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## THE PLACE OF INTELLECT IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

By THE REV. J. W. WENHAM, M.A., B.D., R.A.F.V.R.

IT is perhaps presumptuous of me to attempt to tackle the subject which has been chosen for this afternoon, since it involves a treatment (however slight) of most profound philosophical questions, in particular the question of the nature and function of the intellect. It is particularly presumptuous because this is a philosophical society and I can lay no claims to the title of philosopher. I shall, however, try as far as possible to avoid philosophical abstractions, and I have deliberately stated the title in concrete and practical form, because my aim is a practical one. I want to consider the question of the nature and function of the intellect for the quite practical purpose of strengthening those engaged in Christian work; for I believe that one of the greatest causes of weakness amongst that considerable body of devoted Christians who hold conservative views of Holy Scripture is to be found in a deep-seated tendency to depreciate the intellect. If anything I can say has any effect in overcoming this weakness, I shall consider that my attempt has been worth while, even though I feel bound to crave your indulgence for a treatment so inadequate.

In making a plea for the importance of the intellect before this society I am doubtless preaching largely to the converted, since the very *raison d'être* of the Victoria Institute is that it should consider intellectual questions bearing on the Christian faith. But there are many of the younger generation who are zealous and severely orthodox Christians who are deeply suspicious of discussion and argument, of philosophy and theology—of anything, that is, that may appear to countenance the slightest element of doubt in regard to the body of Christian teaching which they have espoused. I imagine that I as a young man have been called upon to write this paper partly with a

view to saying something relevant to young men, so I make no apology for directing my remarks primarily to them, and particularly to those with conservative views on Holy Scripture.

Conservative views on Holy Scripture have been championed during the present century by two main groups, the Roman Catholics and the thorough-going Evangelicals. The latter (with whom we are mainly concerned) have shown on the one hand a most commendable zeal for the cause of Christ, but on the other a tendency to narrowness and obscurantism which has again and again alienated their would-be leaders and driven them either into Liberalism or Traditionalism. The achievements of the Methodist-Evangelical revival, both evangelistically and socially, compare favourably with any religious movement of the past. It was the dynamic that covered the heathen world with Christian missionaries. It was the chief motive power behind the great philanthropic movements initiated by William Wilberforce and the Earl of Shaftesbury. Yet in modern times forceful Evangelical leadership is conspicuous by its absence within the councils of the churches and in affairs of society generally. It is my belief that the main cause of this decline is to be found in Evangelical depreciation of the intellect. I am convinced that there is nothing wrong with the old-fashioned Evangelical gospel—it is still the one power that can really save a man, that can recreate and permanently reform him. I am equally convinced that there is nothing wrong with the old-fashioned Evangelical views on Holy Scripture. When the plain teaching of the Bible is revered and accepted as the Word of God, it is still like “a fire and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.” No, there is nothing wrong with these basic beliefs, what *is* wrong is that we have not taken them seriously enough and have not thought out their real implications. Many have been content to rely upon a few clichés, such as, “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God,” “argument never won a soul for God,” or “all we need is the ‘simple’ gospel,” which they imagine relieve them of any necessity for painstaking thought.\* It is the aim of this paper to show that

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\* There is a quite prevalent custom of citing St. Paul's procedure at Athens (Acts 17), not as an apostolic example to be imitated, but as a mistake to be avoided. It is maintained that because he descended to philosophical reasoning, therefore he failed. Though this argument is widely current, it is really an argument without foundation, for it is scarcely fair to describe an address that gathered out a group of converts in such a sophisticated centre of paganism as a “failure.”

this depreciation of the intellect is unjustified on Biblical, psychological and pragmatic grounds. If we take the Bible seriously, the intellect must be regarded as of fundamental importance. If we study our own nature, we see the sheer impossibility of relegating reason to a secondary place. If we look at the practical needs of the Christian world, we see an appalling need for intellectual leadership.

