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820TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, APRIL 25TH, 1938,
AT 4.30 P.M.

THE REV. W. J. DOWNES, M.A., B.D., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read, confirmed and signed and the HON. SECRETARY announced the election of W. H. Molesworth, Esq., as a Member.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Major R. B. Withers, D.S.O., to read his paper entitled "Some Fresh Light on the Greek Scriptures."

SOME FRESH LIGHT ON THE GREEK SCRIPTURES.

By MAJOR R. B. WITHERS, D.S.O., late R.A.

IT was with some diffidence that I suggested preparing this paper, for I fully realised that at nearly every point I was trespassing on the preserves of specialists. Nevertheless, no one can deny that the specialist is continually in danger of being "unable to see the wood for the trees"; and this is particularly the case with the subjects to be discussed. The type of mind possessed by a first-rate master of Greek is quite different from that of the research-worker in Physics or of one whose duty it is to weigh evidence in the Courts. Sir Robert Anderson devoted much labour to drawing attention to this point, as regards the weighing of evidence. By now his word has borne fruit, and convinced all who are not deafened by the ceaseless self-applause of some of the destructive critics. On the other hand, the vital need for the application of the method of Science to the study of the Scriptures is still generally unappreciated; and the results of such scientific study which has as yet been carried out are practically unknown. This is the aspect of the matter with which I propose to deal now.

To some, at this point of time, such stress on the need for scientific method must seem grotesque. It *ought* to be grotesque; yet the fact is easy to demonstrate that, outside a relatively

small circle of students, real scientific method hardly exists. For proof, I give three instances, one general and two particular :

The Scriptures, as they have come to us, are saturated with matters outside and beyond our every-day experience of cause and effect, matters variously described as supernatural or miraculous. In spite of this, the majority of those who claim to study them scientifically persist in assuming from the outset that supernatural or miraculous events do not happen. Such an initial assumption is fundamentally unscientific. It violates the first canon of scientific criticism as propounded in Mr. G. B. Michell's important paper read before this Institute (Vol. 58, page 12) ; a canon universally accepted without question by students of the physical sciences, namely : "Scientific criticism proceeds by taking the object to be judged *as it is* ; not according to theories of what it ought to be, or may be supposed to have been."

For a particular instance I quote the late Canon B. H. Streeter : "The first epistle of Peter presents us with Peter and Mark as together in Rome." To this he appends a footnote : "'She that is in Babylon elect together with you' (I Peter v, 13) can only mean the Church in Rome. Babylon as a symbolic name of Rome is found in contemporary Jewish writings (*cf. Sibylline Oracles*, v. 143 ; II Baruch xi, 1) and occurs six times in the Apocalypse" (*The Four Gospels*, p. 489). This extract and the first and third statements of the footnote are in direct defiance of the above-mentioned canon.

Lest it be thought that this unscientific attitude of mind is wholly modern, I quote one more, this time from a Roman Catholic work : *In Spirit and in Truth*, anonymous, dated 1869, pp. 173, 174 : "It was foretold by the prophet Jeremias, as the distinguishing mark of the Church of the latter days, that there should be one universal faith, easy of access to all. 'I will write my law in their hearts' (Jer. xxxi, 34). . . . It seems almost needless to prove here that this unanimity of faith is not and never has been the result of the Protestant use of the Bible." The unknown author's last statement need not be contested, for the problem does not arise. A glance at the passage in Jeremiah shows that the prophet was referring to Israel and Judah explicitly, and not to the Roman or any other present-day Church.

Now, each one of these three instances forms part of a system which its exponent, presumably, elaborates into a complete

entity and regards as a complete segment of the whole circle of truth. Wherein lies the fallacy? Is it not that in each instance the exponent of the system is dealing, not with the subject as it is, *objectively*, but with a concept of it which exists in his own mind, *subjectively*?

The Scriptures, denuded of all miraculous elements, form a purely theoretical concept. To make it objective would be an almost impossible task. The Apostles Peter and John wrote "Babylon." If they did not mean what they wrote then, is it worth while troubling ourselves about anything else they wrote? Life is too short to waste time thus. The same applies to Jeremiah and the author of Hebrews. They wrote that the New Covenant would be concluded with the houses of Israel and Judah. Any lesser man who happens to disagree with them should at least condescend to offer some evidence in support of his opinion. It is worth noting, by the way, that when the Apostle John wishes to convey something more than the idea of the locality, Jerusalem, itself; he says so plainly (Rev. xi, 8).

These three schemes which I have pilloried are all subjective; they are created in the minds of their exponents, they do not exist objectively in the Scriptures themselves.

The issue here is plain: Is our aim to discover what the Scriptures actually teach? Or is it to discover whether we can force the Scriptures into agreement with our own opinions?

In each of the three instances cited above, the Scriptures are approached with a set of initial assumptions firmly held in mind; and whatever is found out of harmony with it is ruthlessly discarded. Do not those who treat the Scriptures thus risk the charge that they are claiming to know more about them than the original writers themselves?

In past eras, people were more logical. The exponents of Scholasticism laid down certain initial assumptions, and proceeded to reason therefrom until they achieved what they regarded as a complete system of knowledge. They did not waste time and energy consulting other external sources of knowledge. It is said that when sunspots were first discovered, the leaders of contemporary thought refused to look through the telescope at them. Sunspots had been proved impossible by the Scholastic system, and there was no more to be said!

The Scientific method endeavours to discover the facts it seeks, by testimony, observation and experiment; to classify them and to make generalisations from them. It makes no

assumptions, beyond the basic assumption, necessary for all rational thought, that ultimate truth does exist.

The Scholastic method assumes this, and a great deal else as well. It assumes virtual possession of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in its premises; and power to work out all the consequences of the premises by reasoning, and to avoid all fallacies. This implies, in effect, Divine knowledge and wisdom.

The Scientific method recognises, in effect, that the Creator has worked out His own system in creation; and humbly seeks to discover all it can of that system.

Are we, fallible mortals, ever justified in reasoning from what we think the facts *ought* to be?

The prevailing tendency now is to try to "have it both ways," to use whichever method happens to suit the immediate purpose in view. The inevitable consequence of this illogicality is only too evident in the intellectual chaos of the modern world.

The late Canon Streeter, in the book already mentioned, speaks of the blinding effect of unconscious assumptions, and quotes some in connection with the Synoptic Problem; but he seems quite unaware that there are other and more fundamental ones.

