cf. p. 62) were very probably Victorinus's translation of the *Enneads*; and we know what an impression was made on Augustine by the story of Victorinus's conversion to Christianity, related by Simplicianus. Victorinus's influence persisted in another way, for he was in considerable measure the author of the technical vocabulary of the medieval schoolmen, with its Neoplatonic impress. For all the attractiveness of Neoplatonism to the religious mystic, evangelical Christians must

be grateful to the Reformers who removed this alien element from the faith and replaced it by a truer and Biblical emphasis.

PROFESSOR T. E. JESSOP wrote: My comments are an endorsement of Principal Watson's paper. I admire the way in which Neoplatonism has been both accurately and concisely expounded; and I doubt if the basic opposition between Neoplatonism and Christianity could be expressed more briefly and more pointedly than it has been in the last three pages. Only at one point have I felt a misgiving, which perhaps concerns expression rather than meaning. The last two sentences of the first paragraph of Section II on p. 55 suggest that with Plato the soteriological interest is not paramount. There are many passages in Plato's dialogues (notably *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Timaeus*) which suggest that it is; and in *Timaeus* (e.g., 41 f., 90D) soteriology seems to be linked very closely with cosmology. Plotinus shares with Plato the conviction that salvation requires intellectual as well as moral *askesis*.

REV. DR. HAROLD ROBERTS wrote: Principal Watson's paper seems to me to be an excellent account of Neoplatonism; and although the third section is necessarily brief, the fundamental differences between Christianity and Neoplatonism relating to the nature and way of salvation are well brought out. In spite of the enthusiastic devotion of the late Dr. Inge, it is worth inquiring whether Neoplatonism has a contribution of permanent value to offer to human thought. The points raised by Mr. Watson in the last section are of first importance.

AUTHOR'S REPLY

Professor Jessop is of course right. The soteriological interest is undoubtedly paramount in Plato. My statement on p. 55 is unfortunately ambiguous. What is "hardly Platonic" is not the soteriological ascent of the soul, but the elaboration of the cosmological descent, the emanation of all things from the One, as the presupposition of the ascent.

The idea of emanation is also a point at which, as Mr. Thexton observes, Neoplatonism differs profoundly from Christianity with its doctrine of creation. I have touched on this in section III(1), and would have said more about it if there had been time. But the contrast between Eros and Agape is, I think, more fundamental, since unless it is understood and accepted the doctrine of creation is insufficient to counteract the effects of emanationism. This can be illustrated in reply to Mr. Titterington's question about Augustine and Aquinas, who as Christians are naturally not emanationists. They hold that the world is a good creation of God, and therefore they cannot regard matter and the body as essentially evil. Nevertheless they maintain the Neoplatonic identification of the hierarchies of existence and value, and they class material, earthly, corporeal existence among the very inferior "goods". But what is more, their doctrine of love is basically Neoplatonic. All love is

interpreted as ultimately desire for the Supreme Good, and God's love is rationalized in terms of divine self-love. Hence it is easy to see that their interest must necessarily be directed away from lower goods to the higher and the Highest—which means away from the physical world to the metaphysical. We have here, I think, undoubtedly a primary source of asceticism in the Christian tradition (as Dr. White suggests) and also a reason for lack of progress in the sphere of natural science (to which Major Hume refers). The Reformation, with its rediscovery of the meaning of Agape and the consequent revaluation of the created order, seems to me to deserve more credit than is usually given to it for the scientific achievements of modern times. Not that Protestantism has wholly escaped the influence of the pre-Reformation tradition; very far from it. All too often Protestants have been pre-occupied with the salvation of the soul to the exclusion of the body, and have fallen victim to a wrong kind of other-worldliness.

Whether the "modern theological conception of the soul" (Dr. White) is Platonic or not, depends very much on what we take to be "modern" theology. The recent revival of Biblical theology has certainly led to drastic criticism of Hellenistic thought and its influence on the Christian conception of man as well as of God. Much traditional Christianity has thought in terms of the Platonic-Neoplatonic dualism of body and soul; and while it has never placed the creature on a level with the Creator by teaching the essential divinity and eternity of the soul, it has commonly regarded the soul as a creature far superior to the body and in some degree akin to the Divine. (Popular ideas of a "divine spark" or a "bit of God" in every man are of course derived from Hellenism, not from the Bible.) It is true that the Bible makes a distinction between the physical and the psychical aspects of human nature; but man is for it a unity rather than a duality: he is an animated body rather than an embodied *anima*, and the body is so far from being a prison or a tomb that disembodiment is to be feared and dreaded rather than desired. This of course ties up with the Biblical valuation of the whole created order, which is poles apart from that of Neoplatonism.

Although Plotinus, as I have pointed out, writes against "those who say that the Creator is evil and the world is bad", he can set no really positive value on the created world except as he finds in it the means by which the soul can rise above it. He cannot value the creatures for their own sakes. This fact, together with his egocentric conception of love and his dominant concern with the salvation of the individual soul, makes it unlikely that much "active compassion for the lower animals" (Major Hume) will be found in him. Active cruelty he would certainly discourage—but probably more because of its adverse effect on the perpetrator than on the victims. Even where the victims are human, he shows no sympathy for them whatsoever (*cf.* Inge, *Plotinus*, II. 174 f.). But in this he is typically Greek; for Greek civilization, as Inge remarks, was singularly pitiless.

Dr. Roberts raises the question whether Neoplatonism has any contribution of permanent value to offer to human thought. Inge of course believed that it

had, and that Christianity in particular owed it a great debt of gratitude. According to him, Neoplatonism taught Christianity the meaning of "God is spirit", by enabling it to grasp the idea of timeless, incorporeal existence. But a modern Biblical theologian would reply that here Christianity had been very badly taught, since the Biblical understanding of "spirit" is quite different from that of Neoplatonism and, indeed, of Hellenism generally. That, I think, is certainly true—though the modern tendency to insist on the exclusively Hebraic and non-Hellenistic character of the Bible can be overdone. Dr. White asks whether the Johannine Logos is of Hellenic or Hebraic origin, and it could be argued that it is purely Hebraic; but scholars are not in fact agreed on this point, and many would connect it quite closely with Philo. But to my mind the question of its origin does not very much matter. We know that both Jews and Greeks spoke in their different ways of a divine "Word"—and that neither of them attached the same meaning to it as the author of the Fourth Gospel, who identifies it with Christ. He uses a familiar term, so it seems to me, in order to catch the interest of his readers, whether Jews or Greeks, and then goes on to revise their ideas of what the term means—and of much else besides—by introducing them to Christ. Hence, just as it is misleading to interpret "God is spirit" in Neoplatonic terms, so it is misleading to interpret the Johannine Logos in terms of somebody else's Logos.