### THE BIBLICAL ARGUMENT.

One of the underlying reasons for the idea that the Bible depreciates the intellect seems to be that the Biblical teaching never divorces the intellectual and the moral. Reasoned argument always leads to practical ethical consequences. It never indulges in argument simply as an intellectual exercise. Thus, since it is always possible to show that every argument leads to a moral issue, it is erroneously inferred that therefore it is the moral issue that matters and that the reasoning leading up to it is of no importance. Or again, the Biblical teaching about the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit for entry into salvation is similarly misinterpreted. Because mere human reasoning alone without the operation of the Spirit will not bring salvation, it is falsely inferred that therefore the reason has *no* important part to play in the process. The fact that some people fail to give the Holy Spirit His rightful place provides no justification for others to fail to give the intellect its rightful place.

Now as a matter of fact the witness of Scripture itself is as plain as could be. The New Testament is full of the appeal to reason. The most obvious examples are naturally to be found in St. Paul, who wrestles in argument with his readers to show them the necessary and logical consequences of the premises they are working from. How often we have at the crucial point the favourite Pauline "therefore . . ." But what is so characteristic of St. Paul is to be found throughout the New Testament, not least importantly in the teaching of our Lord. Throughout the gospels He is continually stating clear propositions which carry immediate conviction to His hearers (sometimes by virtue of their Jewish training and sometimes from their innate sense of what is right and wrong) and from these He draws simple, logical, almost self-evident conclusions. One need go no further than the Sermon on the Mount to see several examples of His reasoning

(e.g., Matt. v, 23, 29, 46 ; vi, 2). But in fact He is ever appealing to reason in His teaching, whether in the lucidity of His open-air preaching, or in His devastating thrust and counter-thrust in controversy.

Furthermore the whole *modus operandi* of Christian teaching is such as to demand the fullest cooperation of the intellect, for the New Testament gives us not a system of legalistic enactments but a body of *principles*. There is no neat rule of thumb for automatically deciding ethical problems, if for no other reason than that no collection of laws, however bulky, could ever provide rulings to fit all circumstances for all time. Thus, at its very heart, Christian teaching carries with it the necessary demand for the active cooperation of the human understanding. To discourage painstaking thought is to undermine Christian ethics.

Finally, before leaving the Biblical Argument there is one item to be considered, which is closely related to the Psychological Argument which follows—that is the scriptural use of the term “heart.” In the Bible, neither the Hebrew words לֵב and לִבָּי nor the Greek word *καρδία* refer primarily to the emotions, and when the popular evangelist tries to “reach the hearts of the people” simply by stirring the emotions, he is not proceeding in a scriptural fashion. It is much nearer the Biblical idea to identify “the heart” with “the will,” where the will is conceived as the centre of the personality. But even here the will is never for a moment thought of as divorced from the rest of the personality—from the heart spring not only affections and resolves, but also “thoughts,” “reasonings” (Mark vii, 21 ; Luke ii, 35 ; xxiv, 38) and this intellectual aspect of the heart receives strong Biblical emphasis. Abbott-Smith summarises the matter fairly for both Old and New Testament thus : “*καρδία* . . . In a psychological sense, the seat of man’s collective energies, the focus of personal life, *the seat of the rational as well as the emotional and volitional elements in human life.*”\* This gives a double force to the First and Great Commandment : “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *heart* and with all thy *mind.*”

#### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ARGUMENT.

The fundamental importance of the intellect is also to be seen from the study of human psychology. It is quite impossible to

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\* Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (3rd Ed.), p. 230.

isolate the purely moral and spiritual activities of man from his intellectual activities. The human personality has a strange trinitarian structure. It has three clearly distinguishable modes of activity—feeling, thinking and willing—which the older psychologists used to relate to three distinct and separate faculties, the heart, the intellect and the will.† But at the same time the personality is an indissoluble unity, and each mode of activity reacts and is reacted upon by the others. In particular, the activity of the intellect has the strongest influence on the set of the will and the character of one's feelings. Any attempt to undervalue the intellect will pervert the will and impoverish the emotions.