The Synoptic Problem itself depends on two assumptions, that the authors of the Gospels were second-hand and unreliable witnesses, and that their records are not necessarily in chronological order. In consequence, similar accounts are assumed to be inaccurate versions of the same account, variations in undoubtedly parallel accounts are dismissed as errors instead of being scientifically examined, and assumed errors are used as evidences of composite authorship.

The Synoptic Problem depends on what may be called a standard synopsis, concerning the content of which most recognised experts are agreed. This synopsis is based on the foregoing assumptions, together with one other: that the Apostle John's Gospel may be left out of reckoning. If these assumptions be granted, the synopsis follows quite logically.

But why should we agree to these assumptions? They violate the principle of "Occam's razor," because a synopsis of all four Gospels can be prepared on the basis of one assumption only, that the accounts are reliable testimonies. This assumption is different in kind from the three referred to above; since it is the basic assumption without which scientific study of the Scriptures

is not really possible. If the accounts are not reliable, we are faced with a problem more fundamental than the Synoptic Problem itself; the problem whether they are worth studying at all! Without a higher standard of reference, whatever in them is true cannot be separated from the false, if there be any false. Where can this higher standard of reference be found? Apparently we are expected to discern it in the critics themselves; but if so, would it not save a deal of trouble if the critics were to work out for us a really authoritative "gospel" of their own, and scrap the others? Perhaps the standard synopsis may be so regarded, but the account it would give contains many miraculous elements which a true modern critic must regard as most objectionable.

A "conservative" synopsis based on the assumption that all four accounts are reliable is found in A. G. Secrett's *A Combined Analysis of The Four Gospels*. He gives a tribute to the value of the *Companion Bible*, edited by the late Dr. E. W. Bullinger, from whose own indicated synopsis as basis I have prepared one of my own, which turns out very similar to Mr. Secrett's. I have encountered some minor difficulties and disagreements, but there is no reason to doubt that they will be resolved with further study.

This synopsis effectively disposes of the main critical arguments against the accuracy of the Four Gospels. Some of the best known, the alleged discrepancies between the accounts of the denials of Peter, the inscriptions on the cross, the morning of the resurrection, are completely refuted by Dr. Bullinger in the *Companion Bible*, so I need not consider them. It seems too much to ask that those who quote them so glibly should have the Christian humility to ask themselves whether there is not a bare possibility that they may be wrong. If the only accounts we possess of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ are so full of error as the critics allege, we have no right to regard Him as Lord. It is irrational to believe anything so remote from ordinary experience on the strength of four brief and mutually contradictory documents.

In point of fact, while each of the accounts is complete in itself, the four will frequently be found to dovetail into one another. The accounts of the apprehension of the Lord in Gethsemane and of the trial before Pilate, are examples. The combined accounts, taking details from each individual account, are far fuller than any single one. Thrice does the Lord Jesus warn Peter that he will deny Him. The first in John and the

second in Luke refer to three denials before the cock crows. The third occasion appears to comprise two warnings by the Lord Jesus. The first is in Matt. xxvi, 34. The second, in Mark xiv, 30, is emphatic and extremely precise, and foretells two cock-crows.

The denials take place on six occasions. The first (John xviii, 17) is at the commencement of the proceedings, and is to the maid who kept the door. The second occasion (Mark xiv, 68, John xviii, 25) is in the courtyard, where Peter is standing warming himself; first to one of the maids and then to others. The third is immediately afterwards (John xviii, 27), to one of the Chief Priest's slaves. Peter then comes outside into the forecourt, and the first cock-crow occurs (Mark xiv, 68, John xviii, 27).

This, presumably, makes Peter turn back; for next we find they have kindled a fire in the middle of the court, and he is sitting in the midst of them. This evidently supplements, as night draws on, the original charcoal fire in John xviii, 18. A maid comes and makes the fourth accusation (Matt. xxvi, 70, Mark xiv, 70, Luke xxii, 57). So the harassed Peter comes out into the porch, and is accused by another maid (Matt. xxvi, 71) and a different man (Luke xxii, 58). These are probably on the same (fifth) occasion. Evidently Peter creeps back and tries to keep out of the way; but once more they approach him; first, several accusing him (Matt. xxvi, 74, Mark xiv, 71), and then some other one stoutly insisting. While Peter is still talking to this last accuser (Luke xxii, 60), the second cock-crow occurs. There would seem to be nine actual denials.

The history, thus related, gives an edge to Peter's misery beyond that of any single narrative! It is difficult to reconcile any two of the narratives, as they stand, apart from the others; but with all four in our hands, a self-consistent combined narrative can be drawn up. This phenomenon recurs at many other points, and affords strong evidence of the completeness and inspiration of the whole set. This fact is not altogether a new discovery, but it is to be feared that it is new to most students.

Apart from any question of inspiration, the simplest solution of the problems of the Gospels is to credit all four authors with at least ordinary common sense; and to assume that each viewed the whole history from his own particular personal standpoint, and recorded only a selection from the whole.

The "conservative" synopsis of the Four Gospels has a direct bearing on their authorship and dates. "Q" and "Proto-Luke" vanish. The necessary priority of Mark and lateness of John logically follow no longer; and the traditional view that the four exist in the canon in the order of their composition becomes possible once more. This raises the whole question of uncritical reliance on tradition. What do we really *know* of the dates of the Greek Scriptures? Apart from the Apostle Paul's epistles, practically nothing.

Were there no traditions and critical theories to worry us, we could reasonably date Acts where it ends, two years after the Apostle Paul's arrival in Rome, say about A.D. 62. Thus, Luke is located some time before this date, and Matt. still earlier; as might be expected from the preface to Luke. There is, therefore, really no reason why the Apostle Paul should not have completed the canon, as his words in Col. i, 25 appear to indicate. "To fulfil" seems meaningless in this context, whereas "to complete the Word of God" is thoroughly in accord with the transcendent revelation under discussion.