Neoplatonism differs so fundamentally at so many points from Biblical Christianity, that it scarcely seems from a Christian point of view to have anything to be said in its favour. Yet it deserves study on account of its profound and far-reaching influence on traditional Christian thought, and it is also an extremely interesting subject in itself. A religious outlook of such depth and seriousness can hardly be written off as containing nothing but error, even though a great deal in it seems to us erroneous. The question might well be asked, whether we cannot credit a man like Plotinus with at any rate some measure of quite genuine religious experience, the true significance of which he has misunderstood and misinterpreted. His doctrine of love and his conception of salvation are clearly quite incompatible with those of Christianity; but it is not unthinkable that his personal religious experience was nearer to reality than his theory of it—as near, perhaps, as a man can get without Christ.

KARL BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

By the Rev. G. W. BROMILEY, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.

DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN (DR. C. T. COOK) said: In the current issue of *The Expository Times* Professor T. F. Torrance, of New College, Edinburgh, describes Dr. Karl Barth as "incontestably the greatest figure in modern theology since Schleiermacher" and a teacher who occupies "an honoured position among the great elite of the Church—Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin". There could hardly be higher praise than that for any theologian, and at the very least it suggests that Karl Barth is a teacher thoughtful Christians cannot afford to ignore.

We are fortunate in having Dr. G. W. Bromiley to open a discussion on one aspect of Dr. Barth's Christian Dogmatics—and it is an essential aspect—namely, his Doctrine of Inspiration. Dr. Bromiley is known and esteemed as a former Vice-Principal of Tyndale Hall, Bristol, and as the Rector of St. Thomas's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh. His contributions to the *Scottish Journal of Theology*, *The Churchman* and other journals, and especially his essay on "The Authority of the Bible" in *The New Bible Commentary*, have marked him out as one of our ablest younger scholars. He has studied Dr. Barth's writings at first hand in the original German and we are indebted to him for the most informative paper now before us.

His paper has made us even more conscious than we were before of the importance of being able to study Karl Barth's views in the original German. Most of us are dependent upon English translations or even upon the opinions of his disciples and critics for our own understanding of this great theologian, and as this paper has reminded us we may be led seriously astray in our estimates of him and his system. Dr. Bromiley has clarified a number of points which hitherto have been obscure to me. I understand that Barth's *Dogmatics* are in eight massive volumes which are in course of translation into English. Some of his critics, I observe, have spoken slightly of him for having modified some of his earlier conclusions. That is not a commendable attitude. On the contrary it requires courage and humility for an influential teacher to acknowledge that some of his opinions need to be revised as a result of wider understanding of all the issues involved.

There is no doubt whatever in my own mind that Dr. Barth's greatest service to our generation is his insistence that the message of the Bible is the all-important thing, which means that we study it theologically, even

Christologically, and not merely historically or as ancient literature. In this he has set in motion a most welcome reaction against the over-emphasis on the human element in the Scriptures which has been the bane of so much liberal theology. It is impossible to read much of the extreme criticism current forty or fifty years ago without feeling that the writers approached the study of the Scriptures with a strong bias against the supernatural. Dr. H. H. Rowley tells us that in his early days he was once rebuked by a well-known minister because he proposed to waste his life by devoting it to so dead a subject as the Old Testament. To-day, we welcome a turn of the tide, as evidenced for instance in Dr. Rowley's own recent volume, *The Unity of the Bible*. Dr. Barth has had a large share in restoring Biblical theology to its proper place.

I am glad that Dr. Bromiley has drawn attention to one of the greatest weaknesses hitherto in Dr. Barth's view of inspiration, namely his "regrettable hesitancy to accept the objectivity of the initial work of the Holy Spirit". It has resulted in his confusing illumination with inspiration. It recalls a statement by a popular preacher many years ago to the effect, "I believe in the inspiration of the Bible because it inspires me". But the Bible is inspired revelation whether men accept it or reject it as such. No doubt you feel, as I do, that Dr. Bromiley's reference to Karl Barth's strong emphasis on the objective character of the Atonement is particularly apt as a parallel with regard to the objectivity of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

I would like to ask Dr. Bromiley whether he thinks Karl Barth has proved his contention that his theology is a true working out of Reformation principles.

MR. A. H. BOULTON said: I find the Barthian view of the place of reason and authority difficult to follow. It seems rather extraordinary to write a series of volumes so learned and massive as Barth's *Church Dogmatics* and then, in them, deny the validity of the human reason without which it would be impossible to grasp what they were about. And so far as the "self-authenticating" quality of the inspired book is concerned, it must authenticate itself to someone, and my question is what would be the position in the event of a book seeming to me to be self-authenticating, whilst it does not authenticate itself to you. To say that this does not happen is untrue, as witness the Apocrypha, and Luther's doubts about the Epistle of James. The fact is that there existed doubts about the place of Esther in the canon up to the time of St. Jerome, and the canon was settled by the Council of Carthage (I believe) in A.D. 397.

DR. R. E. D. CLARK said: Why does Barth go out of his way to attack reason? It is hard to see how the written word of God can authenticate itself except to a reasonable being. If it has a spiritual effect upon us, does not reason tell us that God is at work? If it points to God, is it not reason which

tells us that it does so? A cat or a dog merely sniffs at the end of the stick which points; it needs a reasonable being to recognize the object pointed at.

Barth says that reason has fallen and is a fallible guide. Of course this is so. All man's faculties and aspirations are tainted with sin—his emotions, his conscience, his desire for goodness and truth, his sense of the beautiful, even his ability to know that the Bible is self-authenticating, no less than his reason. Why does Barth seize upon reason as if that had suffered most of all by the Fall? Man was made in the image of God but that image is not *totally* defaced by sin. If God leads men to Himself, there must be something in man upon which He can work. We do not read that God redeems the devil, who is *wholly* evil. In some of us He uses reason, in some He uses other faculties. In our day one would have thought that He would find in reason an easier line of approach than in past generations, for men are now more apt to distrust emotion and conscience in favour of reason than formerly. By discounting reason in *our* day and generation is not Barth doing a great dis-service to the Christian cause?