Consider for a moment what actually takes place when one performs an "act of will," in any particular situation. Firstly there arises a number of desires, probably conflicting with one another; then the intellect goes to work upon the desires, sorts them out and weighs them up; then finally the personality is set in motion by the will on the basis of what has gone before. Let us take a very simple illustration. Imagine a small and hungry boy going down a road past an apple orchard, on the trees of which are many beautiful, ripe apples. The road is not very secluded, and between him and the apples is a high and jagged wall. What is he going to do? What "act of will" is he going to make? Observe the process by which the decision is made. First there is an uprush of desires—"Coo, I am hungry! Don't those apples look marvellous. I'd love one. And it would be awful sport to climb that wall." Then his intellect comes into action. He begins to think it over. "Yes, but suppose I'm caught red-handed. Or these new trousers of mine—if I tear them on one of those sharp bits, what explanation am I to give? And I wonder if I ought to; I suppose they are not *really* mine." His mind weighs up the pros and cons, and then he acts. That is the process: desires, intellectual judgment, act of will.

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† The Faculty Psychology is now out of favour, because it is recognized (quite rightly) that we have no knowledge, indeed no conception, of separate "faculties." We only know the various forms of activity of the single personality, and these forms of activity are themselves closely interwoven. I am inclined to think that the pendulum has swung too far the other way and that the modern stress on the unity of the personality tends to minimise its three-foldness, and I think that we may still find the "faculty" idea useful as long as we avoid a materialistic conception of it. After all, "personality" is only known by its activity, yet as a concept it is very useful.

Now, whether one takes a strictly self-deterministic view or allows some measure of indeterminism in the "act of will" is immaterial; on *any* view the judgement of the intellect is an integral and inescapable factor in the process, and in so far as it is faulty the act of will will be faulty too. It is no accident that in common parlance "strong-minded" and "strong-willed" are practically synonymous terms. Clarity of intellectual grasp is essential for steadfastness of purpose.

Let us take another instance of the interdependence of the intellectual and the moral, and consider the operation of conscience. Conscience is admittedly a factor of importance in the spiritual life, yet it is very easy to show that the intellect has a profound effect upon conscience. In fact it is even true to say that what a man believes in the last resort determines what his conscience says. Wrong beliefs can dull and misdirect conscience. If an Oriental devotee believes that it is right to place his mother on a funeral pyre when his father dies, he will be conscience-stricken if, on considerations of mere humanity, he fails to do so. It is probably true to say that not a few of the Inquisitors who tortured and burnt Protestants really believed that they were glorifying God and doing mankind a service. Furthermore, not only may wrong beliefs cause a dulling of conscience, but equally they may cause an over-sensitising of conscience, which amounts to morbidity. I heard of an instance of a young man who nearly lost his reason through trying to obey the least prompting of the Holy Spirit without having been first properly instructed in the methods used by the Spirit in giving guidance. He thought he was guided to put a lump of coal on the fire, then to take it off again, then to put it back, and so on . . . with nearly disastrous results. These are extreme cases, but they illustrate a principle of first-class importance and of great practical consequence. Incalculable unhappiness and no little harm to the spread of the Christian Faith is resulting at the present time from uneasy consciences of those who have not been properly instructed in Christian ethical principles. Conscience does not give a ready-made, cut-and-dried answer to the problems of Sunday observance, worldly amusements, pacifism, birth-control, and so on, which at times so sorely perplex such a host of earnest Christians. The only way to peace of mind is by honest thought to sort out the factors involved in the light of New Testament principles and by God's help resolutely to follow what appears to be right.



Irrationality or lazy-mindedness will inevitably reduce the standard of reliability of the dictates of conscience.

This argument for the fundamental place of the intellect in the human personality could be developed in several directions (*e.g.*, the influence of thought on emotion could be illustrated by the power of noble thought to produce fine emotions), but enough has been said to establish our main conclusion, and we can proceed to our last and most tangible line of reasoning—the argument from practical needs.

#### THE PRAGMATIC ARGUMENT.

The need of the hour is for a great revival of simple New Testament Christianity—therein alone lies hope for the individual and hope for society. Such a revival will only come through a great cleansing and revivifying within the churches. Our problem is to discover what are the chief hindrances to Christian vitality. The hindrances are doubtless legion, and it is no purpose of mine to minimise such sins as prayerlessness, moral cowardice and sloth, which so persistently grip us, but I do believe the failure to glorify God with our minds has been one of the most pervasive and destructive factors in killing the usefulness of conservative Christians. By depreciating the intellect we have depreciated scholarship and surrendered the teaching of our ministers and of our children to the enemies of the gospel. Our schools of theology, instead of being power centres of Christian progress, have become the training ground of unbelief. By discouraging thought, we have killed leadership and lost our power, not only to continue the glorious triumphs of social reform, but even to check evil within the Church. Anti-intellectualism has sapped our strength and left us impotent at the time of direst need.