The traditional order of the Four Gospels is in agreement with what facts we know, so we need not reject it. On the other hand, the traditional dating of John's writings is quite unsupported by internal evidence. They might just as well have been written during the period of the latter half of Acts, when Israel's hope was fast waning to its extinction in Acts xxviii, 28. Together with Heb., James, Jude and I and II Peter, their historical setting corresponds exactly with the situation then. The immediate prospect of the return of the King and the setting-up of His Kingdom has gone. For those of the Circumcision called to go on to perfection (Heb. vi, 1) in uncircumcision (Rom. and Gal.), the Apostle Paul leads the way, as the Apostle Peter hints (II Pet. iii, 15, 16). But Peter adheres strictly to his commission as Apostle of the Circumcision; thus his direct exhortation is to patient endurance, even in suffering. So with the other Circumcision writings. "Be patient, then, brethren, till the presence of the Lord" (James v, 7), "We may be racing with endurance the contest lying before us" (Heb. xii, 1). "You are enduring for discipline" (Heb. xii, 7). Jude looks forward to the last time (Jude, 17-23). The action of Revelation is located in the Day of the Lord (Rev. i, 10), and its final message is: "Lo! I am coming swiftly, and My reward is with Me to pay each one according to his work. . . . Surely I am coming swiftly"

(Rev. xxii, 12, 20). So far as all these are concerned, the present interval of reigning grace, of conciliation, of the great Secret of Eph. iii, the unity of the one Body, is simply out of the picture.

New Testament criticism is generally based on an assumed scheme of theological development. It may be the Hegelian conception "thesis, antithesis, synthesis," or a theory of evolutionary development, or a theory of composition like the division of the Pentateuch into J, E and P sources. All such *a priori* systems are a travesty of true science.

There is no need to devise schemes ; for Scripture has a scheme of its own, and all we have to do is to perceive it and then believe it. Unfortunately, in practice the "all" is somewhat delusive ; as any who have attempted the severe mental discipline of regarding the Scriptures wholly objectively will agree. Our minds are ridden with a host of unconscious preconceptions and prejudices, and the primary difficulty is to discover them. The only course is to be continually asking oneself : " This passage *says* so and so. Do I accept it as it stands, or do I try to explain it ? "

Sometimes we unconsciously give ourselves away. I read a little while ago a sermon on Col. i, 20, in the course of which the preacher said : " Some people actually take this literally ! "

It is the failure to take the Scriptures literally, whenever this can possibly be done, which is the cause of all our misunderstanding of them. If we do take them literally, and appreciate that earthly promises and blessings belong to God's earthly people, and are temporarily in abeyance (Rom. xi, 25-32), while the celestial blessings (Eph. i, 3) belong to those who are called to the Evangel of the Uncircumcision (Gal. ii, 7) entrusted specially to the Apostle Paul (" my Evangel," Rom. ii, 16, xvi, 25, etc.), and depend on the earthly promises being in abeyance ; we shall hold the key to all their problems.

Let us go back for a moment to the three instances given at the beginning of this paper. The reason for the present absence of miracles like we find in Acts, can now be appreciated. The things of maturity, of perfection, have now come (I Cor. xiii, 10-12, Eph. iv, 11-14). We can understand the unlikelihood, to say the least, of Peter's preaching with Paul in Rome. Peter and the rest of the Twelve were and remained apostles of the Circumcision. Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiv, 14), Apollos (I Cor. iv, 4, 9), Epaphroditus (Phil. ii, 25), Sylvanus and Timothy (I Thes. i, 1, with ii, 6), Titus and others (II Cor. viii, 23)

were the apostles of the Uncircumcision. In this economy we are outside and beyond the privileges and responsibilities of covenant, and we can safely leave the New Covenant to those to whom it belongs in the future days when the Rescuer has returned for Israel (Rom. xi, 26). We have no need of covenant, because, unlike them, we have died to the law (Rom. vii, 4). We are not under law, but under grace (Rom. vi, 14).

We can believe the Scriptures as they stand! Yes, and we can find deliverance from bondage to the glosses of their interpreters, due to partial apprehension of them. One example has already been given in Gal. ii, 7. The evangels there contrasted are the evangels *of* the Circumcision and *of* the Uncircumcision respectively. The contrast is not in their hearers, but in their subject-matter. This, in turn, explains Paul's anathema in Gal. i, 6-9. The Twelve quite rightly preached to the Circumcision the Evangel of the Circumcision, but to the *Uncircumcision* the only true evangel was and is Paul's Evangel (Gal. i, 8); and the whole point of Galatians is the fundamental incompatibility of these two evangels.

The Scriptures are intensely objective! Where they do deal with abstractions, faith, grace, love, etc., they deal with them in a wholly objective manner. The source of all corruptions of the Scriptures is departure from objectivity, the injection of subjective elements. The majority of commentaries simply teem with subjective thoughts superadded to the text. Apparently, everything must mean something other than what it says.

Some time ago, glancing through a commentary the name of which I cannot now recall, I came across the following note:—

“Rom. v, 12. ‘Eph. ho.’ Literally ‘On which.’ A.V. ‘For that.’ Other renderings: ‘Because.’ ‘In whom.’”

That note was like a blow! The scales fell from my eyes, and I asked myself: “If this means literally ‘On which,’ why in the name of sanity and common sense can we not *be literal*?” Rendered literally the passage is transformed! The interrelation of sin and death becomes, at once, luminously clear. Sin brought death into the world; but it is *death* which brings sin to all mankind. We do not sin voluntarily in the same sense as Adam did. We are riddled through and through with mortality, and in consequence cannot help but come under the dominion of sin. It is the *life* of God's Son which brings salvation (Rom. v, 10), His life Who is designated Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead (Rom. i, 4). The body is dead because of

sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness (Rom. viii, 10). In the resurrection life of the Son do we triumph over death and sin.

I will cite one more example. Practically every expositor I have ever come across regards justification as the same as forgiveness of sins. That appears to be an unquestioned tradition. Yet I question whether in ordinary affairs such confusion would be tolerated. Justification is a forensic term, equivalent to a verdict of "Not guilty." Pardon is outside the scope of the courts. It is a function of government, and can be applied only to those whom the courts have pronounced "guilty." The whole point of justification in Romans and Galatians is that it means acquittal. Through and in Christ Jesus we are pronounced "Not guilty"; and nobody, not even Satan himself, can now lay any charge against us (Rom. viii, 33). Pardon can be revoked. Justification is a final, irrevocable decision. For the justified, judgment is past and done with.

These matters are simple and obvious, yet I cannot discover that they have ever been systematically treated in this objective manner. Does there exist a single handbook of the essentials of the Christian Faith which examines its basic elements in the calm, thorough and objective way which would be found in a good text-book of Physics? How many of us have ever studied scientifically the various evangels mentioned in the Greek Scriptures, or the various "mysteries" or secrets, or the shades of meaning conveyed by the death, the blood, the sufferings, the offering, the cross of Christ, or of His different titles, and so on?