DR. R. J. C. HARRIS said: May I ask Dr. Bromiley to elucidate the sentence in Section VII, p. 77, beginning "Fifth, . . ."? This to me is as "incomprehensible as time".

DR. E. WHITE said: In the exposition of Karl Barth's doctrine which has been so ably and clearly given by Dr. Bromiley, there appears to be some confusion between the subjective reaction of the reader of the Bible and the objective part of inspiration. Is it not true that inspiration is an objective fact of history, and is altogether independent of its reception or rejection by men? Holy men of old spoke, and wrote, as they were moved upon, borne along, by the Holy Ghost. The inspiration of Scripture is surely not contingent in any way upon the mental attitude of those who read it.

Perhaps Dr. Bromiley would make this point clear, or am I mistaken in my interpretation of Karl Barth?

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

PROFESSOR F. F. BRUCE wrote: Dr. Bromiley has done us a really valuable service in preparing so well-informed and balanced an exposition of his subject. That many people should find it difficult to make up their minds about Professor Barth is not to be wondered at, in view of the continuous development of his thought during the thirty-seven years that have elapsed since the first edition of his *Romerbrief*. And it is made clear in this paper that his thought has not ceased to develop yet. Plainly Barth presents a striking contrast in this to his great forerunner Calvin, who produced his *Institutes* at the age of twenty-six.

But many of us, for all the difficulty we find in keeping up with Barth, owe him a great debt. When his work and its significance were first brought to our attention about a quarter of a century ago, not only many of us who were students in the Scottish Universities, but some of our teachers as well, found that Barth sent us back to the Bible and back to the Reformed faith to rediscover something more satisfying than a theological liberalism that had outlived its apparent relevance.

For this reason some of us are gravely perturbed by attempts that are made to depict Barth as a heretic and his theology as a new modernism. One particularly disquieting instance of this tendency affects a member of the Council of the Institute, who has been publicly attacked because of an excellent paper which he published lately on this very subject of Biblical inspiration. His approach has been classified as "Barthian" (which it is not) and condemned out of hand on this ground. Even if it had been Barthian, instead of being much more adequate and objective than Barth's approach, there would have been no excuse for this reaction. For one need not be a follower of Barth in order to realize that (as Professor G. T. Thomson used to tell us) Barth is basically a Reformed theologian, except that he doesn't believe in natural revelation. Dr. Bromiley has pointed out very fairly the weaknesses in Barth's treatment of inspiration, but has done justice to its positive merits too. It is indeed to be hoped that Barth himself will yet give more prominence to the objective element in inspiration than he has done hitherto.

I feel very grateful to Dr. Bromiley for his eminently fair and judicious paper.

REV. H. L. ELLISON wrote: Dr. Bromiley may or may not be correct in his criticism on pp. 75 and 79 of Barth's views on the fallibility of the Bible from the human side, but he seems to be less than fair to his standpoint.

The traditional inference from the Scriptures' being the Word of God, that therefore the human side is infallible and inerrant, may well be correct, but it remains an inference and not a fact of revelation. To affirm the necessary infallibility of the Scriptures is to place them in a position where man can sit in judgment on them. Barth's insistence on their fallibility is surely not motivated by the wish to avoid the accusation of obscurantism, but by the true insight that no human discovery can ever establish their authority, and therefore he wishes to slam the door on human judgment by conceding, it may be, overmuch.

While Barth may well go too far in his affirmation of human fallibility, we ought to learn from him that to regard its human infallibility as more than a reasonable inference is to invite people to base their acceptance or rejection of the Bible on purely human criteria.

MR. J. K. MICKELSEN wrote: Barth may be tending towards a more objective view of inspiration of Scripture; but, if so, it must have begun within the past eight years. For, in *The Christian Understanding of Revelation*—based on lectures given in 1947—Barth affirms:

“The Protestant theology of the so-called high orthodoxy of the second half of the seventeenth century embraced the doctrine of the so-called verbal inspiration, according to which the writings of the Old and New Testaments were literally inspired by God, so that the Bible gives us not only the Word but the actual words of God. This identification of the Bible and the revelation of God is unacceptable because the authors of the Bible do not themselves attest any such identity between their own words and the Word of God. . . . No one who reads the Bible carefully will find in it any claim that its texts are as such a revelation of God” (*Against the Stream* [S.C.M. Press Ltd., London, 1954], p. 217).

It is well to keep in mind, as Dr. Bromiley reminds us to do, that Barth emphasizes the subjective aspect of our knowledge of God. To take one crucial statement:

“The revealed Word of God we know (*kennen*)¹ only from (*aus*) the Scripture adopted by Church proclamation, or from (*aus*) Church proclamation based on Scripture.

“The written Word of God we know (*kennen*) only through (*durch*) the revelation which makes proclamation possible, or through (*durch*) the proclamation made possible by revelation.

“The proclaimed Word of God we know (*kennen*) only by knowing the revelation attested through (*durch*) Scripture, or by knowing the Scripture which attests revelation” (*The Doctrine of the Word of God*, tr. G. T. Thomson [T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1949 impression of 1936 ed.], p. 136).

Note Barth's verb, *kennen*; it emphasizes knowledge by acquaintance, rather than by inference; immediate, rather than mediate, knowledge.

AUTHOR'S REPLY

The matters raised in the discussion are not only so varied but also so important that adequate comment is hardly possible, but the following points may perhaps be made in reply.

1. In answer to Dr. Cook's question, there is no doubt that in his long historical excursus (pp. 574–584) Barth does make out a good case for the view that he is developing a Reformation insight partly distorted or obscured

¹ The German is taken from *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I/1, p. 124.

in later Protestant orthodoxy. The question is a difficult one, partly because it is so complicated historically, partly because we tend to read the Reformers in the light of later orthodoxy.

2. The self-authentication of Scripture is, of course, a well-established evangelical doctrine, and although there are certain objective criteria of canonicity we cannot suspend canonicity either on a rational decision of the individual or an authoritative promulgation of the Church. If some part of genuine Scripture does not authenticate itself this is due to our own resistance or blindness to the Word and Spirit. It is to be noted in this connexion that Luther never raised his doubts about James to an actual exclusion of it from the Bible.