Now it is a simple fact of history that the great movements of mankind are movements of thought. Thought seeds well sown in receptive minds sweep the world. Think of the influence of a Karl Marx or a Charles Darwin, of a Martin Luther or an Ignatius Loyola. A theory clearly conceived and vigorously propagated, irresistibly captures the imagination of men and leads them on in spite of themselves. We who have lived to see the appalling power of false ideologies ought to be the first to see the need for a clear and comprehensive Christian ideology. Such an ideology, I hope to show, is indispensable to a great revival of pastoral, evangelistic and missionary effectiveness.

What is the real cause of the ineffectiveness of Christian

preaching at the present time? It is not that the day of the power of the spoken word is past. Hitler's spoken word has been as powerful to move the masses as any old-time preacher. Nor is it lack of ministerial training. On the technical side the training of ministers is more thorough to-day than it has ever been. No. The real trouble is that those who are trying to teach others are themselves hazy as to what they want to teach. The average theological student is more certain of what he does not believe than of what he does believe, and though he may sincerely want to do good, he has not that burning, consuming conviction which makes the good preacher and teacher. Lack of clarity on basic principles makes teachers in the same church contradict each other and even contradict themselves, with the inevitable result that the ordinary man in the street has the most confused and erroneous idea of what Christ's teaching really was. It is a plain statement of fact (which any service chaplain will confirm) that the majority of even church-going young men and women (let alone the 95 per cent. who own no active allegiance to any church) are completely vague about the fundamentals of the faith, and cannot be relied upon to show any clear grip of such doctrines as the deity of Christ, the atonement, and the new birth, or the authority of the Bible. Is it any wonder that we have so few vigorous Christian propagandists when so few have a clear idea of what needs propagating? ?

Now it is obvious that if our beliefs about the Bible are correct, the whole situation would be at once revolutionised if our teachers were brought back to a whole-hearted belief that the plain teaching of the Bible is the truth of God. The devastating power of a united "Thus saith the Lord" from ten thousand pulpits would stir the whole country overnight. But the fact is that the majority of ministers do not believe, and quite seriously do not believe it would be honest to believe, the old-fashioned doctrine of Holy Scripture. The standard text-books and most of the leaders of thought amass an array of apparently incontestable evidence to forbid such belief, and one man standing alone feels incompetent to oppose them. The only answer is to attack the problem at its source and let those who have experienced the power of the Scriptures stand together and consecrate their minds to the re-establishment of truly Christian scholarship. With the help of God, man for man, the Christian ought to be a more clear-thinking and hard-working scholar than the corresponding non-Christian. Once we have really

seen the need we should be able to establish centres of Biblical research and a school of theology of a higher standard than any which our opponents can achieve. But we must first see the need and be prepared for the sacrifice which the call to scholarship will demand.

So much for the need of scholarship for the revival of the churches, but its need in the evangelistic sphere is equally evident. It is quite true that many fine evangelists have been ignorant and ill-instructed men, and it is quite true that *mere* reasoning does not constitute evangelism. But this does not imply that the evangelist can afford to do without an intellectual foundation for his work. I believe that it is the change in intellectual atmosphere since the days of Moody which largely accounts for the relative ineffectiveness of Moody methods when applied at the present day. By and large it would be true to say that in Moody's day people generally believed the Christian Faith to be true—but they did nothing about it. His task was to face them up to the implications of their belief and get them to surrender their hearts and lives to their Redeemer. Nowadays the situation is entirely different. The common man has a vague theistic belief, but he has neither understanding of nor belief in the Christian doctrines of redemption. He believes that modern knowledge has quite out-moded the ancient Christian superstitions. Now to such a man the Moody technique is entirely inappropriate. You cannot face him up to his beliefs as a prelude to surrender to Christ. You are attempting the ludicrous plan of getting him to entrust himself to a person he has not the slightest reason for believing to be trustworthy. True faith is based on knowledge, and the "leap of faith" can only follow upon the receiving of sufficient evidence of the faithfulness of the One trusted. "Simple" faith is not faith based upon insecure evidence; it comes from profound assurance of the love of God. The human parallel is exact. The apparently simple act of trusting a person the first time one sees him is not really so very simple. It results from long study of human nature. Through continuous observation of all types of people one comes to recognise characteristics (probably not analysable at the time by the observer, but surely recognised none the less) which assure one that the character behind the external characteristics is dependable. So with God, the simplest faith is based on the profoundest knowledge.