The question of the translation of "eph ho" cannot be left without further discussion. It occurs in at least eight* other passages, and is variously rendered "where," "wherefore," "wherein," "whereof," "for which," and, once again, in a rather archaic sentence, "for that" (II Cor. v, 4).

At the risk of being dismissed with the mild contempt the expert usually feels for the amateur's "dog-greek"; I must point out that the literal "on which" can be substituted for all these assorted renderings without obscuring the sense; though in two, English idiom demands "on what account" or "on which account." Even then, a close approximation to uniformity has been attained. The underlying idea is the same throughout, and is violated by the A.V. rendering "for that."

* Matt. xxvi, 50, Mark ii, 4 (MSS, A.C. and others), Luke v, 25, xi, 22, Acts, vii, 33, Rom. vi, 21, ii, Cor. v, 4, Phil. iii, 12, iv, 10.

This brings me to the most controversial part of my paper, the problem of translation.

I suppose we are all agreed in theory that real scientific study of the Scriptures should be our aim. It would, of course, be carried out with the extreme of accuracy demanded by scientific method in every other study; yet few people seem consciously to realise that such study cannot even be started unless we can know with certainty what the Scriptures actually say.

Is it really necessary to have not less than six English renderings of a Greek form which occurs in nine or ten passages only? "Eph ho" can be fitted into our extremely idiomatic tongue with the literal "on which" and a slight modification of it. On the other hand, "wherefore" is the A.V. rendering of no fewer than 19 different Greek forms, according to Young's Concordance; "wherein" of 6 and "whereof" of 8. I notice, by the way, that Young gives "upon which" or "upon what" as the equivalent of "eph ho," so I can to some extent claim his support.

This particular example has been dwelt upon because it came to hand in the course of the argument, but other words indicate an even stronger case. For instance, "zoe" means "life," and is so rendered in every occurrence but one (Luke xvi, 25, lifetime). "Psuche" means "soul" and nothing else; yet the A.V. renders it "soul" 57 times, "life" 40 times, "heart" once and "mind" thrice; and to make things worse renders "pneuma" (= "spirit") once by "life" (Rev. xiii, 15), also! Is it not hard enough to grasp the distinctions between these ideas without having to cope with all this wanton confusion? No wonder so much unsound teaching exists!

The confusion is increased by the misuse of another pair of words. We frequently read, particularly in "Modernist" literature, that the earliest Christians were hourly expecting the end of the world. Indeed, that is given as a certain proof of the alleged late date of the Four Gospels; the argument being that nobody would bother to write such accounts for posterity until the delusion began to fade—an entirely sound and convincing conclusion, if only the premiss were as sound! The Greek word for "world" is "kosmos," and it is so translated in 187 of its 188 occurrences in the A.V. Nowhere is "the end of the kosmos" mentioned. Heaven and earth (ge) are spoken of as "passing away" (Matt. v, 18, xxiv, 35, etc.), and the Apostles Peter and John speak of "new heavens and a new earth" (II Pet. iii, 13, Rev. xxi, 1); but "the end of the earth" or of the "inhabited

earth" (oikoumene) are nowhere mentioned, nor is there the smallest hint they were ever regarded as an immediate prospect. What we *do* find is the end of the "aiōn" (Matt. xiii, 40, etc.), a word which deals with *time*, not space. Incidentally, the A.V. has "world without end" in one passage, an expression frequently heard but devoid of any meaning I can discover.

Can it be denied that our greatest need now is an accurate, modern, and really scientific translation of the whole of the Scriptures? None yet exists. We hear a great deal of modern scholarship, the complacency of which, in the face of its failure in this matter, is extremely odd; yet nobody seems to have the courage to state the plain fact that for scientific study the A.V. is simply not good enough, the R.V. little better, and most so-called "modern" versions mere paraphrases.

In consequence of this lack, real research entails elaborate investigation with a concordance of the original tongues. This amounts to an attempt to carry out, in fragments and with unnecessary handicaps, a work which should already have been accomplished by the translators.

It is absurd to contend that an adequate approximation to a self-consistent, scientific translation cannot be made. It has already been attempted; and the proper attitude to such attempts is not destructive criticism, but a constructive effort to do the work better!

I definitely challenge our Hebrew and Greek scholars to make such an effort! I do not see how any sensible person can contend that the chaotic renderings of "psuche," and many other words, are unavoidable; or that such arbitrary treatment of them can be anything but an evil. I have in my own studies corrected every example of the Greek words I have quoted, and many others; and have satisfied myself that such uniformity makes just as good English and far better sense! I am well aware of the argument that complete uniformity of rendering is unattainable. Nobody but an ignoramus would deny it! But I cannot see that it is any argument against seeking as complete uniformity as possible; and, where it is impossible, complete consistency, at any rate.* It has, I repeat, been attempted, but with what degree of success I leave to those more expert to estimate. I gather that the main objection to the attempt is that it has not been sponsored by any recognised leading scholars.

* And then, lapses from uniformity could always be noted or marked!

Well, it is for these scholars to do better ; or to give some really convincing reason why it should not be done ; to explain to a wondering world why some Greek words must needs have at least as many English equivalents as a caterpillar has legs, and by what magic touchstone they are able to ascertain which is which.

I suppose my scientific training is to blame ; but I need something more than a "scholarly" *ipse dixit* to convince me that, for instance, "legō" is the equivalent of 13 widely different English words and "say" the equivalent of 10 Greek words ; that "logos" represents 23 English words, of which "work" is one, and that "work" correctly renders 8 Greek words.

Some contend, I gather, that the translators have sought to convey the meaning rather than the actual words. How the words can be divorced from their meaning is quite beyond my understanding ! Such talk seems to me the grossest obscurantism. I beg leave to have the words accurately, and search out the meaning for myself.

I have expressed myself strongly over this matter because the issue is vital. If a scientifically accurate translation of the Scriptures is impossible, then scientifically accurate study of them is impossible. It is idle to retort that the student should take the trouble to master Greek and Hebrew ; how can he, if he is unable to ascertain whether "psyche" means "soul" or "life," and, if it means both, where it differs from "zoe" ? If a scholar can master Greek sufficiently to understand these words, how comes it that he cannot express his understanding in his own mother-tongue without hopeless confusion ?