3. To the question why Barth seems to emphasize particularly the effects of the fall on reason, the answer is given by Dr. Clarke's own statement that "men are now more apt to distrust emotion and conscience in favour of reason". It is on this very ground that reason has become more dangerous and its untrustworthiness needs to be more trenchantly exposed. Otherwise the reason we trust will become the real judge (e.g., whether this or that book is canonical, or the Bible is inspired), not the Word itself, which is the Holy Spirit, which is God. Of course, Barth does not deny that we have a reason, and he does his best to see that we use it. But it must be a reason renewed by the Holy Spirit, and informed by the Word, and therefore subordinate and subsequent, not supreme and preceding. I am quite sure that Barth is right in taking 1 Corinthians 1-2 rather than Romans 1-5 as the most relevant presentation of the Gospel for our rationalistic age—which is what he does in practice.

4. The point raised by Dr. White is a good one, and my own main criticism of Barth's presentation is that he over-emphasizes the "inspiration" in the reader at the expense of the prior inspiration of the writers. Barth himself would argue that inspiration is not completed until there is reception in the Holy Spirit by readers and hearers, and that there can be nothing more tragic than a Bible honoured as inspired which is not allowed to speak with living power. Therefore we ought not to try to divide up inspiration into a "state" and a recurrent act, but to see and know it always in its fulness. He does not really mean, of course, that the Bible is inspired "only" as it is inspired at this moment to me (even if in practice what matters is that it should be inspired at this moment to me). This is the extremist conclusion of Bultmann from which Barth has reacted most sharply in relation to the atonement, and I find it difficult to think that he would not also do so in relation to inspiration. But this is a more recent response to a question which has attained its full prominence only since the war, when Barth's main preoccupation has been with other doctrines.

5. In relation to God, and therefore to the Word of God, I think we must all agree that in the last resort *kennen* is more important than *wissen*. The danger, as Barth now sees it, is to allow the object of knowledge to become

less important than the act of knowing. When this object is God and His acts, this is a disastrous mistake, and we may include in His acts the prophetic and apostolic witness of the Old and New Testaments. If we have to know God and His acts, God and His acts are first there to know.

6. I believe that if Mr. Ellison re-reads the essay he will find that in the exposition there is a very full statement of the point he makes (cf. especially p. 68; p. 70, lines 4-8; p. 74; p. 79, lines 19 f.). But to make this point Barth has no need actually to make a judgment and assert the errancy and fallibility of the Bible. He has only to show that its infallibility and inerrancy are not essential and cannot really be proved. After all, there are just as many people who are likely to be invited to sit in judgment on the Bible, and dismiss it as mythology, when an eminent theologian or preacher tells them that it is full of errors and inconsistencies, as there are when the claim is made that it is free from error. That the real error is the sitting in judgment—either to appraise or condemn—is the point which Barth does, of course, want to make, but we must not make it in such a manner as to encourage it in another form. The rather categorical pronouncements on this line would, therefore, be better omitted, the more so as for all practical purposes (in his own extended expositions) he virtually ignores historico-critical findings and gives us (very valuable) theological exegesis.

7. Just one final matter. I append the relevant sentences from Barth himself to try to clear up the obscurity of compression which Dr. Harris has pointed out on p. 77: "But the presence of the Word of God itself, the real and present speaking and hearing of it, is not identical with the existence of the book as such. But in this presence something takes place in and with the book, for which the book as such does indeed give the possibility, but the reality of which cannot be anticipated or replaced by the existence of the book. A free divine decision is made. It then comes about that the Bible . . . is taken and used as an instrument in the hand of God, i.e., it speaks to and is heard by us as the authentic witness to divine revelation and is therefore present as the Word of God. It is present in a way we cannot conceive: not as a third time between past and future, between recollection and expectation, but as that point between the two which we cannot think of as time, which when it is considered immediately becomes once more either before or after."

May I take this opportunity of thanking the Council for the invitation to give this paper, and all those who contributed to the varied and stimulating discussion?

THE LARGE NUMBERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

By R. E. D. CLARK, M.A., Ph.D.

DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN (DR. E. WHITE) said: We are very glad to welcome Dr. Clark here to-day. In view of the pleasure and profit derived from previous papers read by him, we looked forward with expectancy to some original and stimulating ideas in to-day's address, and we have not been disappointed.

It is quite obvious that some of the numbers given in the Old Testament cannot represent the truth, and must therefore be attributed to errors in transmission of the text. When and how such errors occurred is a problem for the elucidation of scholars.

As I am neither a Hebrew scholar nor a mathematician, I am not in a position to discuss or criticize the theory put forward by Dr. Clark. We must all be indebted to him for relieving our minds of the burden of trying to believe, or, alternately, to explain away, the large numbers given in the records of the Exodus from Egypt, and later in connection with the entry into Canaan. His explanation appears to be a very feasible one, and I trust that further discussion of his paper will help to confirm what he has said, or perhaps produce some other equally reasonable theory. God, who gave us our power to reason, cannot have caused anything to be written down in His Word entirely contrary to reason, and whether or not Dr. Clark's theory is correct, his paper is a courageous attempt to cope with a difficult problem.

MR. D. J. WISEMAN said: Dr. Clark does well to stir us to fresh thought on the important problem of the large numbers of the Old Testament. That part of his Paper which appeals to me the most is his argument that the Hebrew *'lp* ("captain") has been interpreted in some passages by later scribes as *'lp* ("thousand"). Since the author shows how this may lead us to a solution of the problem, even if only in part, I would like to make some observations on this point.

Basically the Hebrew root *'lp* seems to mean "to be familiar with" and is used in this sense in Proverbs 22: 25; Job 15: 5; 33: 33; 35: 11 (A.V. "learn, teach"); and frequently as an adjective (A.V. "tame", e.g. Jeremiah 11: 19). The word parallels *meyuda'* ("friend"—i.e. one with whom one is familiar). In ancient Near Eastern texts a man who had special knowledge, being familiar with some art whether of peace or war, was *ipso facto* a leader. Hence the Hebrew *'alluph* (literally: "one who has learned, become familiar with . . .") is the "chief" or "leader" (Genesis 36: 15 *et passim*). There may be some connection here with the Hebrew *'elep* ("cattle"; cf. the Accadian *alpu* used of large horned beasts, etc.) which is the word used to describe the first or leading sign of the alphabet derived from the Phoenician pictogram of a horned beast. I would not care to press this possible connection between the Hebrew idea of "expert" (? rather

than "captain") and "leader" both being variants of 'lp. Could the Hebrew 'lp mean simply "trained (regular?) soldier" much as the Accadian *ummanu* ("expert") is used in the collective plural for "army" (*ummanati*)?