Thus in modern evangelism, except amongst the small minority

who have had a good background of Christian teaching, we have to start much further back than Moody did. As always, the trifler must be rebuked for his sin and attacked via his conscience. Protracted reasoning will probably do him little good, but a few well directed thrusts may go far to stir his conscience. He can be shown the hollowness of his attempted denial of God ; he can be shown the inescapable fact of a Providential judgment upon wrong-doing. A penetrating pulpit analysis of the shams of unbelief can lay bare the nakedness of a person's soul in a terrible way, *but* such an analysis presupposes a lucidity that comes only from very hard thinking and the most careful study of human nature. Our reliance will not be on the spoken word alone—it will of course be backed by prayer and consistent Christian living—but how else is the word of God to be brought home to a man's conscience unless by reasoning ?

With the sincere seeker, the need for intellectual clarity is even more obvious. While it is true that the actual creative act of regeneration is an instantaneous operation of God, there is a long process leading up to conversion and a long process following after it, and throughout both periods God is working upon the whole personality, including the intellect. The prominence of the intellectual element in conversion varies with the degree of intellectuality in the cast of personality of the person concerned. In some the intellect plays a dominant role, and the conversion of such from an anti-Christian to a Christian mode of life is bound to involve a painful intellectual pilgrimage. In others the intellect may be poorly developed in comparison with the emotional and æsthetic side of character, and intellectual objections to the Faith may be relatively easily overcome, but overcome they must be—for no one, however limited his intelligence, can put his trust in someone he does not believe to be trustworthy. To everyone the facts of the gospel must be presented to the mind, and where the mind has reason to doubt the facts, these doubts must be removed before faith can result. The particular grounds for belief which especially carry conviction will vary enormously from person to person. One person will be helped by abstract philosophical reasoning, another will be convinced of the truth of the gospel by the evidence of a friend's transformed life ; but in each case it is a *rational* ground for belief, and in almost every case belief results from a combination of such rational evidences.

Thus the modern evangelist must be prepared to use reason to

undercut error, to probe the conscience, to lead the seeker for truth patiently step by step from one conclusion to another till he is brought boldly face to face with the final decision for or against Christ. Personally I believe that for purposes of evangelism, it would be well to reinforce and even in part replace the old-time mission by Christian lectures. Lectures alone, unless they finally impinge upon the conscience, are of little use, and fervent emotional appeals without intellectual content are worse than useless. The ideal evangelist must both instruct and challenge,\* and of necessity the instruction must precede the challenge. Alas! how few there are to-day who can show themselves qualified for this task. And what is the reason? Simply that for years Evangelicals have discouraged would-be evangelists from fully training their minds.

Lastly, I should like to suggest that a revival of sound scholarship would have an immense, direct influence in forwarding world evangelization. At the present time much of the foreign mission field is in a state of transition. The native churches founded during the past two or three generations are taking over the responsibility for the evangelization of great areas hitherto regarded as the responsibility of the white man. For such areas it is the task of the home churches to send teachers to train a native ministry rather than to provide itinerant white evangelists. It is these teachers of the teachers who are the key people in forwarding world evangelization. The question is, Have we the qualified conservative men to fill these posts? I fear that already the rot has set in in some hitherto fervent and vigorous missionary communities. Missionaries are going out instructed in the Liberal theology which dominates our divinity halls, and they are undoing the fine work of their predecessors built up at the cost of so much blood and tears. What scope there is here for a man with brains and zeal! What a tragedy it is that we have by our anti-intellectualism alienated so many able men from the historic doctrines of the faith, and discouraged so many others from fitting themselves for this task. Let us cease decrying the intellect and dedicate ourselves to the rebuilding of a school of Evangelical theology, and ere long we shall be pouring forth a stream of men and a flood of literature which will grant a new lease of life to the younger churches of the world.