Two bogies are encountered under present conditions by the would-be scientific student—figures of speech and idioms. These ought not to be bogies, but, rather, helps ; and if they are bogies, it is because we have made them so. Figures of speech chiefly worry those who seek to interpret the Scriptures literally. Unfortunately, many teachers who ought to know better, when faced by what seems to them an awkward passage, dismiss it as "figurative." To such, the plain question suffices : "What figure is it ?" Figures of speech have been classified, and there is no need to be afraid of them.

When it comes to discouraging those who seek to translate the Scriptures literally, the Idiom bogy appears. It seems that we cannot be literal on account of idioms. Idioms cannot—so it is said—be brought over from one tongue to another.

One of the most important Hebrew idioms has been brought over into English, and completely naturalised, too, in such expressions as "holy of holies" and "King of kings."

If this idiom could not be brought over literally, how did the translators manage to do it? It may be replied that this idiom has to be explained before the ordinary Englishman can understand it. Quite so; and it might be added that it is very often wrongly explained also, so we must be thankful that it *is* translated, and not paraphrased! With a paraphrase, we are at the mercy of authority without knowing it. A translation discloses the facts, and does at least show some explanation is needed.

The forms of this idiom with the word "aiōn" are a great stumbling-block. I have seen two curious renderings. One: "to periods made up of periods of a thousand years," obviously comes from a crank. Another: "ages succeeding one another in endless succession" is mere folly. The "holies of holies" in the Tabernacle were not an endless succession of holy places! Actually, the meaning of this latter form indicates the true interpretation of the others.

So far as I can discover, the problem of rendering Scripture idioms into accurate English equivalents is by no means insuperable. At the worst, all they require is a simple explanation. I speak with diffidence here; but even if I am wrong, it is surely not beyond the resource of scholars to classify them and work out uniform English equivalents.

A word about context. The sum of its contexts fixes the colour and usage of a word. In different languages this sum necessarily differs, so usage differs also, and no two words are exactly equivalent. Obviously the only way to seize upon the colour and usage of a given foreign word is to bring over as precisely as possible, by scientific translation, as many of its contexts as possible. For example, in the Greek Scriptures the repose of sleep is sometimes a figure of death. In an accurate translation, this is evident from the context. For a translator to render "katheudo" and "koimaomai" by "to die" in these contexts would be to ruin the delicate beauty of the figure. His business is to translate, not to interpret!

Surely the problem to be solved is how to think ourselves out of our English idioms into the idioms of the originals? This is really an essential, and is frustrated if we aim at idiomatic English. The idioms of a language reflect the manner of thought of those who use them, and a mature familiarity with those

idioms is a necessary prelude to the understanding of the thoughts they convey. To attempt to bring them into line with our own way of thinking is certainly to confuse them. On the other hand, a word-for-word "crib" rendering is almost unintelligible. The only solution appears to be to have two, or even three, translations.

The first would be a word-for-word "crib," the second a rendering consistent and literal up to the very limit of intelligibility; both being for the use of students. The third should be based on the second, but in plain, simple modern language; consistent and literal in its renderings, and carefully avoiding all unnecessary modern idioms. If the original has literary beauty, it will surely come out in such a translation. If it is plain and homely, the translation will probably be plain and homely too; yet this need be no loss, since to decorate what is by nature simple is bad taste. Here we reach the real issue. What are we seeking; literature, pleasing to the ear; or the most faithful possible rendering of the original, pleasing to God?

As in the physical sciences, so in the Scriptures, fresh light follows upon more careful study, more precise apparatus, keener and more exact scrutiny of the facts—in other words, more completely objective approach. My aim has been to bring this home by giving a glimpse of the fresh light shed by recent study, and by indicating the conditions necessary for the winning of further light. We cannot stand still. If we persist in opposing modern weapons with obsolete ones, we are foredoomed to failure. Picking and choosing interpretations, instead of studying and believing God's Word as it stands, is the essence of heresy.

Perhaps I am unduly optimistic, but I like to hope that this paper will be criticised as little more than what "Mr. Punch" might call "another glimpse of the obvious." Would that this were so! My thesis, that the Scriptures must be regarded wholly objectively, scientifically, *is* obvious—in theory. The trouble is, few of us carry the theory into practice. If we did, we would, at one stroke, end our unhappy divisions and be able to bring a real, clear, convincing evangel to a world which so desperately needs it.

POSTSCRIPT.

The view that Matthew and Luke depend primarily on Mark and "Q" is now so firmly established that some may regard it as folly on my part to attempt to reopen the question.

I am, however, encouraged by the discovery, at the last moment, of a newly published book, *Matthew, Mark and Luke*, by the late Dom John Chapman, O.S.B. This work offers new and very strong evidence in support of the traditional order of the Gospels. The fact that his arguments do not depend on my view of the proper method of working out the synopsis, gives it special interest.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. DUNCAN said : There was an incidental feature of this paper which, to him, was very unacceptable, and which, he ventured to think, was also out of accord with the witness generally of the Victoria Institute.

Certain paragraphs towards the middle of the paper, dealing with the proclamation of the Gospel in the Apostolic Age, led up to the extraordinary conclusion that the twelve Apostles and Paul preached respectively different and fundamentally incompatible evangels.

To him (Mr. Duncan) this was a perverse conception, altogether irreconcilable with any just summing up of the New Testament evidence. One might indeed have recourse to words used by Paul himself, and say that he and his brother apostles were being "slandereously reported" when any affirmation was being made as to an innate incompatibility in their respective gospels.

The essential unity of the New Testament writings, emanating though they do from different minds, at different times and in different circumstances, was more and more apparent the longer they were reverently studied ; and it was to be regretted that any attempt should be made to interpret them as deriving from two mutually antagonistic currents of spiritual influence.

When, moreover, it appeared to be claimed that such a line of interpretation afforded "fresh light on the Greek Scriptures," there was forcibly brought to mind the warning word of the Lord Jesus Christ, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness !"

The Rev. Chas. W. COOPER said : All Fundamentalists will value the paper which has been read to us to-day and will gladly give their support to the writer's plea for the need of a more scientific examination, criticism and determination, as to the actual statements made in Scripture.

The Report of the Archbishop's Commission upon the Doctrine of the Church of England—just published—acknowledges that the Bible is a revelation from God but then proceeds to give “the opinions” of members of the Commission as to the meaning of its statements.

The truths of Scripture are not dependent either upon men's acceptance or understanding of its actual statements: what the world needs is to be given or told the actual statements given in the Bible. The Bible will then be its own interpreter.