Is there any evidence for the use of the word for "expert" or "leader" as a numerical designation such as a "thousand" at a later period? It may prove relevant that the Egyptian army when mobilized was considered as "many thousands". Under Tuthmosis III (c. 1509-1450 B.C.) a division consisted of 5,000 men. It was later subdivided into 20 *w'rtw* each of 250 men (variants c. 200 men) under a standard-bearer. The lowest grade of rank mentioned is "the greatest of 50" or equivalent to an under-officer (cf. Assyrian *rab ḥamša*). In neither Egyptian nor Assyrian sources is a "captain of 100" or centurion attested. The Assyrian divisional officer was a *rab kišir* or "chief of a trained group". Does all this point to a possibility that the 'lp controlled some group other than a thousand? In Egyptian texts of the Middle Kingdom there occurs the phrase "valiant citizen" though whether this is a military rank or honorific appellation is uncertain (see p. 85; cf. *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* [1953], pp. 3 ff.). This contemporary military evidence leads me to doubt the high proportion of "officers" allowed by Dr. Clark on pp. 87 ff.

If the arguments given above should be correct in leading to a definition of 'lp as a military expert, whether of officer status or not, it remains to question how the scribes came to misinterpret 'lp in a number of passages. In equivalent Egyptian and Accadian documents, as in the later Aramaic writings, large numerals were rarely written in full since special signs or abbreviations were used, e.g. in Babylonian and Assyrian the sign LI(M) for *limu* ("thousand") and ME for *me'at* ("hundred"). The lesser numerals or digits were obvious notations, usually a series of strokes such as were adopted in the Roman system. Would Dr. Clark's solution imply that the scribe, at some juncture, had before him a manuscript in which an aleph was used as an abbreviation for both the figure 1,000 (?? see above) and the military title? An important discussion of the Aramaic numerical notation in Ezra-Nehemiah has been given in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 136 (1954), pp. 21-27.

It is difficult to generalize about the number of combatants in a battle in antiquity (p. 85). On the one hand, for example, Shalmaneser III includes the 10,000 soldiers supplied by Ahab in his own list of the participants of the battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C. and these numbers are certainly possible. Where the ancients have been accused of exaggeration it is often noteworthy that variant texts often give variant, yet still large, numbers for the same event (e.g. Sargon II and the captives from Samaria). On the other hand, there is the classical case of possible minimizing of numbers when Sargon II, after a long and arduous campaign in which he claims to have fought three battles in 714 B.C., gives his losses as three killed! It may be of interest that instances of c. 25,000 people and cattle taking part in a single migration have been recorded in the Near East.

In any study of the "large numbers" of the Old Testament each case must be examined individually, for there does not yet seem to be one solution to all the difficulties. We must thank Dr. Clark for reminding us of this.

REV. H. L. ELLISON said: We must be genuinely grateful to Dr. Clark for having ventured to deal with such a difficult subject, but I cannot help feeling that he has not realized how difficult it is. It is perhaps particularly unfortunate that he has looked for a key to fit the majority of the problem numbers instead of confining himself to the particular question that occupies most of his paper. The specification of the Lord's portion prevents his solution being applied to Num. 31: 32-40, while the addition of *'ish* to *'eleph* rules it out in 1 Sam. 6: 19 and 1 Kings 20: 30. A closer study of 1 Chr. 12: 23 ff. will show too many anomalies for Dr. Clark's solution to provide a complete answer, however much it might clear some of them away. Equally I remain unconvinced by the interpretation of 2 Chr. 17: 13-19. In fact Dr. Clark is demanding far too much, when he wants *'alluph* to mean both "officer" and "mighty man of valour".

I feel he is making the common mistake of deducing the meaning of a word from its etymology, according to which *'alluph* should mean leader, instead of asking how it is actually used. If we omit seven cases where it comes from a different root and means friend, it is used fifty-seven times of the clan chiefs of Edom and three times of clan chiefs of Judah (in Zechariah), though in the latter cases we should probably render "clans". This specialized use makes it very doubtful whether it was ever used of officers in general. When we remember that *sar* is the technical word in Hebrew for such officers as Dr. Clark postulates, the use of *'alluph* in the census lists becomes even more doubtful.

Sir Flinders Petrie rightly or wrongly assumed a simple and easy misunderstanding of *'eleph*, but Dr. Clark asks us to believe that the census lists used *'lp* (the consonants of both *'eleph* and *'alluph*) side by side with two different meanings, an ambiguity we should not lightly assume.

The effort to reconcile the number of first-born with the grand total reached by Dr. Clark seems to have failed. I cannot follow his calculations, but since the average age of the population of Great Britain is well below fifty at the present time, any calculation on Dr. Clark's basis is obviously false.

It is welcome that no effort is made to justify the traditional figures by an appeal to the supernatural. It is just the belief that an issue between the supernaturalists and anti-supernaturalists is involved that has prevented many from facing the problems of the numbers involved in the Exodus. Modern archaeology has, however, shown that such large figures simply will not fit into the Egyptian and Canaanite scene of the second millennium B.C. It is even doubtful whether Dr. Clark's much reduced figures would do so, though they might. It is probable that no solution of these numerical problems will be reached until we know how figures were written in the Hebrew records at an early date.

MR. TITTERINGTON said: It seems difficult at first sight to reject out of hand the large figures given in Num. 1 and 2, despite the difficulties they entail. The figures given in detail in chapter 1 are repeated in chapter 2, with sub-totals added; and the resulting round figure of 600,000 is mentioned again in chapter 11: 21, in a context where nothing is relevant beyond the figure itself. The full total is also given in Exod. 38, where a cross-check is supplied by calculating the amount of money represented by a half shekel per head, the sum amounting to something over 100 talents, which again is made to correspond with the number of sockets for the boards of the tabernacle.

But when we come to the census taken at the end of the wilderness journeys in Num. 26, whilst the grand total shows little change, the details show some surprising variations. Only four of the tribes, apart from that of Levi, have numbers at all comparable to those of the earlier census. Simeon has shrunk from 59,300 to 22,200; whilst Manasseh has increased from 32,200 to 52,700. In any consideration of these figures we have to bear in mind the heavy mortality in the wilderness; apart from Caleb and Joshua there was not a man left over sixty years of age.

Looking at it from another angle, if we accept the figures as given, the population must have doubled some fifteen times from the time when Jacob entered Egypt. If we take the 400 years of Gen. 15: 13 as dating from the promise to Abraham, the sojourn in Egypt would have lasted some 195 years, increased to 225 years if we take the 430 years of Exod. 12: 40. This would mean that the population doubled itself every thirteen to fifteen years—an astonishing figure, however much we may allow for intermarriage with the inhabitants of Egypt.