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\* Incidentally, by this definition St. Paul is the ideal evangelist—a conclusion borne out by results.

The witness of the Bible, the witness of psychology, and the demands of practical expediency all point in the same direction : The intellect is of strategic importance in forwarding the cause of the gospel, and we depreciate it at our peril. It seems to me to be a clear call to the younger generation to dedicate their brains to God, and to try with His help to build up the best possible school of Christian learning. The results accruing from the hard labour of patient scholarship appear but slowly, yet in the end they are more enduring and more potent for good or ill than the fevered activities of ill-instructed zeal. May the older generation grant unstinted backing by personal encouragement and by releasing the funds required for the gigantic undertaking.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. H. S. CURR, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D., wrote : Mr. Wenham's essay is a timely one. There is a widespread movement in evangelical circles, both conservative and liberal, to assign to the intellect a much lower place in religion than it ought to hold. One explanation, of course, is the reaction from the rationalism and humanism which has dominated Protestant theological scholarship for more than a century. For a prolonged period reason had practically the last word in the discussion of Christian doctrine with the result that the supernatural was being slowly and steadily eliminated. Christianity was ceasing to be a religion, and becoming more and more a religious philosophy combined with an incomparable code of ethics. There was no place for revelation in the usual acceptation of the term. Reason was self-sufficient to unravel all the riddles of existence and experience, provided that sufficient time and patience were forthcoming. What the schools think to-day, the streets think tomorrow, and there can be no doubt that this tendency has helped to promote the wave of irreligion which is sweeping the Northern Hemisphere at the moment. It is not the only factor by any manner of means, but it is a potent one. A welcome change is now manifest. Reason is no longer regarded as an absolute monarch in the things of God. But there is a danger, as Mr. Wenham emphasises, that the new trend of theological thought will go too far in the opposite direction. The popularity of some modern religious cults, whose existence is only made possible by the repudiation of reason, proves that point.

Mr. E. J. G. TITTERINGTON wrote: This is a valuable and challenging paper—may its challenge be heeded. Mr. Wenham has rightly stressed the need that we love God with all our *mind* as well as with all other faculties with which we are endowed, and has pointed out various directions in which Evangelical Christians seem often to fall short in the exercise of their intellectual activities. The matter is not one that affects the leaders of religious life and active workers alone, but also to a very great extent all believers alike. We are bidden to be able to give a *reason* for the hope that is in us. There is far too much slipshod thinking current in Christian circles; a too facile acceptance of other men's ideas without due examination, especially if those ideas are put forth with some show of authority; or, perhaps, if those ideas fall in with the traditions current in the circles in which we move. There is not enough of the Berean "searching the Scriptures to see whether these things are so." From this flow several evils, one is, that our beliefs are in danger of being, however sound, merely secondhand. We have not thought them out for ourselves and thus made them our own. But further than this, there is a real risk that unsound ideas may gain wide currency by dissemination until they become so familiar that they are regarded as almost axiomatic, and accepted as the very teaching of the Scriptures themselves. When this stage is reached, it becomes an actual bar to any critical examination. In a word, we do need from time to time to review the things that are most surely believed among us, that we may continue to be assured that they are in very truth based upon the Word of God and not merely the interpretation of man.

Mr. NINIAN LOWIS wrote: I have read Mr. Wenham's paper with great interest. It is most thought-provoking and helpful. The suggestion that the absence of effective Evangelical leadership to-day is mainly the result of a depreciation of the intellect among Christians of that school is interesting, but surely there are other greater causes?

I have been particularly interested in what Mr. Wenham has to say on the increased need for scholarship in evangelism. There can be no doubt that largely as a result of national compulsory education (however imperfect we may feel it to be) there has been a "change of intellectual atmosphere since the days of Moody." This is evidenced,

for instance, by the sincere intellectual difficulties raised often by quite young persons. It is also sadly true that to-day in evangelism we have to begin much further back, as Mr. Wenham says. I feel, however, that these facts are being increasingly realised by the greater number of those who are called to "do the work of an evangelist." Anyone engaged in such work in the past ten years must surely realise that mere emotional appeal alone has little if any lasting value, and that more and more the need is for a teaching evangelism. By no means the least of the difficulties that such an evangelist has to face to-day is that of overcoming the prejudice which is so common, even among Christian people, and which is based on the idea that all evangelists are intellectually ignorant, a theory which is, one is thankful to know, very far from being true.