The root of most of the present-day controversies over Scripture is the lack of Christian scholars being able to come to an agreement as to whether statements concerning the “House of Israel” and the “House of Judah” refer to one or two separate nations.

Also, much of the confusion which exists in men's minds would vanish if the present practice of scholars substituting (on their own authority) the word *church*, where Scripture definitely speaks of the nation Israel.

I give two glaring examples of the inconsistency of the above practice:—

(1) The following note is from the speaker's Commentary on Ezek. xxxiv:

“The complete fulfilment of the spiritual blessings, which the prophets were (here) guided to proclaim, was manifestly never realised in any temporal prosperity of the Jews, and never could, and never can be realised in any earthly kingdom.”

Then, because the writer fails to recognise that the said promises were not made to the Jews or the House of Judah, but to the House of Israel, proceeds to wrongly assume that the promises are therefore prophetic of “The Church.”

(2) A second example of the confusion which exists through altering actual statements concerning the Kingdom of God is the comment of Dean Alford in his commentary on Matt. xxi, 43, which says “The Nation” herein mentioned by Christ, means “The Church.”

The comment of Bishop Thorold, S.P.C.K. Bible, on the phrase Kingdom of Heaven in Matt. xiii, Luke viii, is that “the Kingdom” is the Church.

By putting these two quotations together we are given the following curious rendering of Matt. xxi, 43 :—

“The Church shall be taken from you Jews (who never had the Church) and shall be given to a Church bringing forth the fruits thereof,” which is absurd.

Dr. A. DRUITT appreciated the endeavour to arrive at the correct text of Scripture, especially when it involved a search for the original words.

He asked the lecturer if he was acquainted with the Numeric proof of the inspiration of the Bible—by Ivan Panin—and later briefly explained the principles of Bible Numerics, and showed how, by the features of an acrostic numeric pattern the text was settled—irrespective of theological opinions and diversities of version ; also that, in so settling a text there was nothing found in Bible Numerics which was out of harmony with the Voice of Scripture. He commended the study of Bible Numerics to all.

Mr. W. E. LESLIE said : The first part of the paper is rather miscellaneous in character. Reference is made to “The Synoptic Problem,” but its nature does not seem to have been clearly grasped. The main object of this section is rather to put forward a number of views associated with the late Dr. Bullinger and his followers. The New Testament undoubtedly presents us with a most interesting historical progression of doctrine. This has been exploited by Modernists. It has also been taken up by Bullingerites, but their extravagance and dogmatism have brought the subject into disrepute among evangelicals. This is exceedingly unfortunate, as a sane examination of the material from an historical standpoint is urgently needed.

The second part of the paper considers the principles of translation, a topic on which it is easy for zeal to outrun discretion. Major Withers does not seem to know that while the translators of the A.V. set themselves to introduce variety in translation, the translators of the R.V. as deliberately set themselves to seek uniformity. They say in their Preface that many alterations which may appear unnecessary have been made for this reason. Still, the R.V. is only

a revision. We need a fresh translation incorporating recent advances in our knowledge of the Greek language, and of the Sacred Text. It should be the work of a body of scholars, in order to avoid the freakishness and theological bias of the unnamed version from which Major Withers so frequently quotes.

It is a pity that no interlinear translation based on the Greek texts of Westcott and Hort, Nestle (the new edition), or Weymouth's Resultant, is published. The "Russellites" and "Bullingerites" have tried to fill the breach, but their publications are best left alone.

In conclusion, while the paper raises a number of points of interest to Bible Students, it sheds very little, if any, fresh light on the *Greek* Scriptures.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. E. J. G. TITTERINGTON wrote: Major Withers has brought before us a very important subject, for which I think we owe him a real debt of gratitude. His thesis falls into two parts: the need for a scientific and objective study of the Scriptures, and the need for a scientific translation as a foundation for such study. It is a matter for astonishment that there should be so much loose handling of the Word of God. Unfortunately, this is often found in conjunction with a reference to the original tongue, so that in itself a new translation would not obviate the evil; though this is, of course, no argument against the thesis before us.

The difficulty lies not so much in recognising what needs to be done as in the application. Major Withers acknowledges this. He seems, however, to have fallen into his own trap rather badly—to quote his own phrase, both in general and in particular. As a general instance, there is his plea for a literalness of interpretation, to the exclusion, perhaps, of one less literal. I do not say that he is wrong in this: only that in laying down this principle there is a definite subjective, as well as an objective element.

To come to particular instances: the speaker refers on page 208 to "the reason for the present absence of miracles like we find in Acts." This embodies two assumptions: (1) that there is a "present absence of miracles," and (2) a presumed explanation of this assumption. Many (myself included) would strongly dissent from assumption No. 1, and would be prepared to cite evidence in

support of our views ; if then, the assumed fact is no fact, what becomes of the rest of the argument ?

An even more important example of a subjective attitude of mind is to be found in the passage to which Mr. Duncan has referred. And a third, in the selection of one out of several possible renderings of the Greek phrase " eph' ho " in Rom. v, 12.

We do not get rid of this difficulty, which seems inherent in the human mind, when we come to the question of translation. We have to exercise our own judgment, first in the adoption of our original text, and then in finding the best equivalent in another language, and we cannot divest ourselves at any moment entirely of a subjective standpoint. This is not to say that the task should not be attempted (I believe the late Sir Edward Clarke made an effort in this direction), but in attempting it we should be clear in our minds as to what we are doing. Much as we all admire the Authorised Version, one cannot but regret that the structure of Matt. vi is obscured by the use of the same word " alms " in verses 1 and 2 to express two entirely different Greek words, or that the word " Parakletos " should be translated " Comforter " when it refers to the Holy Ghost, and " Advocate " when it refers to our Lord, and it would be easy to multiply examples.

But the translators of the Authorized Version were proceeding on a definite principle ; they carried it too far, no doubt, here and there, but the principle itself is set out in the Preface (not printed in most editions of the Bible) addressed to the Reader : see the section headed " Reasons inducing us not to stand curiously upon an identity of phrasing." As it stands in this Preface, " Is the Kingdom of God become words or syllables ? Why should we be in bondage to them if we may be free ? "

The truth is that the Word of God is something living, and though our existing translations are not perfect, we must at all costs avoid a translation which is merely mechanical, and therefore lifeless ; it is a spiritual task, which calls for spiritual equipment. Precision is needed both in translation and in interpretation ; but it is rather the precision of the lawyer, who deals with living language and abstract conceptions, than that of the scientist, who can only be precise so long as he is dealing with entities that can be weighed or measured or counted. " The letter killeth ; the Spirit giveth life."