Then we come to the great difficulty to which Dr. Clark has drawn our attention—the comparatively small numbers of the first-born. Apart from the lack of any due proportion between this figure and the large total given (the more so in that a wider age group is involved), we have the close correspondence of the figure with the corresponding totals of the Levites. That these numbers should correspond would not have been altogether unexpected if the tribes were of comparable size, but this was not the case: Levi was very much the smallest of the tribes.

The figures for Levi present another complication which makes any actuarial assessment difficult. Num. 3 gives us the total numbers of each of the families of the Levites from the age of one month upwards, and in chapter 4 we have the numbers of those of serving age, from thirty years up to fifty years. The proportions for the three families are so different as to indicate a widely differing age distribution.

I do not profess to offer any solution of the problem offered. It has, however, occurred to me as a *possibility* that the total of 600,000 odd might include the “mixed multitude” who had become incorporated into the tribes, whilst the numbers of the first-born represent the true-born Israelites alone. But can we believe that the mixed multitude, however large, represented some nine-tenths of those taking part in the Exodus?

I do not, however, see that the large numbers need involve in themselves any difficulty as regards the crossing of the Red Sea, if they crossed on a very broad front. This possibility would depend on the terrain on both sides of the crossing. At that stage they would have practically no impedimenta.

However we regard the figures, the number must have been sufficiently large for the effective occupation of the land.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

PROFESSOR F. F. BRUCE wrote: My first duty is, as Editor of Transactions, to apologize to Dr. Clark and the readers of his paper for the inconvenient arrangement of his diagrams.

The subject of his paper is one which engaged the attention of the VICTORIA INSTITUTE over eighty years ago. Volume V of our Transactions contains a paper in which a Vice-President, the Rev. Dr. Robinson Thornton, argued for a modification of the large numbers of the Exodus narrative, and a sledge-hammer of a reply by another Vice-President, the redoubtable Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S.

I do not think that a single solution will account for all the problems raised, even within the Pentateuch. The large numbers in the Books of Chronicles constitute a problem by themselves—they affect material wealth as well as man-power—and form part of the larger question of the Chronicler's environment, outlook and aim. The problem of the men of Beth-shemesh was discussed in *The Evangelical Quarterly* for October 1943 by Professor O. T. Allis; taking a hint from Matthew Poole's *Synopsis* (1669-74), he renders the relevant clause of 1 Sam. 6: 19 thus: "and he smote of the people seventy men—fifty thousandths of the population" (*i.e.* there were some 1,400 inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, and 5 per cent of them died). But these are not the problems with which Dr. Clark is principally concerned.

The magnitude of the problem of the numbers given for the Israelites at the time of the Exodus is a matter of simple arithmetic. Anyone with a little experience of public administration can appreciate what would be involved in an encampment of at least two million people in the Sinai Peninsula or North-west Arabia; anyone with a little experience in the marshalling of men (not to speak of women and children) can estimate how long it would have taken such a host (say) to cross the Red Sea. It may not be necessary to suppose that the vanguard would have reached the frontier of Canaan before the end of the column reached the eastern shore (as some have suggested) but it would have taken more than a single night to get them across.¹

Then there is the question of their multiplication during the sojourn in Egypt. That they multiplied at an extraordinary rate is certain in any

¹ Perhaps no one has examined all these matters more exhaustively than Bishop Colenso in the first part of his work on *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua critically examined* (2nd edn., London, 1862). His arguments are not cavilling objections but sober and factual, and worthy of more serious consideration than they received when they were put forth.

case, but seventy or seventy-five in all went down, and they left "in the fourth generation" (Gen. 15: 16). This places a limit on their numbers by the time of the Exodus and settlement, even when we make allowance for some intermarriage with Egyptians, for the adhesion of the "mixed multitude" and for the incorporation of kindred stocks in the Negeb. That the "fourth generation" of Gen. 15: 16 is to be taken literally is confirmed by the genealogical lists. Thus, according to Exod. 6: 14 ff. Moses and Aaron were on their father's side great-grandsons of Levi, while on their mother's side they were Levi's grandsons. Their paternal grandfather (and maternal uncle) Kohath was one of the seventy who came down to Egypt with Jacob (Gen. 46: 11). The 400 years of Gen. 15: 13 and the 430 years of Exod. 12: 40 f. indicate not the duration of the Egyptian sojourn but its terminal point, the 430 years being perhaps calculated from the Era of Tanis, as Albright has maintained.

One explanation of the census figures of Num. 1-2 and 26 that has won considerable acceptance more recently is that they represent variant recensions of the figures of a much later census of the tribes (from the period of the united monarchy) which have strayed into this earlier setting and been interwoven with the "priestly" narrative of the Pentateuch. This saves them from the charge of being inventions; but Dr. Clark would no doubt regard other difficulties involved in this hypothesis as insuperable obstacles in the way of accepting it.

In some places the form *'lp* may represent *'elep* not in the sense of "thousand" but a smaller unit—"practically, perhaps exactly, equivalent to the subdivision of the tribe which was technically known as a father's house; cf. Num. 1: 2, 4 with v. 16, R.V.; Judges 6: 15, cf. R.V. marg.; cf. 1 Sam. 10: 19 with v. 21" (*Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "thousand"). In other places it may, as Dr. Clark suggests, be *'alluph*. That *'elep* and *'alluph* might be interchanged in the textual tradition is plain from the non-Septuagintal Greek version of Mic. 5: 2 quoted in Matt. 2: 6, which presupposes a Hebrew vocalization *'alluphê* ("captains") instead of *'alphê* ("thousands" or "families") of the Massoretic text (cf. p. 83). But (in spite of Dr. Clark's remarks on semantic change on p. 85) I do not think that a word meaning "captain of a thousand" would be used to cover the idea of "captain of a hundred" or "captain of fifty"; as late as the recently discovered Qumrân text, *The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (first century B.C.), these terms retained their proper meanings. On the other hand, if *'elep* can mean "father's house" as well as "thousand", then *'alluph* (assuming the derivation from *'elep*) could mean "captain of an *'elep*" in the more general as well as in the strictly numerical sense.