Mr. A. McDONALD REDWOOD wrote : I should like to express my thanks to the author for his helpful paper on a very important subject. Of the several points raised, some are worthy of fuller treatment, and many are provocative.

The author, I rather think, has tended to over-emphasise the "Evangelical depreciation of Intellect," as he terms it. That it exists to a certain extent, and in certain small circles, I am prepared to admit. But I feel the point needs developing from a rather different direction than he has taken. Actual and deliberate depreciation is not so much the vogue, as he seems to imply. What is obvious, is the *apathetic* "unthinkingness" prevailing within and without the Church. People, including church-goers, do not *want* to think too deeply. Any preacher who rises above a certain "accommodating" level, and begins to display a serious desire for presenting truth through sustained intellectual argument, is simply not listened to—of course, with due regard for the "certain exceptions." The inevitable reaction is that the preacher has to lower his level of intellectual approach, and even take to the more emotional. Hence, "the simple Gospel" class the author refers to.

The author may also have in mind the tacit belief entertained in certain circles that the "balance of power" intellectually, has passed almost entirely to the Critical School, leaving the conserva-



tives to drift "on the misty flats below." We have all been treated to some such smugly complacent remark as "All clear-thinking people have now abandoned the claims of an infallible Bible," etc. Does this need to worry us unduly? For one thing, it has yet to be proved, I submit. Not many years ago, Prof. Gresham Machen in *What is Faith?* argued trenchantly, in reference to the "Critical Controversy" that much of the theological liberalism and allied modernism of the day would never hold its own but for the prevailing *lack of thinking*. To "think through" a subject is not what the majority have any special desire for, least of all in religious matters.

The causes which contribute to a lowered intellectual virility lie more elsewhere than in a conscious and deliberate "anti-intellectualism." Rather are they to be found in the realm of the "anti-moral" and the "anti-spiritual" spirit of the day. It seems to me we cannot dismiss as of no immediate application the prophetic word of St. Paul in 1 Tim. iv, 1-2. And I submit that, the "appalling poser of false ideologies," which the author instances, is not due to their irresistible "intellectualism," but to their fanatical and fantastic parading of threadbare theories "dressed to the fashion," immediately adapted to unthinking minds, already blinded by the particular "fashion," for there are prevailing fashions in every sphere.

I cannot help thinking, therefore, that the diagnosis of the present conditions in reference to the lack of an intellectual Christian propaganda is hardly correct. It follows that, the remedy needs further adjustment. It is not only an increased stimulation of the intellectual forces, but a fresh infusion of the "blood plasma" of Divine life-power into the *spiritual* experience, which will most affect the anaemic mentality of the "average Christian" of to-day.

Are we not beginning to see something of the signs of this "new infusion" in the very definite and fairly widespread revival of earnest desire for more systematic and spiritual Bible Study and Bible Teaching? If so, as I venture to believe, then the author does a good service in drawing attention to the "real trouble"—"that those who are trying to teach are themselves hazy as to what they want to teach" (p. 5). Does not part of the cause lie in the unconscious *influence*, if not the unthinking acceptance, of the modern

“Critical Methods” of studying the Bible? Do people in general pay more attention to the productions of these methods than they did to the, for example, “simple Gospel”?

The author’s reference to the need of better-trained men for the mission fields, prepared, that is, to stand staunchly on the side of the conservative view-point of Biblical interpretation and principles, I can heartily endorse. After more than thirty years’ experience of missionary service in India, that is, without doubt, the great desideratum in the present world crisis, I am quite convinced. This point is enticing and is worthy of further discussion, but the problem of space prohibits. Peter’s challenge to present-day Christians is one terse phrase, “*Gird up the loins of your mind.*”

Mr. EVERARD JOSE wrote: The lecturer’s remarks on page 6 need to be taken to heart and acted on. Our gospel is the same as Moody’s, the everlasting Good News, but the audience has changed; the same seed, but new ground.