Rev. H. TEMPLE WILLS, M.A., wrote : I have read the paper with very great interest and feel that the author has sounded a note very much needed in saying we need a new translation of the Bible, one nearer the present meaning of the words, and also a consistent translation. Why should the old English word "hell," for example, be used as the translation of iii or iv Hebrew and Greek words and so give a false idea of its meaning—the grave. Conditionalists have for long been pleading for consistency but tradition still holds the field for Rome and paganism. I trust Major Withers may be able to get his ideas attended to in the proper quarters.

Col. A. H. VAN STRAUBENZEE wrote : The lecturer has stressed the importance of the very words of Scripture—but I think he has omitted to emphasise the importance of belief in the plenary and verbal inspiration of those words.

Thus, in the Gospels we have four accounts of the Life of Christ given to us by God the Spirit—but *through* four sinful men, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—Thus, as in days past the Holy Spirit touched an imperfect woman and brought about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, one in whom there is no error or sin. This same Spirit touched men set apart by God to produce the perfect written word—one and the same member of the Godhead has given us both Christ and the Bible, and both equally perfect, Ps. xii, 6. The words of Jehovah are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace (word) pertaining to the earth, purified seven times.

God has safeguarded the copies of the original writings that it is acknowledged, we have to-day at least 95 per cent. of the very words in the originals.

Our Lord believed in the infallibility of the Old Testament and we may say it reverently ; it was Our Lord's belief in verbal inspiration that sent Satan from him in utter defeat.

Job says in chap. xxiii, 12, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food," and Christ, quoting Deuteronomy, that man liveth by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. In Hebrews, iv, 12, we have a record not of the *Higher* criticism but of the *Highest* criticism.

"For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul

and spirit, and of the joints and marrow and is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

The Word of God criticises man and exposes man to himself in all his helplessness, sinfulness and hopelessness, and also exposes to man “God’s love for man,” *vide* John, iii, 16. Thank God then for the Highest Criticism in which God shows what we are and what He is.

I agree with the lecturer that a translation, giving us in every passage where it occurs, the same meaning of any given word, and also indicating “figures of speech,” would be valuable.

And that our theology for life now should follow the Gospel of the Grace of God as set forth in the Epistles, revealed after the Gospel of the Kingdom as in the Gospels.

Mr. THOMAS FITZGERALD wrote : Major Withers has done well to call attention, in his suggestive paper, to the need of applying the method of Science to the study of the Scriptures, and I desire to make some comments on the subject of his paper, first of a general character, and then with reference to some particular points connected with it.

No other book has ever been subjected to such haphazard and unscientific treatment as the Bible. A considerable proportion of those who profess to study it, do so without any attempt to discover why the Book was written and to understand the true relation of the parts to the whole.

While assuming the rôle of Christian teachers, a certain school speak of the Bible in glowing terms as to its superlative merit in the realm of literature, but refuse to acknowledge that its origin is Divine. We are told by such that, “The conclusion is forced upon us that the Bible is a human work, as much as the “Principia” of Newton or Descartes. Some things are beautiful and true, but others no man in his senses can accept. Here are the works of various writers, thrown capriciously together, and united by no common tie but the lids of the bookbinder—two forms of religion which differ widely, one the religion of fear, and the other of love.”* We are asked to believe that this is *scientific criticism*. It is, to speak plainly, a flagrant travesty of the facts, and violates the canon

* *The Bible and Modern Thought*, by Rev. T. R. Birks, p. 6.

that, "Scientific criticism proceeds by taking the object to be judged *as it is*," just as the geologist who picks up a pebble by the brook-side discovers that all nature is related to it.

The fresh light on the Greek Scriptures, which has resulted in recent years from the diligent researches of scientific students of the Bible is, as the author states, practically unknown.

Turning to some particular points, it is reasonable to ask, "How many students of the Scriptures really know anything of the vast accession of material, now available for the textual interpretation of the Greek New Testament?"

Prof. Alex. Souter states in the preface to his Pocket Lexicon, "The last quarter of a century or so has, as is well known, seen a vast accession to the material of value for the textual interpretation of the Greek New Testament, particularly in Greek papyri discovered in Egypt. These documents are for the most part written in the non-literary Greek, the *κοινή* (*διαλεκτός*), 'the common dialect' or *lingua franca*, spoken and written throughout almost the whole Græco-Roman world. . . . Unless I am mistaken, the newer knowledge sheds a flood of light on passages hitherto misunderstood or regarded as unprofitable (*e.g.*, 1 Cor. x, 11, James i, 3, 1 Pet. ii, 2), and sweeps into the dustbin a deal of the well-meant but hair-splitting theology of the past (*cf.* *Eis*), quite unsuited as it was to the comprehension of plain first-century Christians."

Take another point, which Dr. James Hope Moulton refers to in his *Introduction to the New Testament Greek*. "We are now at last able to read the everyday speech of the people, and we find to our astonishment that one 'Hebraism' after another can be exactly paralleled from the letters, wills, petitions or accounts of Greek-speaking Egyptians from the fourth century B.C. downwards. It is becoming clear that in general we must only expect Semitic idioms in places where there is direct and over-literal translation from the Hebrew of the Old Testament, or the Aramaic which presumably underlies the Greek of men living in Judæa. In Palestine, as in Lycaonia (Acts xiv, 11 ff.) and elsewhere, the bulk of the people must have been like the Welsh to-day, greatly devoted to their native language (*cf.* Acts xxii, 2), but able to understand and use the language then current throughout the civilised world. . . . 'Judaic' or 'Biblical' Greek being no longer recognisable as a distinct variety, we can use without restriction the general term Hellenistic

(Greek), employing it after the manner of the old 'Atticist' grammarians for the one general Hellenic vernacular as distinguished from the archaic language now firmly established for use in 'correct' literature."

I fear that the lecturer's appeal to scholars to make an effort to produce an accurate, modern, and really scientific translation of the whole of the Scriptures comes too late in the day. The apostasy has so pervaded Christendom that it would be impossible to bring together a company of men representative of all the Churches, who would bring to bear upon their work not only their profound learning but a deep spiritual understanding of the Divinely revealed truths of the Sacred Writings.