REV. J. W. WENHAM wrote: I have no doubt that this contribution to the numbers question has brought us substantially nearer a solution, even if

much is still uncertain. On general grounds I feel that 120,000 is still an uncomfortably big number for the events described in the Exodus. I should feel happier with something like the Petrie figure of 20,000—still a good number (the population of Durham City). But in certain details the figures fit very well and they are certainly not obviously impossible.

Referring to the middle of p. 90, the figure of 14 children seems too high.

Let us suppose that the average Israelitish mother might bear further children after the birth of the first boy for 15 years. The average age of the first-born males in the army is 35. A first-born in the army might have younger brothers in the army from the following 15 years of his mother's life, and further young brothers not in the army from the next 10 years of the mother's life.

The average of 1.1 *adult* brothers has already been calculated so that the average of *child* younger brothers will be $1.1 \times 0.67 = 0.7$, so that there will be $1 + 1.1 + 0.7 = 2.8$ boys per mother, that is 5.6 children in all. This would be a good number for the surviving children and would be more than double the number needed for replacement. And incidentally this would be a very satisfactory rate of increase to account for the growth of Jacob's descendants in Egypt.

MR. D. C. MANDEVILLE wrote: I imagine that something on the lines of Dr. Clark's suggestion about the meaning of Hebrew terms is widespread in the East: e.g. Turkish has *binbaşı* (head of a thousand)=major; *yüzbaşı* (head of a hundred)=captain.

AUTHOR'S REPLY

In making the suggestion incorporated in my paper I am in no way setting myself up as an authority on the subject. At best I can hope that those whose studies lie in directions other than mine will be profited by a suggestion made by one who is, perhaps, by virtue of his ignorance, a little less likely than they to miss the wood for the trees! It is a pleasure, therefore, to learn that the proposal is on the whole acceptable, even if it need to be modified in the kind of way suggested by Professor Bruce.

The additional information provided by those who have contributed, especially by Mr. Wiseman and Professor Bruce, is deeply interesting and Members of the Institute will be indebted to them.

I gladly accept Mr. Ellison's correction with regard to Num. 31: 32-40 and I must apologize for the expression "average age of 50" when in fact I meant "average age at death of 50". The force of his other criticisms, however, eludes me. Nearly everyone (including Mr. Ellison) seems agreed that a misunderstanding of some kind *has* crept into the text which has been handed down to us. Careless copying alone will not account for the facts since the difficulty always arises in connection with numbers. So the misunderstanding *must* have involved ambiguity—unless, indeed, we resort to

the critical position that deliberate exaggeration is involved. However improbable any particular ambiguity may appear, I do not see why (when a better view is lacking) we should dismiss a suggestion simply because it involves ambiguity. Yet this (unless I mistake his meaning) is what Mr. Ellison seeks to do. Again, I find it hard to see why he argues, for example, on the basis of the *present* order of 'ish and 'eleph in 1 Sam. 6: 19. When once a misunderstanding had become accepted would not this slight change in the order of words have been made naturally in order to conform with grammatical usage?

Mr. Wenham's computation of 5.6 children per mother (instead of 7) seems reasonable enough. He is certainly right in criticizing me (by implication) for doubling this in order to obtain the total number during her lifetime, though no argument depends upon the total of 14 thus obtained. I intended to give the extreme maximum possible.

FREEDOM AND THE CHRISTIAN MISSION

By SIR KENNETH GRUBB, C.M.G., LL.D.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

THE CHAIRMAN (Dr. E. WHITE) said: I am sure that I am voicing the thoughts of everyone present at this meeting when I say that we are indebted to Sir Kenneth Grubb for a very thoughtful and stimulating address. He has revealed himself as a statesman of both Church and State with lofty ideals and high aims at a time when so many spiritual values seem to be ignored or forgotten by those who guide the affairs of nations.

He has packed so much material into so small a compass that any attempt to enter into a general discussion of his paper would occupy far more time than we have at our disposal. All I propose to do is to offer a few general comments and criticisms.

We must all agree with the importance of the theme as defined in the opening paragraph. "It is of paramount importance that men should be free to ascertain, believe and proclaim the truth, and that they should not be deterred from doing so by the deliberate actions of governments." All thoughtful men and women who have the welfare of their fellows at heart surely would subscribe to these propositions, and must view with concern the increasing encroachments on the liberties of mankind which our present age is witnessing. At no period in modern history has there arisen such a widespread threat to the freedom of the individual as that which has coincided with the rise of great totalitarian states. The doctrine that the individual is of little account and that the State is all-powerful is in itself a negation of Christian truth. Sir Kenneth has ably worked out some of the implications of Christianity in relation to the policies of governments towards the people whom they govern, and in the principles which should be at the root of international relationships.

In the course of his paper he has referred to the relationships between Church and State. This is a highly controversial question. Some of us are not too sure that Henry VIII did the best thing for the Church of England when he substituted the reigning monarch for the Pope as head of the Church. Would it not be better for the Church itself if it were independent of State control, and acknowledged no head but Christ? It seems unfitting that under our present constitution, with a limited monarchy, a Parliament should have the power to decide the form of prayers to be used by the Church in its public services, and that the higher dignitaries of the Church should be appointed, not by the Church itself, but by the Sovereign on the advice of the Prime Minister.

I am sure that Sir Kenneth will forgive me if I question one or two of his basic suppositions.

In his first sentence he states his conviction that the course of this world is ultimately determined by what men believe about God. This seems to be a rather one-sided generalization. Would it not be nearer the truth to say that the course of the world will be ultimately determined by what God thinks of man, and by God dealing with men in righteous judgment? Is it not true that God is behind the great events of history, and is overruling and will finally fulfil His own purposes in the destiny of the nations?

Sir Kenneth brings into contrast three different views concerning the origin and authority of human rights. The first is that man possesses certain rights and freedoms which are indisputable constituents of his nature, the second that man's rights are vested in the State; the third that man's rights are derived from the fact that he is a child of God, created in His image and likeness. Perhaps Sir Kenneth would agree that these three views are not mutually exclusive, and that they may be synthesized in a Christian view of society. The Bible teaches clearly that rulers of men hold their power from God, and are to be obeyed except where their laws may come into conflict with the conscience and the laws of God. "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's." "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." And we are exhorted to pray for kings and for all that are in authority over us.