Moving about among all sorts and conditions of men, I find it generally accepted (1) that the Christian faith, as formerly understood, is disproved and out of date, and (2) that ministers of religion as a body, believe this to be the case. Consequently everything is uncertain and problematical. The more thoughtful in the population have dilettante ideas about some sort of idealism, or are bitter about some supposed political cause of world evil. But the usual refuge is an attempted forgetfulness under the dope of jazz, cinema or anything that obliterates thought or feeling.

For the most part this restless hysteria of unbelief is of second-hand origin. Outside the Gospel of Christ, the dominating influence of life in all ages, everywhere, is “Everybody’s doing it NOW.”

Here, obviously, is the field for sanctified thought, feeling, and will. We can take nothing for granted, the familiar truths, and phrases and associations, which are so dear to us, are altogether unknown to our audience and of no interest to them.

Lt.-Col. L. M. DAVIES wrote: I welcome this paper, and agree with every word of it. The author refers to himself as a young man. If he is young, all the better. He shows a mature grasp of the

subject, and places his finger on a root cause of the relative ineffectiveness of far too many well-meaning preachers to-day. Even when sound on the Gospel, they ignore the wide dissemination of "science, falsely so-called" which makes the Gospel seem ridiculous to our contemporaries. As a result, they make little impression upon people with whose supposed factual objections to belief they have no power of dealing.

When I found, many years ago, that one Christian friend after another was losing his trust in the Bible owing to "Darwin's scientific discoveries," I set myself, with God's help, to get to the root of that matter, although it was out of my line as a young gunner officer. It took many years' study, and the sacrifice of many leave periods, in order to master it. Some evangelical friends gravely doubted my efforts, and urged me to remember that "Christianity is of the heart, not of the head." To this I replied that if my heart were not in the right place, I would not be using my head like that, but would be after game in Kashmir instead of swotting in the Geological Survey Offices in Calcutta.

I asked God to show me the actual facts, and to give me an unchallengeable position from which to testify to His Word. That prayer was granted. After retiring from the Army, I finally graduated, in order to seal matters; and now in old age hold two doctorates in geology, with a long record of research, and a factual knowledge which no B.B.C. propagandist—Prof. D. M. S. Watson, Dr. Julian S. Huxley, or any other—cares to face in public dispute.

My faith is as it always was. But my power of "putting it across" to those who try to counter Paul—or Moses—by Darwin is incomparably greater now than it was in far-off subaltern days.

I apologise for these personalities, which are quoted only because of their relevance, and as showing how emphatically I agree with the author of this very able paper. Our Lord said: "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" Unless we can show that we have a competent grasp of natural facts, people will hardly trust our judgment on supernatural ones.

It is not easy to acquire the power to talk soundly about earthly problems (by which I refer in particular to facts which are supposed to disprove the statements of Scripture). It involves hard and pro-

tracted work, whether one takes up the doctrine of organic evolution, or its literary parallel in textual criticism. But if done to God's Glory, such work returns abundant interest. Knowledge so acquired is not of itself fruitful; the Word of God alone is the living Seed. But this knowledge is a most useful accessory. I would compare it with the ploughshare which (although barren in itself) breaks up the ground to take the seed before the fowls of the air remove it. The ground is much harder now (as our author rightly points out) than it was even in Moody's day; and much ploughing requires to be done if sowing is to be effective.

Major R. B. WITHERS, the Rev. E. E. INGHAM and the Rev. A. W. PAYNE also contributed to the discussion.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I am not anxious to burden the transactions with lengthy comments and I trust that I shall be forgiven if I content myself merely with an addendum, which I hope may be a source of cheer to those who have so kindly expressed their approval of the thesis. Since I originally wrote this paper there has come into existence an institution on the very lines that I have advocated—the Tyndale House for Biblical Research, 16, Selwyn Gardens, Cambridge, founded under the auspices of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. This is a residential library with already a considerable collection of excellent books for biblical research. It has been conceived largely by young men and should prove an important instrument in effecting what we all so much desire.