The right use of the critical apparatus now available to students is better than another agreed translation, yet scholarship alone without the enlightenment of the indwelling Spirit of God, would be no safeguard from error.

Dr. J. H. MOULTON writes of the advantage even a little knowledge of the Greek Testament will bring, and of how accessible that knowledge is in our time. He says, "How accessible that knowledge is I learnt with profound satisfaction when I found this book a few years ago in the hands of a poor and almost helpless cripple in a Black Country cottage. He had taught himself Greek enough to work through several chapters of St. John, and he used the added knowledge of Holy Writ to instruct and inspire the young men who gathered around him in the little room which proved a very gate of heaven for many."*

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I thank Colonel Van Straubensee for his kind remarks. Actually, emphasis on inspiration is, I consider, implied in what I wrote. If the Scriptures are not verily the Word of God, absolute accuracy in study and translation is of minor importance.

In the section Mr. Duncan dislikes, I referred to Gal. i, 6-9 and ii, 7, and I took the Apostle Paul to mean precisely what he said. If Paul found it necessary to anathematize so strongly the substitution of one evangel for the other, he must have regarded his own

* *Introduction to the Study of New Testament Greek.* Pref. xi.

evangel as fundamentally incompatible with Peter's. With the passages quoted above, the reader should study Gal. ii, 11-21, iii, 2, 10, and, indeed, the whole epistle. For the Galatians (and for us) to turn back to Peter and the rest of the Twelve, to the Evangel of the Circumcision, to law and to covenant, is to turn away from Paul's Evangel and the great Secrets of Rom. xvi, 25, and of Eph. iii, 3, 5, 6, which were given to him to proclaim (Eph. iii, 7-13). That Paul's Evangel will, in due time, be displaced in turn by the Evangel of the Circumcision and by the Law is evident from such passages as Rom. xi, 25-29, and Heb. viii, 8-12, with x, 15-39 (the latter written to *Hebrews*, i, 1, 2) in the Greek Scriptures, and Deut. vi, 24, Isa. xlii, 21, lvi, 6-8, Ezek. xlv, 21, 25, Zech. xiv, 16, 21, Mal. i, 11, and many other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures. Can any candid student deny that these prophecies are fundamentally incompatible with Galatians? Each is true in its proper setting in time and circumstance. This present Economy of reigning grace (Rom. v, 10-21) is not permanent! It will be followed by a short period of judgment, which will in turn be succeeded by the New Covenant and the Millennial earth-rule of Messiah. The work wrought by the sufferings, the cross, the blood and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ must not be limited. It was in the first place for His Covenant People (Rom. xv, 8, 9); His Apostle of the Gentiles was called to reveal that it also brought blessings, above and beyond covenant, to the Church which is His Body. But the Body will not always remain on earth; its blessings are celestial (Eph. i, 3); and in due time the promises of earthly blessings to Israel and Judah, and to the Gentiles through them, must be fulfilled.

Should this still be not clear to Mr. Duncan, I suggest he try the experiment of mentally excising every scrap of Paul's written teachings from his theology. He will then find he has nothing left of the doctrines *distinctively* for us! Justification by faith alone, all our celestial spiritual blessings, the one Body in which Jew and Gentile are absolutely equal, and many other things, will have vanished. He will have to worship in the Synagogue, keep the Law and the Jewish feasts, be a proselyte of the Jews like Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch, and wait for the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel. Much remains to be learnt about this matter; and I,

amongst others, am engaged in elucidating and clarifying it. It is impossible to say more here, so I must refer inquirers to my own published writings.*

Mr. Leslie does not seem to realise it is impossible to cover every aspect of so vast a subject in a short paper.

I have long admired the late Dr. Bullinger's insistence on the importance of accuracy in the study of the Scriptures and the need to believe them all (Luke xxiv, 25-27); but this is the first I have heard of the Bullingerite sect. Nor am I acquainted with the translations made by them or the "Russellites"; but at least they deserve credit for recognising the need of fresh translation; and I deplore Mr. Leslie's attitude. Such attempts should be judged as *translations*, on their merits, and not left alone because of dislike of their sponsors. Similarly, the charge of freakishness and theological bias made against the Concordant Version, which I quoted a few times, is one which, if made at all, should be supported by evidence. This was the version to which I referred on page 212, para. 3, but I avoided naming it there because I wished to focus attention on the true principles of translation, rather than on the effort to realise them. The Concordant Version is not perfect, but it is the only attempt yet made to approach the problem on sound lines; and it is significant that the only constructive criticism of it, so far as I can discover, has come from those who have themselves worked on it.

I would be glad to have Mr. Leslie's criticisms of the *principles* of this version.

It is impossible to answer Mr. Titterington briefly. I would greatly like to see his evidence for the present existence of miracles such as those in Acts v, 1-9, xiv, 19, 20, xvi, 25, 26, and xxviii, 3-6.

My "selection of one out of several possible renderings" of "eph ho" was strictly objective. I chose the literal rendering!

To select according to personal preferences is subjective. To select according to some standard external to oneself, in this case literalness, is objective. Although, admittedly, the *choice* of that standard may be dictated by subjective considerations; the standard

* *The Conciliation. The Secret of the Evangel and The Evangel. A Systematic Study.* A third, *The New Covenant* is now being serialised in *The Lantern*, and will, I hope, be published in book form later. Publisher: J. & F. Smithers, Ballynahinch, Belfast.

itself, once fixed, being independent of its user, is necessarily objective ; so selection according to it is wholly objective also. I admit my *preference* for literalness of translation and interpretation is subjective ; but literalness does not itself fail to be objective on that account, nor is there any reason why it must needs be mechanical or lifeless. I suggest my critic has himself failed to disentangle the objective and subjective in his last two paragraphs. The fine confused thinking in the quotation from the preface to the A.V. is a superb example of what to avoid. As God has chosen to give His revelation in words, it is neither curiosity nor bondage to treat His words with reverent precision.

I much appreciate the courteous criticisms of the Chairman, but I must add that my association of the Synoptic Problem with a standard synopsis is not due to misapprehension. On opening Hawkins' *Horæ Synopticæ* at random, I find, on pp. 80, 81, references to four synopses, including Rushbrooke's Synopticon, so I am not alone ! With Dr. Druitt, Mr. Fitzgerald, Rev. Temple Wills and the Rev. C. H. Cooper I am in general agreement.