But it seems a little doubtful whether we can accept the third view, that man's rights are derived from the fact that he is a child of God. We have to face the unpleasant truth that men are in rebellion against God, and that the world by wisdom knows not God. St. John expressly states that "the whole cosmos lieth in the evil one." Unless we realize this, we shall fail to understand that no human efforts can bring about the world-peace and universal freedom for which we all long. Men will know no peace until they submit to the Prince of Peace. We are glad to have amongst us men of high ideals who strive for peace among the nations and for the freedom of the individual, and we thank God for them. Also we know the world will know no lasting peace until the day when the Kingdom of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

**OBJECTS AND
 CONSTITUTION**
 of
THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE
 or
PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

ADOPTED AT THE FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES, 27TH MAY, 1867, WITH REVISIONS OF 1874-75, 1910, 1912, 1920, 1938, 1939 AND 1952.

1. **THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE, or PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN**, is established for the following objects, viz.:— **Objects**

- First.* To investigate fully and impartially the most important questions of Philosophy and Science, but more especially these that bear upon the great truths revealed in Holy Scripture: with the view of reconciling any apparent discrepancies between Christianity and Science.
- Second* To associate together men of Science and authors who have already been engaged in such investigations, and all others who may be interested in them, in order to strengthen their efforts by association, and, by bringing together the results of such labours, after full discussion, in the printed Transactions of an Institution, to give greater force and influence to proofs and arguments which might be little known, or even disregarded, if put forward merely by individuals.
- Third.* To consider the mutual bearings of the various scientific conclusions arrived at in the several distinct branches into which Science is now divided, in order to get rid of contradictions and conflicting hypotheses, and thus promote the real advancement of true science; and to examine and discuss all supposed scientific results with reference to final causes, and the more comprehensive and fundamental principles of Philosophy proper, based upon faith in the existence of one Eternal God, who, in His wisdom, created all things very good.
- Fourth.* To publish Papers read before the Society in furtherance of the above objects, along with full reports of the discussions thereon, in the form of a Journal, or as the Transactions of the Institute.

Fifth. When subjects have been fully discussed, to make the results known by means of Lectures of a more popular kind, and to publish such Lectures.

Sixth. To publish English translations of important foreign works of real scientific and philosophical value, especially those bearing upon the relation between the Scriptures and Science; and to co-operate with other philosophical societies at home and abroad, which are now or may hereafter be formed, in the interest of Scriptural truth and of real science, and generally in furtherance of the objects of this Society.

But so that nothing shall be done which shall not directly or indirectly advance the Christian religion as revealed in Holy Scripture.

Membership 2. (a) The Society shall consist of Fellows and Members elected as hereinafter set forth and signifying interest in the Society's charitable work by financial contributions thereto.

(b) The roll of Fellows of the Society shall include such as are so designated on the 17th day of November, 1952, and such other persons (whether previously Members or not) as the Council may deem proper.

(c) The roll of Members of the Society shall include those so designated on the 17th day of November, 1952, and all others subsequently admitted by the Council as Members.

Council 3. The government of the Society shall be vested in a Council (whose members shall be chosen from among the Fellows and Members of the Society and be professedly Christians), consisting of a President, two or more not exceeding seven Vice-Presidents, an Honorary Treasurer, an Honorary Secretary and ten or more not exceeding twenty-four ordinary members of Council.

Election of Council 4. The President, the Vice-Presidents, the Hon. Treasurer and the Hon. Secretary shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting of the Institute, with power to the Council to fill up any casual vacancies.

At the Annual General Meeting in each year, one-third of the ordinary members of Council or if their number be not a multiple of three then the number nearest to one-third shall also retire, in order of seniority of election to the Council, and be eligible for re-election: as between members of equal seniority the members to retire shall be chosen

from among them by ballot unless such members shall agree between themselves. Casual vacancies may be filled up by the Council.

5. For such annual elections nominations may be made by Fellows of the Institute and sent to the Honorary Secretary not later than 1st December in any year. The Council may also nominate for vacancies, and all nominations shall be submitted to the Fellows and Members at the time when notice of the Annual General Meeting is posted.
If more nominations are made than there are vacancies on the Council the election shall be by ballot.
6. Any person desirous of becoming a Fellow or Member shall send to the Honorary Secretary an application for admission, which shall be signed by one Fellow or Member recommending the Candidate for admission. Upon such application being transmitted to the Honorary Secretary, the candidate may be elected by the Council, and enrolled as a Fellow or Member of the Victoria Institute, in such a manner as the Council may deem proper. Such application shall be considered as *ipso facto* pledging the applicant to observe the Rules of the Society, and as indicative of his or her desire and intention to further its objects and interests; and it is also to be understood that only such as are professedly Christians are entitled to become Fellows. The Council shall have power when it deems proper to delete the name of any Fellow or Member from the roll. **Membership Procedure**
7. The Council may make such Rules as it considers desirable for furthering the objects of the Society and regulating its business including arrangements for associating University and other Students and Christian Workers and others as Associates in the work of the Society. **Rule Making**
8. The whole property and effects of the Society shall be vested in the Chairman of Council the Honorary Treasurer and the Honorary Secretary for the time being as Trustees. The Trustees are empowered to invest such sums as the Council may, from time to time, place in their hands, in or upon any of the Stocks, Funds, or Securities, for the time being, authorized by statute for the investment of trust funds by trustees, and shall have the usual powers of trustees in regard thereto. **Property Trusteeship**

- Papers** 9. Papers presented to be read before the Society shall when read be considered as the property of the Society unless there shall have been any previous engagement with its author to the contrary, and the Council may cause the same to be published in any way and at any time they may think proper after having been read.
- Funds, etc.** 10. All moneys received on account of the Institute shall be duly paid to its credit at the Bankers, and all cheques shall be drawn, under authority of the Council, and shall be signed by any two of the following, the Chairman of Council, the Honorary Treasurer and the Honorary Secretary.
- Audit** 11. The accounts shall be audited annually, by a Chartered or Incorporated Accountant or Auditor, to be elected at an Annual General Meeting of the Society for the following year, and this Chartered or Incorporated Accountant or Auditor shall make a written Report to the Council at the first Meeting after such audit, and also to the Institute, upon the day of the Annual General Meeting next following—stating the balance in the Treasurer's hands and the general state of the funds of the Institute.

GENERAL INDEX TO THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

A GENERAL INDEX to the first forty-three volumes of the Journal of Transactions of the Institute (No. I., 1865, to No. XLIII., 1911), arranged alphabetically under both the names of the Authors and the Subjects, was issued with Volume XLIV. Part II of the Index comprising the twenty-seven Volumes XLIV (1912) to LXX (1938) can be obtained from the Secretary in separate form, bound in cloth, for one shilling.

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